



THE COTTAGE CHILD CARE CENTRE & KINDERGARTEN

FAMILY HANDBOOK 2025

Centre manager: Karen Arkell

Quality Area 6: Collaborative partnership with families

Quality Area 7: Governance & Leadership

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Welcome to The Cottage Child Care

Our Family Handbook explains imperative information you will need to be responsive of, whilst your child attends The Cottage Child Care Centre (“Centre”).

We strongly recommend you read the provided information and ask questions to confirm your understanding of how our Centre operates.

Whilst your child/ren is in our care you and your family are welcome to ring anytime. Please be mindful of rest time between the hours of 11:00 am and 2:00 pm as this is our rest time in the centre.

Tours can be provided at a mutually convenient time.

Our Philosophy

QA7 Standard 7.2 Element 7.2.1

A statement of philosophy is developed and guides all aspects of the service’s operations

Our philosophy is shaped by our community, our families, management, educators, and teacher with pedagogical influences.

As a child safe environment, we actively promote the safety, wellbeing, and inclusion of each child. We are committed to protecting each child within our care in accordance with our legal obligations and in agreement with the child safe standards.

Our program is inclusive and is based on acceptance, and respect for the diversity of each child and their family regardless of ability, gender, race, language, and cultural status. We practice and recognise the Acknowledgement of Country, we respect and value the indigenous cultures, heritage, and the continued relationship the traditional custodians have with the land.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) are embedded throughout our program which embrace play-based learning, with a combination of child initiated, and intentional learning experiences.

We respect and value the meaning of “Community”. We are committed in providing a high quality and innovative educational program for each child within our nurturing and respectful environment.

We believe that each child and their families deserve to have a trusting relationship with Management, teacher, educators, and staff and to hold a true feeling of belonging. A place where we can all contribute, communicate, value and respect for each other.

We focus and build on the individual child, their ability and characteristics and reflect on how we as educators can support them to contribute to their world.

Our practice is to connect with each child, understand and build on their strengths, interests, and abilities to enable them to achieve their full potential. Each child’s learning, development and wellbeing is important to us and is scaffolded through interactions, engagement, and physical and social environments.

We undertake to promote self-esteem and pleasure in learning, development, and wellbeing and to enrich each child with sound life skills.

Our learning environment encourages each child to engage, explore, question, discover, create and be happy involved participants.

We strongly believe that each child’s time at The Cottage will be a nurturing, settled, and a fulfilled experience for them and their families.

We hold partnership with families at a high level of importance, we encourage family participation with open and positive communication.

Children understand their world through play-based experiences which are meaningful to them, a play-based curriculum follows a child’s interests. Within our principles and practices educators provide opportunities and focus on process, experience, and discovery.

For those parents who are interested and would like more detailed information or explanation of the centre’s philosophy or part thereof, they are asked to discuss with the Centre Manager or educator in their child’s room.

Centre Information

Our Centre caters for children aged 6 weeks to 5 years (or 6 years age) appropriate for school age. We are open from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year and closed on Victorian public holidays. We are a privately owned Centre.

Our centre has 45 places and consists of five (4) playrooms, kitchen and administration office.

Butterfly Room (0-18 months) | **Caterpillar Room** (18-24 months)

Ladybug Room (24-36 months) | **The Discovery Centre** (36 months–School age)

The Discovery Centre consists of two areas; **The Adventurers** (non-kinder funding) and **The Explorers** (kindergarten funded)

Contact Information

Phone: (03) 9752 1442

Email: monbulk@thecottagechildcare.com.au

Area Manager: Taryn Kearney

Centre Manager: Karen Arkell

Nominated Supervisors Taryn Kearney Karen Arkell

Educational Leader: Susan McGregor

Provider Number: PR-00002599 | Service Number: SE00003699

Our Team of Educators

- Taryn K.** - Area Manager (Chartered Accountant and Masters in Teaching, ECT)
- Karen A.** - Centre Manager (Qualified)
- Susan M.** - Butterfly Room Leader and Educational Leader (Qualified)
- Sarah G.** - Butterfly Room Assistant (Qualified)
- Rose S.** - Caterpillar Room Leader (Qualified)
- Carly P** - Centre Reliever (Qualified)
- Ruth C.** - Caterpillar Room assistant (Cert III childcare qualified, studying for diploma)
- Nicole H.** - Ladybug Room leader (Qualified)
- Jasmine C** - Ladybugs Room assistant (Working towards Certificate III - trainee)
- Pam C.** - Discovery Centre - Adventurers room Leader (Qualified)
- Rebecca P.** - Kinder Teacher (Bachelor Of Early Childhood Education) Explorers Room
- Caitlin P** - Discovery Centre - Explorer room assistant (Qualified)
- Jayde A.** - Caterpillar room assistant (Cert III childcare trainee,)
- Elizabeth. C** -Support educator – (Qualified)
- Norma M.** – Support educator (Bachelor Of Early Childhood Education)

Kathrine C. - support educator (Working towards Certificate III – trainee)

Kitchen Staff

Kienan QP. - Food safety Supervisor

Lousie B. - Cook

Stevie M. - Support - Centre Chef (Certificate 2 & 3 in food safety food)

Photos of our educators are on the noticeboard, above where you check your child in.

