Dear Parents,

Welcome to Geelong Children’s Centre......

You have chosen to enrol your child in this Centre that has Exceeded the requirements of the National Quality Framework. The NQF rates Centre’s on these areas:

- Educational program and practice
- Children’s health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management

The Centre provides above child staff ratios, staff who are highly experienced and committed educators.

The staff would like to work with you and value your partnership with us. We encourage you to be actively involved in your child’s education and care.

The information provided in this booklet is of vital importance and will help you to understand the workings of the Centre.

We sincerely hope that you and your child/children enjoy being part of this vibrant, high quality education and care environment and that you enjoy your association with Geelong Children’s Centre.

The Board of Management.
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Centre Philosophy

We acknowledge the original custodians of this land, the Wathaurong people and their language and all the indigenous people in the Geelong community.

Children

We value providing a warm and welcoming environment that assists children to feel safe and secure. We believe developing trusting respectful relationships between children and educators is of utmost importance in children to reach their full potential to learn and develop according to their needs. This enables children to feel supported to explore, learn and take risks in their learning environment.

Children are social learners, co-constructing their understanding of the World around them and themselves through interacting with peers and adults alike. Through social interaction, children’s learning is facilitated and scaffolded by more capable others, whilst the child remains an active participant in their learning. Through providing an environment and program that encourages and supports social interaction children are enabled to develop reciprocal relationships and develop a sense of Community with their peers and teachers. Children are also provided with consistent opportunities to resource their own learning and initiate their own play experiences. Through this discovery children further develop their sense of agency within our service.

Families & Community

We acknowledge the importance of developing a sense of Community within the Geelong Children’s Centre and the importance of involving families in their child’s learning journey. We value and respect the contributions that families make, as it is through family involvement that children feel their learning is valued and recognised. Family involvement also enables the curriculum to reflect the diversity of the community. By building trusting and reciprocal relationships between home and the learning environment we aim to positively contribute to children’s holistic wellbeing and development, allowing us to focus on the ‘whole child’ including individual culture, heritage and family values. We endeavour to connect with the local community services, groups and events including maternal health services, local schools, sport groups, library and community Festivals and events.

Curriculum & Learning

We believe children learn best when they are provided rich opportunities to make independent choices to guide their learning. Through engagement in a play based program, children’s learning is fostered to meet the diverse range of learning intelligences. We also aim to provide programs which support children in developing knowledge, skills and attitudes that will assist them in becoming environmentally responsible. We value providing developmentally appropriate, open ended play experiences that are meaningful to children. This is provided through an emergent curriculum that is planned in response to children’s developmental needs and interests. Curriculum decision making promotes inclusive practices by building on children’s strengths interests and abilities in both planned and spontaneous learning experiences. Gender equality create opportunities for children to engage in social and educational learning. We believe that through these experiences children are supported to develop the skills and concepts that enable them to become lifelong learners. Children develop early literacy, numeracy and scientific concepts and knowledge as well as social, emotional and physical skills through actively participating in play based experiences. Each child develops and learns in their own unique way and rate. By providing a combination of teacher-initiated and child-initiated learning experiences, all children are able to positively participate in the program at their own level and reach their individual potential.
Educators and Management

The management promotes professional enquiry and development for all teachers and educators to enhance their knowledge. Code of ethics is embedded in our practice and informs our relationships with the children, families and each other. We aim to have constant reflection in all areas of our work and will remain committed to Early Childhood Education and the broader Community. Educators collaborate with variety of organisations and service providers to enhance children’s learning and wellbeing.

Our educators are dedicated Early Childhood Professionals who work together to create a supportive and positive environment. Each teacher and educator is recognised for their skills and ideas that they contribute to our service and wider community. The board of management supports the management team, staff, teachers and educators to effectively manage the service with a shared sense of purpose, providing direction and leadership and dealing with collective responsibility.

CENTRE VALUES

Staff and management engage in professional behaviour, through following and implementing all centre’s policies, practices and procedures, being courteous to each other, families and children.

Staff and management treat and show respect towards one another, showing openness to critical reflection of our own and each other’s performance and ways of doing and being.

Staff display professionalism in accordance to the Early Childhood of Australia’s Code of ethics. Staff are valued and respected as professionals with their views and opinions listened to without fear of consequence and maintaining integrity.

Staff take ownership of all aspects of their work with each other, children and families along with their workplace and the facilities provided, including the environment presented to and for children.

Management will provide a safe working environment in which staff are active participants in maintaining and supervising safe work and play practices for each other and children.

As a collective we initiate and embrace change, accepting it into our ways of operating.

We respect the privacy and confidentiality of each other through non-engagement of gossip and innuendo.

Fairness and equity is given and received by all stakeholders (Management, Staff and Families) Flexibility is shown with regards to room assignments, roster times and requests for leave and the changes that occur to these.
CHILD SAFE POLICY

As per the Education & Care Services National Law 2010, Education & Care Services National Regulations 2011, National Quality Standards and the Department of Human Services Victorian Child Safe Standards, UN Conventions on the rights of the child “The Convention applies to everyone whatever their race, religion, abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from”. This service is committed to child protection and child safe environments.

The Child Safe Policy:

- reflects the service’s philosophy, which can include values, code of ethics and code of conduct for management, staff, educators, children, families, students, volunteers and the community;
- establishes the procedures for child protection matters including identifying, documenting, reporting and managing concerns or incidents;
- maintains procedural fairness and natural justice concepts in all circumstances;
- identifies safe protective behaviours for all persons who access the service’s premises, facilities and/or programs;
- abides by federal and state legislation;
- defines the appropriate direct or indirect physical contact between children and adults in the service;
- identifies and details the procedures when an adult harms a child; a child harms another child; or an adult harms another adult in the service (refer to staff grievance policy);
- details complaints, grievances and disciplinary procedures;
- demonstrates a commitment to ongoing professional development for leadership team, staff/students/educators and volunteers;
- identifies support and counselling services or agencies for all stakeholders, including strategies to deal with the media; and
- reflects relevant licensing requirements, for example staff/child ratios;
- Geelong Children’s Centre has a duty of care to ensure that all persons are provided with a high level of safety and protection during the hours of the service’s operation;
- Staff, children, volunteers and families acknowledged that there is a shared responsibility between the service and all stakeholders that the Child Safe Policy and procedures are accepted as a high priority;
- In meeting the service’s duty of care, and legislative requirements outlined in state legislation that the management/coordination unit staff and staff implement and adhere to the service’s Child Safe Policy, and ensure a level of safety and protection to all children who access the service’s facilities and/or programs;
- Geelong Children’s Centre has zero tolerance for child abuse has systems to protect children from abuse, and will take all allegations and concerns very seriously and responds to them consistently in line with the Centre’s policies and procedures;
- Staff at Geelong Children’s Centre actively works to listen to and empower children;
• Geelong Children’s Centre is committed to promoting cultural safety for Aboriginal children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability for equal participation; whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the service, as long as this does not harm others.

• Geelong Children’s Centre has risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff, students or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media (refer to Internet, Social media and email policy).

Child sexual and physical abuse and neglect is a criminal offence. We have a legal responsibility to report such incidences. Child abuse is defined as anything which individual institutions or processes do, or fail to do, which directly or indirectly harms children or damages their prospects of a safe and healthy development into adulthood.