Kitchen

We encourage healthy eating with freshly cooked meals. Our menu is on the kitchen door and on Educa. Any dietary requirements can be catered for.

Breakfast 7:00 am to 8:30 am - Toast and/or cereal

Morning Tea 9:30 am - Fresh fruit platter

Lunch 11:00 am to 11:45 am

Afternoon Tea 2:30 pm to 3:00 pm

Supper 5.00 pm

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Our Centre is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times whilst being educated and cared for by educators and staff. We promote a child safe environment that minimises the risk to all children in our care from all types of abuse, harm and neglect. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to adopt and comply with the National Principles of Child Safe Organisations and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Our staff carry out their responsibilities as mandatory reporters as required by law under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act 1998) and maintain up to date with knowledge of child protection law and child protection training.

Our staff are recruited through an extensive screening process to ensure they display the right personal qualities and experiences to provide high quality supervision and care to child in addition to holding a validated Working With Children Check.

We have a zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards children and any breach of child protection law. Any allegation or concern will be responded to promptly by management. We request that you contact our Nominated Supervisor if you have any concerns on 9752 1442 or monbulk@thecottagechildcare.com.au

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct establishes the standards for all employees of our Centre. Employees are committed to adhere to the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals outlined in the Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics. The values that underpin our work ethic include equality, respect, integrity and responsibility.

Our educators and staff

Our Centre is made up of a team of high-quality professional educators who are committed to and passionate about early childhood education and care. Our staff promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.

We create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.

Our educators are continually evaluating how our curriculum meets the educational needs of our children and reflecting on ways to improve children's learning and development and are supported by a team of highly qualified professionals. Our educational leader and early childhood teachers guide our educators in providing quality, research based educational programs.

Our educators take into account children's learning styles, abilities, interests, linguistic and cultural diversity and family circumstances when planning and implementing learning programs. We support and respect the history and backgrounds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and aim to foster each child's sense of identity.

All staff are encouraged and supported to attend professional training and development to further their knowledge and skills.

All staff hold valid Working with Children Checks/Cards and all Responsible Persons (placed in charge of the day-to-day running of the service) have current ACECQA approved First Aid, Emergency Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications.

For further details on the qualifications of the educators, please see our Nominated Supervisor.

National Quality Framework

Our Centre complies with the Australian Government's National Quality Framework (NQF) which consists of the legislative framework of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and a rigorous assessment and rating system. Our educational program and curriculum are based on the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). We regularly self-assess our practices against the National Quality Standard and strive for continuous improvement through our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP assists our service to identify quality aspects of care we are already providing and assists in developing future goals for further improvement. Families are welcome to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Additional information about the NQF can be found at [ACECQA/nqf/about](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about)

Regulatory Authorities

Our Centre is regulated by the national body for early education and care – the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as well as the state licensing department in our Victoria. To contact our Regulatory Authority, please refer to the contact details below:

Victoria

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
North Eastern Region phone: 1300 333 231 | 03 8392 9300
IBIS Building, Level 3, 295 Springvale Road, Glen Waverley, 3150
www.education.vic.gov.au/ email: nevr@edumail.vic.gov.au

Educator to child ratios (VIC)

We comply with the National Regulations for educator to child ratios across our Centre to ensure adequate supervision is provided for all children. Ratios are calculated across the service (not by individual rooms). This provides us with flexibility to respond to children's interests and needs at different times during the day

AGE OF CHILDREN:	EDUCATOR TO CHILD RATIOS:
Birth to 36 months	1:4
Over 36 months	1:11

Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was developed to ensure all children in early childhood education and care settings across Australia, experience quality teaching and learning through play-based, holistic learning. The EYLF is made up of learning outcomes, principles and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning. Fundamental to the EYLF is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming*.

From before birth children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.

Belonging

Experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood, and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

Being

Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world. Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.

Becoming

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. Becoming reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

- Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency.
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities.
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect.

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation.
- Children respond to diversity with respect.
- Children become aware of fairness.
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment.

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners.

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity.
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating.
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another.
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials.

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes.
- Children engage with a range of texts and gain meaning from these texts.
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media.
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work.
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking.

Educational Program

We are committed to providing a developmental and educational program which caters for each child's individual needs, abilities and interests. Our educational program is delivered through an intentional, play-based pedagogy aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

Our program continues to develop as we use the relationships children have with their families and communities, working in partnership with parents, to ensure each child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of our programs.

We encourage children to be responsible for their own learning through choices in experiences, interests and routine. We use conversations, actions and play as the basis for teaching which involves the children being partners in teaching by seeking out ideas, opinions, thoughts and questions. We encourage children in promoting their independence and self-help skills by assisting within the routine and involving the children in interest-based projects to further enhance their learning and knowledge. We value children and family input and encourage family involvement in order to gather a comprehensive and holistic view of the child.

We know that children learn effectively through play and educators who are diligent in their responsiveness to each child support this. Applying strong intentional teaching practices provide the children with an authentic and meaningful learning environment that challenges, supports and nurtures a child's development.

If we as educators have any areas of concern about your child's development, we will inform you and share our observations and advise of follow up assistance e.g. speech therapy. We understand this may be a sensitive topic and it is always your decision to follow up intervention. Educators are willing to discuss any aspect of learning and development with parents and support discussions with allied health professionals.

Goals for your child at our Centre

"We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being."

Maria Montessori

Educators' practices and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning. Children thrive when

families and educators work together in partnership to support young children's learning. Children's early learning influences their life chances.

Wellbeing and a strong sense of connection, optimism and engagement enable children to develop a positive attitude to learning. (Early Years Learning Framework p.9).

We will create a range of short and long-term goals for your child that we will program to and observe on which will be based on the outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework and include:

- mutual respect and empathy
- concern and responsibility for self and others
- a sense of self worth
- social awareness
- importance of sustainability
- self-discipline and self-regulation
- habits of initiative and persistence
- creative intelligence and imagination
- self-confidence as an independent learner
- a love of learning.

We strongly encourage communication between families and educators to ensure continuity in what we are delivering to your child and acknowledge that the role of the educator is to work in partnership with families, children's first, and most influential educators.

Documentation of Learning

Educators observe children and facilitate their learning through documentation throughout the year.

Our Centre uses a variety of documentation to demonstrate learning which may include:

- your child's profile
- goals from families and educators
- observations- learning stories, captioned photos
- objectives for further development
- work samples- drawings, photos, recorded video
- checklists and transition statements.

The individual child's portfolio is maintained and used as a direct tool for evaluation and future planning within the Centre's program. This makes the program reflect the value of individuality

and is not be used as a means of comparison between peers or stereotypes. The portfolio will be used in parent/educator meetings throughout the year and is always available for you to review at your convenience.

Communication

We work in partnership with you and your family. We support and encourage communication with your child's educators about your child's unique needs and their general enjoyment of their day at our Centre. Everybody has a preferred time and method of communication. Sometimes, mornings and afternoons can be a little rushed, and not the best time to discuss your child's progress. You are encouraged to talk to our Nominated Supervisor to arrange to meet your child's educator at a mutually convenient time.

Our Centre uses EUDCA to provide real time updates about your child.

Enrolment Information

Prior to your child commencing at our Centre, you'll be required to complete an online enrolment form and provide documentation.

Enrolment Form

If you require assistance completing the online enrolment form, please contact our Nominated Supervisor or reception staff for assistance.

We will require a copy of your child's birth certificate and immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register. This must show that your child is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR your child is on a recognised vaccine catch up schedule OR has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

Please note, the names written on the enrolment form must match the names on your child's birth certificate to meet legal requirements.

Family law and access

Our Centre will uphold any responsibilities or obligations in relation to Family Law and access to the service. We require certified copies of any court order, parenting orders or parenting plans, relating to your child and request that if situations change, a copy of the Court Order is provided to our Centre. We will only allow children to leave the Centre with the written permission of the custodial parent/guardian. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting a child.

Authorised Nominees

You will be requested to provide information about authorised nominees on your child's enrolment form. These are persons that you provide permission to:

- collect your child from the Centre
- provide consent for medical treatment for your child from a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service
- provide consent for the transportation of your child by an ambulance service
- provide consent to go on an excursion.

Please understand that it is essential we have up-to-date information on your child's enrolment record in case of an emergency. It is important that you notify the Nominated Supervisor (or Responsible Person) by email of any changes to enrolment information including:

- your residential address
- health of your child
- telephone/mobile numbers
- contact details for any parent or authorised nominee
- family changes (parenting orders)
- emergency contact information details etc.

Authorisations

The enrolment form will include additional authorisations for our Centre to seek medical treatment and emergency transportation for your child if required. Authorisations will also be requested for application of sun cream, permission to administer emergency medication to your child in the case of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency. (Ventolin or Epi-pen), permission for an educator with current first aid to administer paracetamol in an emergency and permission to access medical treatment and transport in case of an emergency.

Photographs, social media, promotion

As part of the enrolment process, we will also ask for your permission to take photographs and video of your child during normal activities and excursions for sharing with our parent community through social media and/or to promote our Centre to the community through marketing and promotional materials. Photographs and video may also be used as part of our observation and programming process.

Medical conditions- Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes or Epilepsy

It is vital that we are aware of any medical condition including diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, eczema, asthma, risks of anaphylaxis of your child including any potential triggers. Families are required to indicate any allergy or asthma on the enrolment form.

Our Centre requires a Medical Management Plan or Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan to be completed by your General Practitioner to assist in managing your child's needs. This needs to be provided prior to your child's commencement at the Centre. In consultation with the Nominated Supervisor, you will be asked to develop a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan to assist our educators and staff. Any prescribed medication that your child may require must be provided each day they attend our Centre.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child, please update your child's Medical Management Plan/ Action Plan every 12-18 months or whenever a change in their medication or treatment occurs. (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) (ASCIA).