Mandatory reporting legislation compels the Director (Child Protection Officer) to report suspected cases of child abuse when, in the course of practising her profession or carrying out the duties of the office, they form a belief, on reasonable grounds, that a child is in need of protection from any form of abuse whether it be physical, emotional, neglect or sexual abuse. As professionals, we are obliged to report any suspected child physical abuse. Reports must be made as soon as practicable.

If you have a reasonable suspicion that a child is being, or has been abused in some form, or a child has abused another child you must immediately notify the person in charge and record all information in Incident Reporting Form including incidents updates. Room In-charge / Director will have a meeting with the parent to support the family and if they require any information or reading material. There is a strong need for sensitivity and confidentiality in handling such information. All information will be stored securely and treated in a strictly confidential manner and the appropriate authorities contacted. If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

Staff are monitored and supported through supervision by room co-ordinators to ensure that they met compliance and child protection policies and procedures. Staff attend compulsory in-service education sessions and information sheets are provided on child protection issues to keep them up to date on the latest knowledge of child protection.

New employees, students and volunteers are supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation’s commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation’s code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

Our organisation understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal peoples, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability. All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check or VIT registration Card for teacher and to provide evidence of this Check.

Legislative responsibilities
Our organisation takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:
• Any personnel who are mandatory reporters must comply with their duties.
• Failure to disclose offence: In addition to mandatory reporting and duty of care obligations, any adult who forms a reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed by an adult against a child under 16 must report that information to police. Failure to disclose the information to police is a criminal
offence except in limited circumstances, such as where the information has already been reported to Child Protection or the child is over 16 when the belief is formed.

• **Failure to protect:** Any staff member in a position of authority, who becomes aware that an adult associated with their organisation (such as an employee, contractor, volunteer or visitor) poses a risk of sexual abuse to a child under the care, authority or supervision of the organisation, must take all reasonable steps to remove or reduce that risk. This may include, for example, removing the adult from child-related work pending investigation. If a staff member in a position of authority fails to take reasonable steps in these circumstances, this may amount to a criminal offence. The offence applies only to adults in a position of authority within an organisation, including Directors, staff, Educators, regional directors and other senior managers.

**HOW WE CARE FOR AND EDUCATE YOUR CHILD**

**Babies’ Room**

The educators in the babies’ room care for children aged from 6 weeks through to 18 months. The room is set up to provide each baby with support, comfort, positive guidance and nurturing.

The Babies room operates on the primary care giving system.

*The primary care giving system ensures that every child has a familiar person, and that each parent has a primary contact.*

Each child has a primary caregiver who develops a relationship of mutual trust and respect with the child and their parents. The primary caregiver also works with other staff within the room to ensure a positive learning and care experience.

Care giving is primary in two senses. First, most but not all of the care, nurturing and parent communication is provided by the teacher who is the primary caregiver. Second, teaching is primary because of the prime times (nappy changes, feeding, putting to sleep etc.) - and those most intimate and personal moments of care and teaching – are the major responsibility of the primary caregiver.

The program within the Babies room has been developed to ensure that each child is given equal, quality and responsive care to assist in the progression of their development. The program covers a variety of developmental areas including; cognitive (thinking), gross motor (large muscle development), fine motor (small muscle development), social and emotional (interactions), language, literacy and expressive arts.

During the day we offer indoor and outdoor play with children given the opportunity to make their own decision as to where they would like to play and what experiences and activities they would most like to encounter. Activities within the program are designed to be enjoyable, educational and appealing; incorporated into the curriculum is a collaboration of interaction, natural materials, multiculturalism, music and dance, dramatic play, painting and the encouragement of self-help skills.

You are welcome to phone staff or visit your child at any time throughout your child’s time in care.
We provide two supervised separate sleep rooms so that the babies may sleep peacefully and undisturbed. Staff are proactive in endorsing the SID’S policy.

We also provide breast feeding facilities, disposable nappies, and all linen.

The menu has been developed to follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013 providing each child with 50% of their recommended daily intake of foods. We acknowledge and implement each family’s decision in their child’s dietary requirements.

We welcome all parent ideas, feedback, suggestions, as we want you and your child to feel at complete ease whilst in our care.

**Toddlers’ Room**

We implement primary care giving into the room, whereby children form a bond with their primary carer.

We incorporate your child’s home routine into the day-care program. Children are able to sleep according to their individual needs as we provide a supervised sleep room that is a separate room from play areas.

We focus on language, independence and toilet training as the major milestones in the Toddler years.

The play based curriculum allows children to feel a sense of belonging through warm, responsive, individualised care designed to promote your child’s self esteem. We see every experience as a learning opportunity – the program is structured to optimise opportunities for learning, through continuous in/outdoor play.

We provide a range of teaching experiences that encourage all areas of development.

We engage in spontaneous group times including stories, music/movement and puppets etc. We focus on small groups of children that allow one to one interactions with staff. Through the outdoor program we enhance skills such as climbing, balancing, swinging, digging and bike riding.

We have visual displays that show you what we have done in the Toddlers Room each day. We value the opportunity talking to you about your child’s day at the beginning and end of the day. The information board is located in the room and contains all of your child’s information such as sleep time, food and toileting. We will also keep you informed through newsletters and e-mails.

The toddler’s room provides a school holiday program which offers events such as multi-cultural days, teddy bear picnic, cooking day and dress up days. We also provide various incursions and excursions throughout the year.

We welcome you and your families’ participation in every facet of the Toddlers Room and most of all we aim for the children and staff to have fun together.
The 3-5 integrated pre-school curriculum identifies key areas of development such as the arts, numeracy, literacy, music and movement, social studies, science and motor development.

The program is designed and reflected on a daily basis and incorporates the needs, interest and strengths of the individual child as well as the whole group. The main focus of the program is to plan positive experiences that assist children to make choices, develop responsibility, respect for themselves, others and the environment, encourage independence and provide challenges and enjoyment. We implement formal learning sessions that give the children the opportunity to gain knowledge in basic mathematics, life skills (stranger danger), language and literacy, science and multicultural activities— including languages other than English.

Children explore their own ideas, problem solve and experience social interaction in all size groups. The group operates an indoor / outdoor program where children have a choice of playing in or outdoors throughout the day. The children have long periods of uninterrupted time to explore the various activities, whilst having the formal learning sessions to give the children skills for these activities.

We provide above required staff child ratios so staff can spend lots of time interacting and working with individual children as well as focusing on small groups rather than all the children as a whole.

Our school holiday program compliments and extends the children’s learning environment by providing special days to relax and unwind. This program includes some incursions and excursions, cultural days, dressing up, special person’s day and visits from educational/important people from the community, i.e. guide dog association, vet and dental visits, musicians and the animal nursery.

The curriculum is based on the interests and experiences of the children, staff are sensitive to individual differences that are free from cultural and stereotypical biases. We also encourage family participation into the programming and in the care in which we provide for your children.

4 Year Old Kinder

The Early Years Learning Framework curriculum is provided for children attending school in the following year. The focus of the curriculum is to provide overall development of the children in order to prepare the children for school and everyday life.

Through a program which is based on stimulating play experiences, the children build and further develop valuable skills as well as learn new ideas and concepts. Problem solving, literacy, numeracy, creativity and social skills are fostered through these play experiences.

The program meets the needs of all children as the experiences are based both on the children’s interests and their development. The children work with the teachers in small groups as well as individually.

The sessions for 4 year old kindergarten are run four days in a week for eight hours duration:
Mon/Tues/Wed/Thurs: 9 am to 4.30pm

From Term 4, children going to school the following year have the opportunity to visit various Schools within the local community introducing them to all aspects of school life, e.g. outside
toilets, school assembly, different rooms for different activities, use of library, art room, and classroom, and eating of lunches. They are accompanied by the pre-school teacher and a staff member.

**Kinder Funding Reminder**
Children are only able to access one funded 4 year old kindergarten program. If children are enrolled at this centre they cannot access another kinder.

**3 Year old Kinder**

The Kindergarten program aims to provide the children rich learning experiences through a structured setting to prepare them for a 4 year old kinder. We are offering extended hours which will provide the children opportunity of longer periods of teaching times and free exploration. As we are focusing on learning through play, it helps children to develop structured imaginative play, social skills, scaffold each other’s play to learn how things work, recognize other people’s ideas and suggestions along with language and learning dispositions to develop confident competent learners.

The sessions for 3 year old kindergarten are (Fridays only)
Friday: 9 am to 4.30pm

**Primary Caregiving**

Primary caregiving provides children, families and educators time for purposeful communication and meaningful relationships to develop, forming the basis for trusting and secure attachments.

Primary caregiving ensures that each child is linked to one educator who assumes major responsibility for their care. Primary caregiving is offered to children under 3 years of age however we do continue with this practice with the children from the toddlers room who orientate to the 3-5 room at the beginning of the year and we do this for a period of six months. This is to ensure that children feel belonged and supported as they transition to another room

**The Key Roles:**

**Room Cordinator**

Room Coordinators are highly skill educators, who are flexible, decisive, innovative and are responsive to the change process. Room Coordinators are responsible to manage the day to day operation of the designated room; this entails, effective supervision of all children and educators, management and implementation of the children’s programs, meeting the needs of all families and children. Possessing the skills to effectively lead their team throughout the day.

**Primary Caregiver/Educator**

Communicate

*Share information about children with their parents and other staff within the room.*

A link in the communication chain between parents and program and children and program, ensure that children’s experience is communicated to parents – not just what you observe, but what others observed or enacted. We relay parents’ concerns and suggestions to other staff within your child’s room.

Advocate

*Speak to children and their parents.*
Empower parents and children by translating their individual concerns and needs into action through the efforts of all program staff. Ensure that the program wraps around children and their parents rather than insisting that children and parents fit the program.

**Nurture**

*Love and care for children.*

Tune in to children and develop a special bond that ensures that all their needs are met. You ensure thatprime times are provided in ways that empower children and establish a sense of security and basic trust, while promoting independence and secondary attachments.

**Facilitate learning**

*Help children learn.*

Care for children in ways that maximize their language experiences and learning potential. Ensure that the learning environment works for each child, providing a balance of developmentally appropriate experiences and neither too much nor too little stimulation.

**Observe, monitor, and reflect.**

*Ensure that children and their parents have positive experiences.*

Ensure that children’s experiences in the program are positive and that parents’ concerns are addressed by continual assessment through observation, discussions with other staff, talks with parents, and assessments of the actual experiences of children and their families. The Centre aims to provide 70% of daily activities to be conducive of Primary Care.

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**NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK**

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education and care, and outside school hours care services in Australia.

As the NQF progress, every service in the country is be assessed to make sure it meets the new quality standard. Safety is paramount all day and every day, every service must comply with rigorous health and safety requirements. The NQS will also support the implementation of the EYLF by ensuring that the necessary environments, facilities, staffing arrangements, resources and management structures are in place. To ensure children enjoy the best possible conditions in their early educational and developmental years, the NQS promotes continuous improvement in quality.

The major benefits for parents and children include:

- improved educator to child ratios
- greater individual care and attention for children
- educators with increased skills and qualifications
- better support for children’s learning and development
- a national register to help parents assess the quality of education and care services in their area.

A child’s learning and development is holistic, advancing simultaneously in the areas of health, cognition, personal and social development and wellbeing. Their learning and development is advanced when they are provided with opportunities, support and engagement within their families and in partnership with our educators. By acknowledging each child’s identity, culture and spirituality, and responding sensitivity to their emotional states, our staff build children’s confidence, sense of wellbeing and safety and willingness to engage in learning.

The Victorian Framework identifies five Outcomes for all children from birth to eight years:

- Children have strong sense of identity (identity)
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world (community)
- Children have strong sense of wellbeing (wellbeing)
- Children are confident and involved learners (learning)
- Children are effective communicators (communication)

The framework is used by early childhood professionals to design experiences and opportunities for advancing children’s development and assessing children’s progress towards these outcomes.


**ORIENTATION PROCESS**

The orientation process is compulsory before starting care. The Centre offers an extensive orientation process to all families, whereby your child is introduced into day care slowly through regular visits with you prior to their commencement day at the Centre. This process is actively encouraged. We organise for you and your child to orientate initially for ½ - 1 hour to enable you to meet and talk to staff regarding your child’s needs. These times gradually increase depending on how your child settles. We require families to orientate their child for at least one week before start date. Staff will guide you through this process. We strive to ensure that this is a positive experience for your child. Please see the Director to arrange suitable times for orientation. Please consult with the person in charge of the room who will tailor this period to suit both you and your child. The orientation period is not charged as fees.

**OPERATION OF THE CENTRE**

The approved provider of Geelong Children’s Centre (Geelong and District Day Nursery Inc.) is the Board of Management.

The Director is: Jane Rathjen (Nominated Supervisor)

The Deputy Director is Payal Mahajan. (Certified Supervisor)

The Educational Leader is: Catherine Robinson (Certified Supervisor)

The Centre operates **50 weeks of the year**.
Open **Monday to Friday**, excluding Public Holidays
Between **7:00 am and 6:00 pm**
Christmas and New Year Closure
The Centre will close from 6:00 pm on Thursday, 21st December, 2017, and will re-open at 7:00 am on Tuesday, 2nd January 2018

Parent Contact Details
Please ensure that your mobile phone is turned on whilst your child is in care. We must be able to contact parents in case of an emergency or illness.

If an emergency arises and you are unable to collect your child, it is your responsibility to contact the Centre and advice of the arrangements made for the collection of your child. No child attending the Centre is given into the care of any person other than the parent or guardian of the child, except where authorisation has been given by the parent or guardian, either personally or by phone. (Education & Care Services National Regulations 2014).

Parents should immediately notify the Administration staff of any changes in their address, home or work phone numbers, and emergency contact numbers.

Security
You will be given the “pin” number to enable you to enter the Centre. If you forget it, please press the intercom button on the security pad.

Attendance at the Centre

Selling Days
We may be able to sell your child’s day of care if they will not be attending on a certain day. To do this, either contact the Centre early in the morning of the day of care, or you can also speak to the Administrative staff and complete a form advising which days your child will not be attending. Any fee adjustments will be made in the next billing period through the Ezidebit system.

If you have booked extra days on a casual basis you are obligated to pay for these days unless you give 24 hour’s notice to cancel. The reason for this is we do at times have a high demand for care and other people miss out because of lack of notice.

Care for Children about to commence prep
When places are available in January, the Centre will offer care for children who attended the kinder or 3-5 room the previous year. Contact the Director for further information.

Arriving late for care
Please advise us by 10:00 am if your child will not be arriving at the Centre until later in the morning and you require their lunch to be saved.