Diagnosed disability

If your child has a diagnosed disability, please speak to our Nominated Supervisor prior to enrolment. We provide a supportive and inclusive environment that allows each child to fully participate in quality education and care. We aim to develop and sustain supportive relationships with families and encourage discussions about how we can support your child to have equitable access to resources and participation. If your child has a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package, we may need your consent to make contact with services and/or therapists who are working with your child to seek information regarding their learning plan to support continuity of learning.

Our Centre may be able to apply for additional support through the Inclusion Support Program (SIP) to assist your child's access.

Fees, Rebates and attendance

Fees

Our daily fee is: \$143.00 per day, before Child Care Subsidy (CCS) has been applied. The fees are assessed on an annual basis with changes taking effect 1 July each year. Fees must always be paid 2 weeks in advance.

Statement of fees

Each fortnight we will send you a statement via email the day before your weekly debit. Please check these statements to ensure all details are correct and accurate. If there is any discrepancy, please contact the Nominated Supervisor as soon as possible.

Payment methods

Parents/guardians are required to complete a Direct Debit form upon acceptance of enrolment, this form is emailed through our software provider @smartcentral.com. Fees will be deducted fortnightly. Please note that additional charge of \$9.90 that will apply for any failed transactions as a result of insufficient funds, this is charged by the Direct Debit Provider not The Cottage Childcare Centre.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Subsidy offers assistance to families to help with the cost of child care aged 0-13 years. There are 3 factors that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy, which include:

- Combined annual family income
- Activity test – the activity level of both parents
- Service type – type of child care service and whether the child attends school

Families who wish to receive Child Care Subsidy as reduced fees must apply through the [myGov](#) website. This includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test. Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to our Centre to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families will contribute to their childcare fees and pay the difference between the fee charged by our Centre and the subsidy amount received. This is called the '*gap fee*'.

On enrolment we will need the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the person linked with the child, along with the child's CRN so we can confirm the attendance and ensure that you are receiving the appropriate subsidy.

Complying Written Agreement (CWA)

A Complying Written Agreement (CWA) is an agreement between our Centre and a parent or guardian to provide childcare in exchange for fees. The CWA includes information about your child's enrolment including your child's full name and date of birth, the date the arrangement is effective from, session details and details of the fees to be charged. Before Child Care Subsidy can be paid, you must approve the enrolment information within the CWA via the [MyGov website](#).

Absences

We encourage families to notify the Centre as soon as possible if your child will be absent for any day or session you have booked. It is recommended that absences are notified to the Centre by email or through Educa

Child Care Subsidy will be paid for any absence from an approved child care service your child attends for up to 42 days per child per financial year. Additional absences beyond 42 days may be approved for specific reasons with supporting documentation. Please talk to us about additional absences.

You can access your child's absence record on your online statement by selecting '**View Child Care Details and Payments**' on your [Centrelink online account](#). You can also do this using the [Express plus Families mobile app](#)

Public holidays will be counted as an absence if your child would normally have attended the Centre on that weekday, and fees have been charged for that day for your child.

If your child has not attended our Service for 14 continuous weeks, your child's enrolment will be cancelled, and Centrelink will stop paying your CCS subsidy from the last day of attendance.

Fees in arrears/ Financial Support

If a family fails to pay the required fees on time, a reminder letter will be issued after one week and then again, after two weeks if the fees are still outstanding. A child's position may be terminated if payment has not been made after three weeks, for which the family will receive a final letter terminating the child's position. At this time the Centre will initiate its debt collection process, following privacy and conditional requirements.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, please speak to the Nominated Supervisor or Director. Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) may be available to support your family. We may be able to organise a payment plan before your fees go into arrears.

Withdrawal from care/Reducing Enrolment Days

We require 2 weeks written notice to withdraw and/or reduce enrolment days for your child/ren from any permanent booking. Please see the Nominated Supervisor to obtain the required form to complete. Children are not able to attract CCS for any days after the last day your child physically attends our Centre. *There are some circumstances where CCS can be paid after the last day your child physically attends with an approved reason.*

Centre Closing Time and Late Collection Fees

Please be aware our Centre and program closes at 6:00pm. In accordance with National Regulations and licensing, we are not permitted to have children in the service after 6:00pm. A late fee is incurred for children collected after 6.00pm.

The fee is \$15 per child for every 10 minutes or part thereof and will be added to your next account. The late fee is strictly adhered to, as two staff members are required to remain at the Centre until all children are collected.

If we are unable to contact either the parent or a person nominated by the parent on the enrolment form to arrange collection of the child/children within an hour of the Centre closing, we may need to contact the Police or other authorities to take responsibility of your child.

Permanent and Casual Bookings

Permanent bookings are an ongoing booking that:

- remains the same from one week to the next
- must remain unchanged for a minimum of 3 weeks
- are chargeable regardless of attendance

Casual bookings are one off bookings that:

- can be booked at the last minute for emergency care. This is provided that we have vacancies. If there is no vacancy, we will put your child on a casual waiting list and will contact you if a vacancy becomes available
- are designed to support families taking on casual work and shift work
- can be cancelled at no cost, provided 24-hour notice via email is given

Waiting list

Casual waiting list: We will create a casual waiting list for casual bookings that have been requested for a session that we are at capacity. If positions become available, we will allocate them in order of application whilst adhering to recommendations of Priority of Access.