Withdrawing your child or changing days
If you wish to withdraw or change your child’s booked days from the Centre, two weeks’ notice must be given to the Director.

Failure to do this will result in fees for those weeks being charged in lieu of notice.
Drop off and collection of your child

Parents are required to sign in and record the arrival time and expected collection time of their child on the attendance sheet in the child’s room. On collection of your child you will be informed about your child’s day, and you are required to sign your child out.

Parents are to deliver and collect their children as agreed to under Authority to Collect/Emergency contacts, as stipulated on the enrolment form. If you are running late to collect your child on a particular occasion, please phone the Centre and let the staff know. Any overtime incurred as a result of late collection of children (i.e. after the Centre closes at 6.00 p.m. sharp), will be charged and invoiced to parents at time and a half for two employees. Regulations stipulate that there be two staff on duty at all times.

Please do not allow your children to run in the corridors. Children must remain with the parent whilst departing the Centre and are not permitted to press the green exit button.

Changes to days or times of care

If parents wish to change their hours or require extra days of care from those stated on the enrolment form, please contact the Director or the Deputy Director.

Parents are not able to change or directly sell their days of care to other parents. All changes must be discussed with the Director or Deputy Director.

Staff cannot make arrangements for extra days

COMMONWEALTH PRIORITY OF ACCESS GUIDELINES

The Federal Government has determined guidelines for allocating places to those families with the greatest need for childcare support.

These guidelines are strictly adhered to by the Management of the Centre.

First Priority
Children at serious risk of abuse or neglect.

Second Priority
A child/children of parent/s who satisfy, the WORK / TRAINING / STUDY test (under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act).

Third Priority
Any other child.

Please Note
If you are a non-working/studying parent you may be restricted to one day of care per week. Should a working parent require your allocated day of care, every effort will be made to offer you an alternative day. If this is not available, you will be given 2 weeks written notice to withdraw your child to make way for a higher priority child.
ENROLMENT INFORMATION

Each year, your enrolment at the Centre applies from the first day the Centre is open in January, to the final day the Centre is open in December. Fees are applicable for this period in order for you to retain your place at the Centre. Clients are required to re-enrol each year.

**Current Clients:**

- The Centre will take enrolments for current clients for 2018 on 16th and 17th October 2017
- Parents can access the enrolment form from our website [www.geelongchildrenscentre.com.au](http://www.geelongchildrenscentre.com.au). A duly completed Enrolment form including the immunisation details will only be accepted. Immunisation History Statement needs to be brought in along with the enrolment form to be sighted by administration staff in the office hours between 7am to 3.30pm on the above dates.
- Management will allocate your 2017 booked days for 2018.
- Current clients will be notified of their booked days after enrolment process in the middle week of November 2017. If your booked days for 2017-2018 are unavailable due to Centre space restrictions, these days will be put on the priority wait list.
- If you require extra/different days these will be allocated after your current days are allocated.
- If your requested day/days are not available, you will be placed on the wait list.
- All current clients will receive priority over new clients however we cannot guarantee that siblings will be offered a place this will depend upon days available.
- If current clients do not return their enrolment forms by 3.30pm on the 17th October 2017 they will not get preference over the families who have requested additional days.

**New Clients:**

- The Centre will take enrolments for 2018 for new clients on Monday, 23rd October 2017 commencing at 7:00am.
- New clients will be notified in writing of their requested days for 2018 by the middle week in November 2017.
- If you are not successful in obtaining your days you will be placed on the wait list.
- All new clients will go on a wait list based on the Commonwealth priority of access guidelines; each family will be allocated a number on arrival on the enrolment day.
- You will be offered positions as a vacancy occurs.
This Centre is registered under the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010 and Education and Care Services National Regulation 2014. The Centre is registered for 120 children, 48 children under 3 years of age, 44 children over 3 years of age and 28 children in 4 year old kindergarten.

The operation of this Centre is administered by a voluntary Board of Management to whom the Director is responsible. The names of the Board of Management, including parent representatives, are placed on the notice board in the Centre’s entrance.

The staffing and management policies folder is available on request. The Parent Handbook is placed in the foyer, as are the menus, immunisation and structure of service. Children’s programs are also displayed in each room. **We encourage parents to read the information that is displayed, particularly notices on the whiteboard, the front doors of the Centre, and within your child’s room so that you are aware of what is happening in and around the Centre.** Parents will also receive newsletters each month throughout the year bringing them up to date with relevant information. All parents will be invited to information and evaluation meetings at appropriate times during the year in addition to social and informal gatherings.

**Staffing Ratio**

Management ensures that all children in the Centre have regulated staff coverage at all times. There are qualified staff on duty at all times the Centre is in operation with all staff holding current first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis qualifications. This Centre employs staff **above** the minimum requirement.

The Centre has a staff of 49, consisting of the Director, Deputy Director, 1 Educational Leader, 22 Diploma Qualified staff, 20 Early Childhood Educators and 2 Kindergarten Teachers. Other staff includes 2 administration, a cook and kitchen hand. A commercial cleaner, maintenance person and gardener are employed on a part-time or needs basis. The Centre employs permanent relief staff and Inclusion Support Facilitators are employed for special needs children. The centre does not employ casual staff.

The staff coverage for each group is as follows:

- **Babies’ Room:** 2 diploma qualified staff member and 4 educators for up to 16 babies aged 6 weeks to 18-19 months.
- **Toddlers’ Room:** 3 diploma qualified staff members and 6 educators for up to 32 children aged 18-19 months to 3 yrs.
- **3-5 Room:** 3 diploma qualified staff members and 4 educators for up to 35 children.
- **3 year old Kinder:** 1 qualified Kindergarten Teacher and 1 diploma qualified, there may be 2 assistants if required for 28 children.
- **4 year old Kinder:** 1 qualified Kindergarten Teacher and 1 diploma qualified, there may be 2 assistants if required for 28 children.
FEE STRUCTURE FOR 2018

Daily/Weekly fees are charged for 50 weeks of the year, including public holidays.

You are required to pay fees for all days you enrol your children in, even if your child is absent due to illness, holidays or any other days off.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Fees</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>To be notified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Fees</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Morning - 7:00 am – 12:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon - 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half Day Fee</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>Morning - 7:00 am – 12:00 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Afternoon - 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The Board of Management reserves the right to alter fees during the year. You will be given adequate warning in writing of any fee changes.

WHEN YOU SHOULD PAY YOUR FEES

Fees will be directly debited from your nominated account fortnightly in advance through Ezidebit. You are required to complete an Ezidebit Direct Debit Request form with your enrolment form.

Statements will be sent electronically.

Please read carefully the Ezidebit service agreement and the frequently asked questions to ensure you understand your commitment.

Clients who default on a payment will incur an administrative fee of $11.90 with Ezidebit.

Please contact the Director immediately if you know in advance that you will be unable to meet your direct debit requirements to enable discussion to take place.

If fees continue to be unpaid for two weeks, and you have not contacted the Director, your child’s position at the Centre will be cancelled. Any clients with concerns with this arrangement must put these concerns in writing to the Committee of Management.

Ezidebit Fees

There is a once off set up fee for this service which parents are to meet the cost of which is $2.20. Ongoing fees for this service which parents will also meet the cost of are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Transaction</th>
<th>Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank Account</td>
<td>0.88c per transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visa/Mastercard</td>
<td>1.87% of transaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMEX/Diners</td>
<td>4.4% of transaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COMMONWEALTH CHILDCARE BENEFIT

The Child Care Rebate assists parents or guardians who are working, studying or training with their out of pocket child care costs. To receive the Child Care Rebate you must claim Child Care Benefit.