Permanent waiting list: If you would like to increase your child/ren's permanent sessions but there are no permanent vacancies, your child/ren will be placed on a waiting list until a position becomes available. Positions will be allocated in order of application, whilst adhering to our Priority of Access process.

Priority of Access

Our Centre aims to assist families who are most in need and may prioritise filling vacancies with children who are:

- at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- a child of a sole parent who satisfies, or parents who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.

Centre Policies and Procedures

You will find a copy of our Centre policies and procedures located outside the administration office. The policies are being transferred to Educa under Centre – Policies, we anticipate to have this finished by June 2022, which means all staff and families will have access to all our policies 24/7. We expect our staff and families to always adhere to our policies and procedures to ensure we maintain compliance and abide by the National Law and National Regulations.

Educators cannot make exceptions for individuals unless the Nominated Supervisor or Management do so on account of serious and/or unusual circumstances.

We are constantly reviewing our policies and procedures and ask for staff and family participation to ensure our policies and procedures adhere to the needs of our families and meet required regulations. Your involvement helps us to improve our Centre and may lead us to change our policies and procedures.

Orientation-Preparing for your child's first day

Orientation is an important start for your child and family to connect to our Centre. We encourage each child to attend our Centre in the company of a family member before they start their first day with us. This gives you and your child the opportunity to gain an understanding of our program, the lay out of the room, where to put your child's belongings, provide educators with additional information about your child and how we can best support their transition and settling in period. The Nominated Supervisor will contact you to arrange suitable times and days for visits.

If your child is reluctant to attend, please discuss this with their assigned educator so that they can develop strategies with you to support the transition from home to the Centre. You are welcome to take photos of your child in our environment to show and discuss at home with them. Some children like to take a book from our library to read at home and return on the next visit.

Arrival and Departure

Each day, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign out upon departure through the tablets at the reception area. We are required by legislation to maintain our attendance record at all times. This record may be used in the event of an emergency situation at the Centre.

Our staff have a duty of care to your child and will only allow your child to be released into the care of either a parent, guardian or an authorised nominee as listed on your child's enrolment record. If your child needs to be collected by another person for some reason, an authority to collect form must be provided in writing to the Nominated Supervisor. Our staff may ask to view photo identification of the adult collecting your child from care to confirm their identity.

The first day/week

The first day in a new service is a big step for you and your child. Please don't be alarmed if your child experiences some separation anxiety. This is normal and our experienced educators will assist you and your child through this transition period. We encourage parents to stay as long as they like during the morning drop off to help your child settle into an activity. There may be tears and extra tight hugs when saying goodbye for the first few weeks but there are always cuddles, reassurance and genuine care from educators for both the children and their families. Sometimes this experience is upsetting more so for the family, not the child. We understand this and offer support through phone calls during the day, photos and open communication.

Saying goodbye - Ideally, your child will be settled at an activity before you leave, however some children find it hard to settle until their parents have gone. What works best is a set routine so try to establish the care routine from the orientation process. Being well organised and avoiding a rush usually results in a calm start to the day.

Most children will want to have a look around first to see who else has arrived and to look at what activities are available. Please tell your child when you are leaving as they may become upset if they haven't had the opportunity to say goodbye. This will gain trust from the child, not only in you but in the educator, who is reassuring your child about their day and when you will return. Rest assured, we will contact you if your child becomes distressed.

What you need to bring

BACKPACK - For independence, we work towards all children being able to recognise and open their own bag. You can help by allowing them to be involved in selecting their bag and taking ownership of it. Please ensure it is large enough to hold all their belongings and is clearly labelled.

SPARE CLOTHING - Every now and then, accidents occur, and it may be necessary for your child to get changed into a fresh set of clothes. Please include a complete change of clothes every day which can stay in your child's bag...just in case!

DRINK BOTTLE - A labelled drink bottle is required every day for water. Children are able to refill their drink bottle when necessary throughout the day. We always provide water and cups, but a drink bottle is a great start to school readiness.

SUN HAT- A protective sun hat (either broad brimmed or legionnaire hat) must be worn every day when playing outside for protection against the sun. Please make sure to include it in your child's bag every day regardless of the weather conditions.

Meals

Our Centre promotes healthy eating habits and provides delicious and nutritious food for your child each day. We provide a nutritionally balanced breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and supper. We follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines to ensure our meals are prepared to meet the dietary requirements for all children. Our menu is carefully planned and prepared by a qualified cook.

We cater for the dietary requirements of all children enrolled at our Centre. Please discuss your child's special requirements, allergies and any other medical conditions with the nominated supervisor.

Breastfeeding

We are a breastfeeding friendly service. Mothers who are breastfeeding are welcome to attend the Centre during the day to feed their infant. We have a private, clean and quiet area for mothers to breastfeed their infants or express breastmilk.

Families that are breastfeeding should speak to the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to be aware of our policies on storing and serving breast milk. Families that are formula feeding should also consult our Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person to be aware on how we need the formula prepared and stored. Regular communication is encouraged to ensure your infant's needs are met as they grow. Please refer to our *Breastfeeding Policy*.

Clothing

It is helpful to your child if they are dressed in non- restrictive, serviceable and easy to wash clothes so that they feel free to join in all the activities and to develop independence. Shoes also,

need to allow children freedom to run, climb, hop and jump as well as being easy for the child to take off and put on by themselves. Joggers and sandals are appropriate shoes to wear.

Thongs, slippers and gumboots are not suitable, and we prefer that these are NOT worn to the Centre. Also, please consider clothing that enables the child to move around easily and allows children to be independent in dressing. Clothing such as long dresses, overalls, braces, belts and stiff buttons can prove a problem for children who need to go to the toilet. We require all t-shirts to have sleeves (no mid-drift tops) and hats that are broad brimmed are essential for effective sun safety.

Toys

The Centre has an abundance of toys and we ask that children do not bring in toys from home. This eliminates toys getting lost, broken, disappointment for other children and responsibility on educators to track numerous toys throughout the day.

Behaviour Guidance

We encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour. We give children the opportunity to self-regulate their behaviours during play to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Educators follow a *Behaviour Guidance Policy* that extends across the whole Centre giving consistency of expectation in all rooms. We use a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour to help them develop a respect for others, for property and respect for self. If you require further information on this policy, please ask educators and refer to our Policy manual.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is more than just feeling happy, it is about our overall health- physical, social, emotional and mental. We provide opportunities for your child to develop a strong sense of wellbeing through dance, movement, yoga, mindfulness, music and relaxation.

Physical Play

Physical play includes activities that use physical movements to allow children to use their energy, enhance their concentration, motivation, learning and wellbeing. We feel physical play is a vital part of everyday life. We believe in providing children with a range of physical activities and experience on a daily occurrence for them to challenge their large and small muscles, allowing them to gain increasing control over their bodies as they learn the importance of physical play.

Physical play provides children with the opportunity to:

- develop strong bones and muscles
- improve strength and balance
- develop Flexibility and coordination
- develop Fundamental Movement Skills
- develop spatial awareness
- develop mathematical concepts
- be confident as they learn to control their bodies and understand their limits
- learn to cooperate and share with others
- promote healthy growth and development

Rest and Sleep

Rest and sleep routines vary according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide beds for children and play soft music in the background. Your child may wish to bring a security item to have at rest time. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest or sleep needs with educators. Each day we provide information about the times your child rested or slept.

Quiet activities, such as puzzles and books are available for those children who do not sleep.

Sustainability

Our Centre is passionate about sustainability. We believe in supporting children to appreciate and care for the environment by embedding sustainable practice into the daily operation of our Centre, infrastructure, and teaching.

In order to empower our sustainability program, we emphasise children's ability to make a difference, enabling them to learn and appreciate their environment in an engaging, fun and exciting manner. We do this by engaging children in discussion about sustainable practice, encouraging them to participate in a recycling program, reducing energy and conserving water. We aim to provide children with the skills and knowledge required to become environmentally responsible.

Birthdays

It is very exciting for a child to be having a birthday. If a cake is required for a child's birthday it is recommended that cupcakes be provided in a packet mix as this reduces the major allergy risks associated with most other cakes and helps us to provide a hygienic celebration with only the birthday child blowing out the candles on their cake. Families are required to discuss cake options with educators prior to the celebration as we monitor food and treats to ensure the safety of all children and staff. *For further information, please see our Celebration Policy.*

Sun Safety

Our Centre implements a combination of sun protection measures to ensure the health and safety of your child at all times. We monitor the UV index levels daily and schedule outdoor activities when levels are safe. Our outdoor environment provides shade for play experiences and we conduct regular risk assessments to ensure the play space and equipment is safe for children.

Children and educators must wear hats and appropriate clothing, including footwear when outside, when UV is over 3, and in terms one and four.. Educators will encourage children, including by way of modelling behaviour, to avoid excessive exposure to the sun and to wear suitable sunscreen (at least SPF 30+), which is reapplied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. We ask that children come to the Centre with sunscreen already applied so they are able to participate in outdoor play immediately and not have to wait the 20 minutes after application. Consent to apply sunscreen is included in our enrolment form.

Parent Participation and Feedback

Our Centre has an Open-Door Policy and actively seeks and encourages families to be involved in the Centre. This can range from evaluating and adding input to your child's program and observations, volunteering within the Centre and sharing skills and experiences that the children and the program will benefit from and providing feedback.

We can arrange meetings with your child's educator at a time that suits you throughout the year and pride ourselves on strong verbal communication on a daily basis. We seek input from families on all aspects of the Centre but in particular, your child's goals, observations and program.

If, for any reason you question or do not understand any aspect of the Centre or your child's experience we have a *Grievance Policy* that supports all stakeholders in our community and like all policies, is available for families to consult and implement at any time. Copies of our policies are available in each room, the office and parent library. You are welcome to take a copy home and review at your leisure.