If you are using approved child care for work, training or study-related reasons the Government will provide you with 50 percent of your out-of-pocket child care costs, up to the annual cap. From 1 July 2015, the Child Care Rebate annual cap will be $7500 per child per year, subject to the passage of legislation. This may change due to change in governments.
How is the Child Care Rebate paid?

There are four ways to receive your Child Care Rebate:

- Direct to your approved child care service paid fortnightly
- Direct to your bank account paid fortnightly
- Quarterly payment to your bank account
- Annual payment to your bank account

When you choose a payment option, this option will be applied for the entire 2015-2016 financial year.

Registered Childcare and Ceiling on hours

It is the parents responsibility to notify the Director or Administration Staff if they have other children who receive approved and registered care elsewhere, or children who are enrolled with approved and registered providers of Before and After School and Vacation care.

The ceiling on the number of hours you can claim for Childcare Benefit is 50 hours per week (which equates to full time care). The Centre may allow 1 day of care for non-working/studying parents but this is only if there is a vacancy under the Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines.

Childcare Benefit for Absences from Childcare

If your child is away on holidays or sick for any length of time, every effort will be made to sell your days to other clients requiring extra days of care. This facility is offered subject to your child’s room being at full capacity at the time. Please always advise the Director or the Administration Staff when your child will be away from care.

Holidays / Days Off / Sickness

Childcare Benefit is paid for a child's absences from care up to 42 days per year commencing every financial year. These absence days may be taken for any reason, and do not require supporting documentation, e.g. medical certificate. Public Holidays are counted as an absence day, and therefore are included in the 42 days. Childcare Benefit is not available if you exceed 42 absent days and, therefore, full fees are charged to parents for any absent days over the 42 day limit. Once the 42 day absence limit is reached, documentation is required for childcare benefit to be paid on any absences.

COMMUNICATION

The Board of Management and staff welcome your opinions and views on any aspect pertaining to your child's care at this Centre. Parents are encouraged to become actively involved in, and contribute to the children's programs, centre policies and procedures. If you have any special skills, (diverse or cultural), that would benefit the children and programs, please talk to the staff members in your child's room.

Parents have access to the Centre at any time during the hours of operation, either in person or by telephone. Parents are welcome to have discussions with the staff throughout the day. If you, require a more detailed discussion or meeting with any of the qualified teachers, please contact the Director so appropriate staffing arrangements can be organised. Daily exchange of information about your child's day will be communicated upon collection of your child. It is strongly encouraged that parents share with staff any relevant details regarding their child’s health and well being on arrival in the room, or any aspects of their child’s life which could be included in the program.

Communication is an essential tool that is practised by all staff valuing the different backgrounds,
attitudes and beliefs from:

• staff with children; staff with staff;
• staff with parents, parents with staff;
• whenever parents request a discussion/meeting; staff and parents with management;
• staff with community agencies and parents;
• newsletters, emails, flyers, whiteboards, notices on benches and doors, posters, leaflets, books, parent contribution books, suggestion boxes.

If staff have any concerns about any developmental issues with the child in their room they will first talk to the parent. If referral is needed to an outside agency, requests are made on official forms, by letter or by telephone. Parents’ permission is always sought and parents can avail themselves of this service. Referrals can be made to specific external services as required.

Our Centre provides opportunities to communicate with all families including families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and/or low literacy levels, with bi-lingual support where required and any appropriate agency support deemed necessary.

Babies Room: babies@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au
Toddler’s Room: toddlers@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au
3/5 Room: 35room@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au
Kindergarten: kinder@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au

Please feel free to contact any of your room staff on the above e-mail address

COMPLAINTS

If parents have any concerns at all regarding their child’s care, please see the Director immediately. We strive at all times to offer the highest quality of care and welcome suggestions and feedback to continuously improve our policies, procedures and Centre practices and to accommodate your needs. Please do not “sit” on the complaint as it only becomes worse.

1. If a parent has a complaint relating to the children’s service, they must approach the Director who will respond and deal with the complaint as promptly and discreetly as practicable.

2. If the complaint cannot be resolved by the Director, the complainant should put the complaint in writing to the Board of Management. Further action would take place a soon as practicable after the complaint is made. A member of the Board would contact the parent and discussion would take place with a representative of the Board of Management, the Director and the parent concerned, or in such other way which satisfactorily deals with the complaint.

3. If the parent still feels that the complaint has not been handled adequately and there is no resolution, the parent would be directed to South Western Victorian Region Quality Assessment & Regulation Division Geelong Office- Barwon South West Area Team 5a Little Ryrie Street, Geelong Postal – PO Box 2086 Geelong VIC 3220 Phone:5225100 Email:bsw.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au

4. Should the complaint allege that the health, safety and wellbeing of any child attending the Centre has been compromised, or that there may have been a contravention of the Children’s
Services Regulations, the Director will notify the South Western Victorian Region Quality Assessment & Regulation Division Geelong Office - within 48 hours of the complaint being made.

5. If staff have a complaint related to the breaking of regulations, they may make contact with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

6. The Centre also operates a Fair Hearing Committee.

Parents if they wish to, can use the suggestion and feedback book which is located in each room or email the Centre.

**WHAT YOU SHOULD BRING FOR THE DAY AT CARE**

**Where can I park?**

The driveway of the Centre is an emergency entrance and exit. We request that parents do not park in the driveway or in front of the driveway on any occasion. Short-term parking is available on either side of Lomond Terrace ensuring you are at least 1 metre from any driveway.

**What do I need to bring?**

The Centre supplies nappies, feeders, washers, sheets, blankets. Children who are not toilet trained are requested to come into the Centre in a disposable nappy. A disposable nappy should be supplied for going home.

We also provide sensitive/low allergy sun screen. This Centre is a registered Sunsmart Centre. You may supply your own sunscreen if your child has an allergy.

Your child will be provided with a named locker for their belongings. All clothing and bags must be named. Staff will endeavour to look after clothing but will not take any responsibility for lost items if they are not named.

Parents need to supply the following items which must remain at the Centre at all times:

- a named hairbrush;
- a named legionnaire or wide brimmed hat for summer months;
- a named coat and beanie for winter months.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Babies</th>
<th>2 changes of clothes, disposable nappy for going home. Formula and bottles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Toddlers</td>
<td>If toilet training, several complete changes of clothing and shoes. Disposable nappy for going home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Schoolers</td>
<td>Spare set of clothes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following articles of clothing are not appropriate:

- "Singlet" T-shirts or “singlet” type dresses due to increased risk of sunburn.
- Open toed sandals, slip-ons or thongs are not permitted for safety reasons, please ensure children wear appropriate footwear (closed toed shoes).

**Can my child bring toys to the Centre?**

The Centre has a large and varied array of both educational and fun toys. Therefore, we only allow children to bring in one soft toy, a book or comforter for rest time.

Parents are requested to not allow their children to bring any other toys into the centre other than on special toy days/school holiday requests. Staff will not be responsible for children’s toys, jewellery etc. that is misplaced, broken or lost.

War toys are not to be brought into the Centre at any time, e.g. pistols, guns, swords, knives, bows and arrows.
CENTRE POLICIES

HYGIENE CONTROL

Staff and all children need to wash their hands on arrival after signing in. All rooms and bathrooms are thoroughly cleaned throughout the day and at the end of each day. Staff and children practise frequent hand washing throughout the day and staff also uses gloves where necessary.

Immunisation

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, before enrolling you child you must first obtain evidence that the child is: • fully immunised for their age OR • on a vaccination catch-up program OR • unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons.

Illness

Children with obvious infectious illness are to be excluded from the Centre immediately. If a child becomes ill, the parent is immediately notified by staff with authorisation from the person in charge. Appropriate treatment as deemed necessary will be given to the child in consultation with the Director.

The Director/ Nominated Supervisor or person in charge is the only authorised bodies who can make the decision that a sick child should be removed from the Centre. Children may return to the Centre if medically directed, or at the approval of the person in charge.

It is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and illnesses within Centres. However, some illness from infectious disease can be prevented. The primary responsibility of staff in this Centre is to maintain the health and wellbeing of all children. Staff are to be alert and aware of common signs of illness, monitor children closely and consult with other staff and the family.

Staff will complete an Illness Incident Form recording the signs of illness and action taken. The parent must read and sign this form on collection of their child.

There will be times throughout the year when your child becomes ill. If your child is obviously ill they should not come into day care. We expect parents to be honest with staff in letting staff know if their child has been awake for most of the night, has had a temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea. If your child is unwell with high temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea they are not permitted to attend the service for 24 hours after the last temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea episode.

If your child has had three loose bowel movements, you will be asked to come and pick up your child immediately from care to stop the spread of infection. If your child has been prescribed Antibiotic your child will not be able to attend the Centre for 24 hours after the first initial dose. While in care if your child’s temperature reaches 40 degrees and if the parent is not contactable or is unable to reach the Centre in time, an ambulance will be called. If your child has a broken bone or fracture a medical clearance from a practitioner will be required before your child can return to the Centre. It is important that your child can participate in all aspects of the program when returning.

We acknowledge the pressures on parents who are unable to take time off work or have no extended family to help them look after their sick child, so we please ask you to have a “Back-up” person in case your child needs to leave the Centre due to illness. Although staff will make provisions for the comfort and care of the unwell child, the Centre does not have the extra staffing or facilities to care for sick children in the appropriate manner.

The following illnesses are a guide only. If you are in any doubt, please phone the (Director) Nominated Supervisor of the Centre on (03) 5229 1326, Fax (03) 5229 1424.
Not able to come
The illnesses below are highly infectious and will spread rapidly to other children. Children may not come to the Centre with the following illnesses.

- Vomiting (24 hours exclusion after the last one)
- Diarrhoea (24 hours exclusion after the last one)
- High Temperature (24 hours exclusion) 38 or higher
- Gastroenteritis (24 hours exclusion after the last one)
- Chicken Pox
- Giardiasis
- Conjunctivitis exclude 24 hour unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis with certificate
- Hand, Foot & Mouth exclude until all blisters have dried.
- Slap cheek syndrome

These are some examples of illness that require exclusion – from the service.

Able to come
Children with the following illnesses are able to come to the Centre on conditions. If the child is not able to participate in the program parents will be asked to pick up the child.

- Slight cold
- Green discharge from nose

Please see exclusion table on

Head Lice
If your child is found to have live head lice, you will be advised by telephone to come and pick up your child to enable treatment to commence as soon as possible. See head lice policy on Centre Policy document.

MEDICATION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development specifies that the following procedures be strictly observed.

- Pain relief medication e.g. panadol will not be kept at Centre.
- No medication is administered unless the parent or lawful guardian has given the Centre written permission to dispense the medication by filling out the medication sheet.
- All medications must be kept in the original container within date and bearing the child’s name.
- Verbal authorised by the parent to the person in charge for the medication to be administered may be given in an emergency with written authorisation as soon as possible.

Please note
- Medicine which is out of date will not be administered
- Medications will not be administered to the child if the medication has another name on the medication.
- Sibling’s medication cannot be administered to another sibling unless their name is clearly written on the medication box.
ADDITIONAL MEDICAL NEEDS POLICY

Any child that has any additional medical needs, e.g. Diabetes, Asthma, Anaphylaxis or Allergies must provide the following:

- An individual Health Management Plan prepared by the child’s doctor or specialist outlining the child’s condition, the signs and symptoms, and when and how medication is to be administered. The Health Management Plan is to be signed by both the parent and doctor, and any ongoing changes must be updated immediately.

All staff will be made aware of the child’s medical needs and the plan of action to be implemented. All staff observes and responds to signs of illness/need for medication in consultation with the person in charge.

Your mobile telephone should be turned on at all times to enable contact to be made with you.

Staff will administer medication supplied by the parent, as and when necessary, according to the individual Management Plan. If a child’s condition deteriorates, the Director or person in-charge of the Centre will first call an ambulance and then contact the parents, if parents are not contactable the emergency contacts will be informed.

All children who require special medication will be unable to attend care if their prescribed medication as stated in their medical management plan is not brought into the Centre.

MEDICAL CONDITIONS POLICY RISK MINIMISATION PLAN

Using a child’s Medical Management Plan, the service will develop a Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation Plan in consultation with a child’s parents. The Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation Plan must ensure that any risks are addressed and minimised. The Plan must be developed by the service with the child’s parents or on the advice of the medical professionals. To promote consistency and ensure the welfare of all children using the service, we will follow all health, hygiene and safe food policies and procedures.

Any allergens that may be present at the service will be communicated to parents and addressed through the Medical Conditions Risk Minimisation Plan.

Centre will develop an ongoing communication plan with the child’s parents and with educators at the service to ensure that all relevant parties are updated with the changes on the plan. Parents must inform the service in regards to the changes to the child’s medical conditions or dietary requirements to make the changes in the Risk Minimisation Plan. Parents are required to sign on the communication plan if there is any change to the Risk Minimisation Plan. Parents are given a copy of Medical Conditions Policy.

All staff members are informed of the service’s medical management policy and new staff are handed the policy during induction along with other policies. All staff in the Centre are made aware of the communication plans, individual management plans and risk minimisation plans for each child.
ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY

All staff have had training in the Management of Anaphylaxis

Values
This children’s service believes that the safety and wellbeing of children who are at risk of anaphylaxis is a whole-of-community responsibility. The service is committed to:

- providing, as far as practicable, a safe and healthy environment in which children at risk of anaphylaxis can participate equally in all aspects of the children’s program and experiences.
- raising awareness about allergies and anaphylaxis amongst the service community and children in attendance.
- actively involving the parents/guardians of each child at risk of anaphylaxis in assessing risks, developing risk minimisation strategies and management strategies for their child.
- ensuring each staff member and other relevant adults have adequate knowledge of allergies, anaphylaxis and emergency procedures.
- facilitating communication to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children at risk of anaphylaxis.

Purpose
The aim of this policy is to:

- minimise the risk of an anaphylactic reaction occurring while the child is in the care of the children’s service.
- ensure that staff members respond appropriately to an anaphylactic reaction by initiating appropriate treatment, including competently administering an EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors).
- raise the service community’s awareness of anaphylaxis and its management through education and policy implementation.

Scope
This policy applies when a child diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis by a qualified medical practitioner is enrolled at the children’s service. It applies to children enrolled at the service, their parents/guardians, staff and licensee. It also applies to other relevant members of the service community, such as volunteers and visiting specialists.