Family involvement

We welcome and encourage the involvement of all parents/families at our Centre. Your ideas, experiences and skills are greatly valued and will enable us to extend each child's interests, abilities and knowledge. There are many ways for your family to be involved. We understand

that our busy lives can't always afford the time, however any contribution no matter how big or small is much appreciated. Here are just a few ideas:

Your occupation or hobby - You are the most important person in their world. We welcome all parents to the Centre to talk about their occupation or hobby (e.g. music, craft, cooking).

Everything parents do interest children and these talks are the best educational resources you can provide for the Centre.

We use information that has come from discussions about occupations and hobbies in our program and the ideas explored which can turn into interest projects providing valuable learning.

Your home culture - We aim to foster relationships among families and community and invite you to share aspects of your culture, history, language and celebrations with our Centre. Your involvement greatly assists us to enrich the lives of all our families and children.

Reading - Children love to be read to. If you or your parents have the time, please contact your room educators to organise a day for reading. We love grandparents visiting our Centre!

Recyclable items - We are always on the lookout for recyclable items for the rooms. Empty food containers, ribbons, wrapping paper, towel tubes (not toilet or egg or milk because of hygiene and allergy issues) paper or anything interesting from your work is much appreciated.

Special events - Our Centre organises special events throughout the year. We will communicate these to families in a timely manner. We encourage parent input in all aspects of these events. Some of these include fundraising, celebrations and information sessions.

Suggestions - Parents are welcome to visit or call the Centre at any time. If you have any suggestions or ideas on how we best can work together in the Centre, please let us know.

If you have any concerns, please see your child's educator or the Nominated Supervisor. We have a grievance procedure if you would like to formally raise any concerns.

Community Information

We have a community notice board at the entry to our Centre. This board is used to display relevant programs, menus, notices, updates and reminders for children and families. Please ensure you check this on a regular basis.

Our staff can also provide information for families about a range of topics including early intervention; supported playgroups; Child Care Subsidy; Aboriginal Child and Family centres; health clinics.

Health and Hygiene

Our Centre has effective and systematic risk management systems in place to identify any possible risk of hazards to our learning environment and practices. All staff diligently practice and model personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette and disposal of tissues. We request that all children and visitors to our service wash their hands or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival.

Our educators teach and model correct hand washing techniques to children and regularly clean and disinfect high touch objects throughout the service to reduce the spread of infection.

When should I not send my child to the Centre?

Our Centre is a busy and demanding day for the bodies and minds of our children. We are not equipped to care for sick children; however, we will do everything we can to comfort a child who has become sick whilst in our care.

To minimise the spread of infections and diseases, and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators and staff, we implement recommendations developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)- *Staying Healthy in Childcare*. Our policies and procedures for *Sick Children* and the *Control of Infectious Diseases* are available for all families to view. Please monitor your child's health and do not bring your child to the Centre if they are suffering from an infectious disease/illness or are generally unwell.

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Centre, we will contact you or an authorised nominee to collect your child. If your child is unable to be collected, educators will contact the child's emergency contact for collection. When your child is collected, you will be provided with an *Injury, Incident, Trauma and Illness Record* completed by the educator which includes information about your child's illness, their symptoms, general behaviour and any action taken. You will be requested to sign and acknowledge the details in this record.

Your child should not attend the Centre if they have had paracetamol within 24 hours for a temperature. Children who are on antibiotics are to be kept away from the Centre for the first 24 hours to allow the child to rest and the risk of spreading the infection to decrease. If your

child has been vomiting or had diarrhoea, they will be excluded for 48 hours. For certain illnesses, a medical clearance certificate may be required before your child returns.

Infectious Diseases

The National Health and Medical Research Council have supplied the following information regarding minimum exclusion period for children from an early childhood education and care service. Please inform staff if your child has any of the following so that we can notify the Public Health Unit and other families of any infectious disease/illness. (Confidentiality is always maintained).

Recommended exclusion periods- Poster *Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*

CONDITION	EXCLUSION
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Until all blisters have dried
HIB	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness
Herpes- Cold sores	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible
Influenzas and flu-like illnesses	Exclude until well
Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash
Meningitis (Bacterial)	Exclude until well
Meningococcal Infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Exclude the child for 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of rash
Salmonella	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases

Streptococcal Infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well
Tuberculosis	Exclude until a medical certificate from an appropriate health authority is received
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude if diarrhoea present

**If your child is unimmunised according to our records, then they will be excluded until the threat has passed and upon advice of the Public Health Unit*

Immunisation

The Public Health Act 2010 requires all families to provide an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for their child prior to enrolment in an early childhood education and care service. The immunisation history statement must show that each enrolled child is up to date with immunisations for their age.

The relevant vaccinations are those under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

*The only unimmunised children who can be enrolled in child care (after 1 January 2018) are those who are on a recognised catch-up schedule or those who are unimmunised due to medical reasons as described in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. Parents must provide an AIR Immunisation History Form or an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form upon enrolment. In the case of an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease, management will contact families as soon as possible. We ask that families immediately inform our Centre if someone in their family is diagnosed with an infectious disease to help minimise the risk to other children, families and educators.