Staff responsible for the child at risk of anaphylaxis shall:

- ensure a copy of the child’s anaphylaxis action plan is visible to all staff.
- follow the child’s anaphylaxis action plan in the event of an allergic reaction, which may progress to anaphylaxis.
- In the situation where a child who has not been diagnosed as allergic, but who appears to be having an anaphylactic reaction:
  - Call an ambulance immediately by dialling 000.
  - Commence first aid measures.
  - Contact the parent/guardian.
  - Contact the person to be notified in the event of illness if the parent/guardian cannot be contacted.
• practise EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors) administration procedures using an EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors) trainer and “anaphylaxis scenarios” on a regular basis, preferably quarterly.

• ask all parents/guardians as part of the enrolment procedure, prior to their child’s attendance at the service, whether the child has allergies and document this information on the child’s enrolment record. If the child has allergies, ask the parents/guardians to provide a medical management plan signed by a Doctor.

• ensure that parents/guardians provide an anaphylaxis action plan signed by the child’s Doctor and a complete EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors) kit while the child is present at the service.

• ensure that the EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors) kit is stored in a location that is known to all staff, including relief staff; easily accessible to adults (not locked away); inaccessible to children; and away from direct sources of heat.

• ensure that the EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors) kit for each child at risk of anaphylaxis is carried by a trained adult on excursions that this child attends.

• regularly check the EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors) expiry date. (The manufacturer will only guarantee the effectiveness of the EpiPen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors) to the end of the nominated expiry month.)

• provide information to the service community about resources and support for managing allergies and anaphylaxis.

ACCIDENTS/INJURY/TRAUMA POLICY AND PROCEDURE

In the event of any accident, your child will be comforted and appropriate first aid action taken. The parent will be notified. The qualified staff member in charge is notified immediately and the accident is recorded on the Accident Record Sheet. Parents will be notified of the accident immediately. The parent is requested to read and sign the incident report upon arrival at the Centre. Any incident which requires medical intervention or hospitalisation will be reported to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

If the accident is considered serious or is a potential life threatening incident an ambulance will be called immediately and then the parent or the person on the emergency contact will be notified by the Director or staff member.

BLOOD SPILLS POLICY

In the event of a blood spill, staff will follow specific procedures for the protection and the prevention of contamination/infection of both children and staff.

Staff wear gloves at all times when dealing with bodily fluids such as blood. Pressure is applied to the bleeding area with disposable towelling. Hands are thoroughly washed after this procedure. If there is blood on clothing or bedding it is immediately removed and thoroughly washed. Each room has been provided with a Blood Spill Kit.
INCLUSION POLICY

The Centre is committed to ensuring an inclusive environment that is accepting and accommodating of different, backgrounds and abilities, and embraces individuality.

Educators aim to ensure an environment that welcomes children and parents regardless of race, religion, ability, culture or additional needs. We aim for a sense of belonging, participation between all members of the group, and offer a balance across all areas of child development, learning and experiences, avoiding bias and reflecting cultural diversity.

Educators promote on-going discussions of the child’s needs with all those concerned and may work in consultation with a broad range of support agencies. Educators work as a team involving the child’s parents in all areas of communication, programming and Centre activities.

Educators share the vision of providing high quality care in a secure, responsive and enjoyable environment. Educators aim to recognise, appreciate and respect children for their individual needs, interests, strengths and abilities they bring to the dynamics of group care. Educators aim to provide integrating experiences for all children involved in our Centre programs.

Code of conduct

The Geelong Children’s Centre is committed to the safety participation, wellbeing and empowerment of all children accessing our service. All staff, volunteers and board members of Geelong Children’s Centre will observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children. We support the right of the child and will act without hesitation to ensure a child-safe environment is maintained at all times.

We also support the right and wellbeing of our staff, students and volunteers and encourage their active participation in building and maintaining a secure environment for all participants.

The Geelong Children’s Centre is a Child Safe organisation that adheres to child safe policy at all times:

* welcomes and respects children, their parents and caregivers;
* taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse;
* respects staff, students and volunteers by providing support, training and guidelines to do their jobs well;
* identifies potential risk to children and works continuously to prevent and reduce them;
* encourages parental participation;
* values children by asking their ideas, views and also listens to them, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another;
* promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child’s self-identification);
* promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds (for example, by having a zero tolerance of discrimination);
* promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities);
* ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child;
* reporting any allegations of child abuse to Geelong Children’s Centre’s Child Safety Officer Jane Rathjen and ensure any allegation is reported to the police or child protection;
* reporting any child safety concerns to Geelong Children’s Centre’s Child Safety Officer Jane Rathjen; and
if an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child(ren) are safe

Staff will:
conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their position as a positive role model to children, and as a representative of the Geelong Children’s Centre;
follow centre policy guidelines around the safety of children as outlined in the Child Safe Policy;
believe and practice respect for children and their families;
raise all concerns, issues, problems with the Child Safety Officer Jane Rathjen as soon as possible;
make sure all allegations or suspicions of abuse are recorded and acted upon;
engage children in safe appropriate play;
show warmth towards children in their daily interaction, displaying cultural sensitivity;
spend time with all children equally;
accept all children as individuals;
practice primary care giving and work towards practicing relationships with all children;
celebrate special events through activities and song;
not take children at any time from the Centre unless permission has been sought from individual parents for their child to attend an excursion or to pick up after work;
not develop any ‘special’ relationships with children that could be seen as favouritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children);

not exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometime, for example while reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area);

not put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors);
do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes;

not engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities);
use appropriate language in the presence of children;
not express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children;
not discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability; and
not have any online contact with a child or their family (unless necessary, for example providing families with e-newsletters).

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

By observing these standards you acknowledge your responsibility to immediately report any breach of this code to Geelong Children’s Centre Child Safety Officer Jane Rathjen.
Positive guidance is used when directing children’s behaviour by offering children choices of activities, re-directing children to other activities or experiences, and suggests alternative outlets for children to undertake and express their feelings in more appropriate and acceptable ways. Staff encourages all children to acknowledge and talk about their feelings rather than use destructive physical action or negative behaviour. Educators support and assist children in resolving conflicts and acknowledge their efforts in doing so. Educators support one another by developing strategies to prevent further negative behaviour. Educators maintain eye contact remaining at the children’s level whilst talking to them in a calm and appropriate tone of voice. Staff are empathetic in their approach to behavioural issues and change their manner according to the situation.

Children are respected as individuals and are not subjected to any form of punishment. Children are not isolated as a result of inappropriate behaviour.

Implementation:
All educators are committed to a positive, encouraging approach to behaviour guidance which:

- differentiates the child from the behaviour, (use “I” messages);
- supports parents/guardians and educators working together on matters of concern.
- deals with inappropriate and challenging behaviour;
- recognises the developmental influences on behaviour at different ages;
- avoids giving children attention only when they are behaving inappropriately.

Procedures for behaviour guidance:
For all children in their care:

- educators have appropriate developmental expectations;
- are sensitive to the child and take into account background factors, including health, family circumstances and culture;
- educators avoid humiliating, embarrassing or frightening the child and focus on the behaviour not the child;
- educators provide the child with positive experiences and encouragement so that they develop their self esteem.