We are legally required to notify the Public Health Unit of any cases of vaccine preventable diseases occurring at our Centre. For an up to date immunisation schedule, please refer to your enrolment pack.

Medication

If your child requires medication whilst at our Centre, you must complete an *Administration of Medication Record* to give your consent for an educator to administer prescribed medication to your child. Medication must be given directly to an educator for appropriate safe storage.

Educators can only administer medication that is:

- prescribed by a registered medical practitioner (with instructions attached to the medication or in written form from the medical practitioner)
- in its original packaging and have the original label clearly showing your child's name
- before the expiry/use by date.

Upon collection of your child at the end of the day, you or an authorised person will be requested to sign the *Administration of Medication Form*.

Incidents, injury or trauma

We aim to minimise the risk of accidents and injury as much as possible however, through play, exploration and adventure, children sometimes have accidents. We always have an educator with a First Aid, emergency asthma, anaphylaxis management and CPR qualification on shift at all times we provide education and care to children. First Aid kits are located throughout the Centre.

In the event of a minor injury, first aid will be provided as required. An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed and when you collect your child, you will be notified about the injury and asked to acknowledge and sign the record. If your child injures their head, even if it is a small bump, you will be contacted to advise you of the injury. Our educators will continue to monitor your child closely and advise if you should come and collect them.

If an injury or incident is serious and we believe urgent medical attention is required, the Nominated Supervisor will contact you immediately. If we cannot contact a parent or guardian, we will attempt to contact an authorised nominee for consent. Where you or your authorised nominee cannot be contacted, we may call an ambulance. If you are unable to meet the ambulance at the Centre, we will send one of our educators/staff members to accompany your child in the ambulance. Please note that Ambulance cover is the responsibility of each family.

An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed, and a parent will be required to acknowledge and sign this record. A copy of any documentation from the hospital or treating doctor will also be requested. Our Centre will also be required to notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any serious incident or injury. In these circumstances, you may be contacted by our Approved Provider and the Regulatory Authority to follow up the incident and actions taken by our Centre.

Safety in our Centre

Emergency and evacuation procedures

Our Centre conducts risk assessments regularly and develops emergency management plans for a range of possible hazards. Throughout the year we follow our policies and procedures to carry out emergency and evacuation drills. These may occur at any given time throughout the day and week to ensure all children know what to do in case of an emergency. Emergency and evacuation drills are carried out in a well-organised and orderly manner and will simulate a range of possible emergency situations such as fire (bush fire), lock down or flood. Under regulations, we are required to practice emergency and evacuation drills every three months.

Educators are trained to use the fire extinguishers that are in the Centre. An emergency evacuation plan and lock down procedure are displayed in every room and exit locations are clearly indicated.

Drop off and pick up time

Early childhood education and care services are busy places especially during the morning drop off and afternoon pickup. We ask that parents be extremely mindful of danger when arriving and departing from our Centre.

- Please always hold your child's hand in the carpark area
- Be alert of reversing drivers in the car park as it is very difficult to see small children
- Use the kerbside, rear passenger door when getting your child into and out of their restraint
- Never leave a child or infant in the car unattended
- Never leave the front entry door/gate open
- Always do a visual check around your vehicle before driving
- Please ensure children do not enter areas in the Centre that are for adults/staff only.

Workplace Health and Safety

We are committed in providing an environment that is safe and healthy for every employee, volunteer, child, family, and visitor. We have made every reasonable effort to minimise the risk of serious injury and request all persons to our Centre to adhere to our policies regarding Workplace Health and Safety.

Each morning, our educators conduct daily safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment and will alert management of any potential risk or hazard to children to ensure this is rectified before children use the equipment or area.

We welcome all feedback regarding the safety of our Centre. If you see something that concerns you regarding safe work practices, the safety of building and equipment or general work health and safety issues, please contact the Nominated Supervisor immediately.

Privacy and Confidentiality

We are committed to protecting the privacy and confidentiality of children, individuals and families and have policies in place to ensure strict confidentiality is maintained.

To plan programs for your child/ren, we need to collect information from you. This information helps us to assess and plan programs in partnership with you. We do not disclose personal information about you or your child to other people or organisations without your consent, unless we are required to do so by law. We do not ask for personal information about you or your child from other professionals or organisations without your consent. You can look at the information in your child's file at any time or request a copy of information in the file.

Our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* is available to view at any time. This policy sets out how we ensure our Centre acts in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act 1988. We ensure all personal information is protected, records and documents are maintained and stored in accordance with Education and Care Services National Regulations and that all staff understand the requirements of the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme. Any Privacy complaints will be managed promptly and in a consistent manner as outlined in our *Grievance Policy*.

Our Centre is required to keep and maintain detailed records about children, parents and staff in accordance with relative legislation contained in the National Law and Regulations and Family Assistance Law. We ensure all records are stored in a secure and locked location. We must keep records for the prescribed periods of times as legislated related to child enrolment, attendance, medication records, incident, injury, trauma and illness records, child assessments and any relevant legal information/documents. Full details about record keeping is available in our *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*.