In setting up the environment, educators:

- allow children to make choices where appropriate and accept their decisions;
- avoid setting up the environment in ways that encourage inappropriate behaviour;
- are alert to potential problems and step in before negative behaviour occurs;
- encourage children to develop conflict resolution skills with the guidance of educators.

In setting limits for children, educators:

- ensure room limits are appropriate;
- explain the limits clearly;
- make sure all educators consistently set the same limits/consequences;
- guide the child through actions and words.

As responsible educators:

- be consistent and show no favouritism or bias;
- model appropriate behaviour;
- make sure of the facts before taking action;
- respond to difficult situations calmly and rationally;
- ask someone else to step in when they feel they need assistance;
- consult with other educators and the Director if there are ongoing, challenging behaviour
problems;
• inform parents of situation and discuss behaviour guidance techniques used.

Procedure for dealing with ongoing unacceptable, challenging behaviour:
• All incidents of inappropriate behaviour are recorded.
• Management strategies are discussed with parents/guardians.
• If the inappropriate behaviour continues, further professional support agencies may be sourced for educators, parents and the child. (Strictly confidential).
• The Director is kept informed.
• A meeting with parents, educators and the Director will be arranged to discuss the outcomes, advice and strategies provided by the external source. An agreed timeline for an improvement in the child’s behaviour is set in place.
• A follow-up meeting will be organised to review the child’s progress and improvement.
• If the unacceptable behaviour continues & all strategies & forms of action have proved unsuccessful, the Centre is obliged to balance its commitment to the child exhibiting the behaviour with its duty of care to all other children. The parents will be requested to make alternative care arrangements

DENTAL CARE POLICY

Staff promote and provide dental health education for children by increasing their awareness, appreciation and knowledge of their mouth and healthy teeth, and encourage the importance of regular brushing of teeth and healthy food choices. Fruit is provided after every meal to clean their teeth.

NUTRITION POLICY

The Centre actively encourages good eating habits from babyhood and develops in children positive attitudes towards eating.
The Centre aims to meet 50% of your child’s daily food requirements as recommended by Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013. Sample of Australian dietary guidelines for food provided is as follows: For more information go to http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n30.pdf http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/_files_nhmrc/publications/attachments/n55f_children_brochure.pdf

Menus are planned with the dietary guidelines for children and adolescents in Australia NHMRC 2013. Foods that are high in fat, salt and sugar are not included in menu planning. The menu ensures that there is a variety of food every day with a range of tastes, textures, aromas and flavours.

Staff sits down with children and offer a calm, relaxed, happy, social atmosphere in which children eat. Foods from all major food groups, as well as milk, are offered each day. We offer a 4 week rotating menu with fruit and vegetables served at each meal. Morning, afternoon tea and snacks comprising various foods are offered each day. Milk and water are the only drinks offered to children. Menus are displayed in the children’s rooms and the notice board in the foyer.

To encourage awareness of good eating habits, staff talk to children when at their table, use books, discussions and songs to reinforce the healthy eating message. Independence is encouraged at mealtimes with children self-feeding, using utensils, setting tables and clearing up. Food is not used as a reward or punishment; it is also not used as a comforter for unsettled children.

All children are encouraged to taste their food. If a child refuses to eat, fruit is offered – food will be
offered again at a later time. Special meals are provided if a child has a special dietary requirement. We will work in conjunction with parents and health professional in ensuring the child’s RDI whilst in care is met.

The Centre caters for children with food allergies, intolerances or any special dietary requirements. Any allergies or food intolerances are recorded in the child’s enrolment records, displayed in the kitchen and displayed in that child’s room. Staff and cook are also made aware if any child has a risk to any specified ingredient to which they may be allergic. The parent is to present to the Centre a detailed allergy medical plan or an emergency action plan including an Epipen® and Anapen (adrenaline auto-injectors).

In the event of the child having ingested an allergic food, the emergency action plan is implemented.

Further information on severe reaction to allergies can be obtained from:  

Policy on choking is documented in the policy folder situated at the entrance to the Centre and in the policy folder in all rooms.

The Centre provides storage for breast milk, and mothers are welcome to breast-feed. Breast milk is frozen if necessary, or refrigerated if it is to be used that day. Breast milk for feeding is reheated in a jug of boiling water, not in the microwave. The Centre will work with parents on the introduction of cows milk and cups for feeding your baby. As an addition to milk drinks, babies are offered cooled, boiled water as necessary, particularly on hot days.

The Centre provides some formulas for babies and makes up their daily bottles. Bottles are heated in the microwave and tested on staff’s inner arm’s skin for correct temperature.

The introduction of solids is undertaken in consultation with parents. Parents are encouraged to introduce solids when there is an increased appetite, able to hold their head up and begin to control their tongue to take food from a spoon. Introduction of solids is encouraged from approximately 6 months, but only after parent consultation. All foods introduced are done after parent consultation. The Centre provides for the children’s morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late snack. However, if children have any specific cultural/religious or dietary needs and wish to supply their own food, it must be labelled with the child’s name and automatically put in the refrigerator. No food is to be brought into the Centre at any time or kept in children’s bags unless arrangements have been made with the Director.

The Centre has emergency foods in stock in case of power / gas interruption, these being: sandwiches, vegemite, light cream cheese, baked beans, salad vegetables, cheese and fruit.

To assist parents with information on children’s diet the Centre displays posters, booklets etc. in the parent room and in the rooms throughout the year.

The Centre is registered with the City of Greater Geelong for purposes of food safety and food handling procedures in which staff are trained. The Centre’s food safety procedures are inspected and audited each year by outside organisation. We have four staff members who are trained as Food Safety Supervisors. All staff have informal training of food handling.

Articles and policy on nutrition will be displayed on notice boards and other various locations throughout the Centre by Centre staff.

Source: Australian Dietary Guidelines 2013  
PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

The development of the Parent Code of Conduct policy at the Geelong Children’s Centre is enabled (or governed) by the:

- Education & Care Services National Regulations 2014
- Education & Care Service National Law Act 2010
- Occupational Health & Safety Act 2004

Purpose

At a licensed Children’s Service which is also a workplace, legislation, regulations and Geelong Children’s Centre policies apply to, or have effect when parents and educators are involved with us.

These requirements include occupational health and safety; Children’s Services provisions and other child protection measures.

Scope

This policy applies to parents and educators when involved with Geelong Children’s Centre.

Policy Statement

Everyone is responsible for establishing and maintaining professional and appropriate roles, relationships and boundaries with children and other adults.

To protect everyone at Geelong Children’s Centre from misunderstandings or a violation of this professional relationship, parents and educators are expected to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with being a positive role model to children while displaying support for the program and centre staff.

Adults are responsible for their behavior. A breach of this policy may have serious consequences including for example, denial of service or mandatory report to the authorities.

Policy Expectations

To meet the expectations of this policy, parents and educators will:

- Treat all children and adults associated with our program with courtesy and respect.
- Accept cultural differences, differing needs and personal ability.
- Support a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment for all children, other parents, staff and volunteers.
- Encourage open communication and invite children and adults to participate in the decisions that affect them.
- Report any concerns or incidents of child abuse/harm whether intentional or not.
- Feel safe, be safe and reinforce safety.
- Report any injury or hazard in a building or playground that may cause an injury.
- Respect the property of the Centre and other people’s property, privacy and confidentiality.
- Come to our Centre fit and well and go home in the same condition. This includes being unaffected by drugs or alcohol.
- Understand that the curriculum is a play based
- Conduct yourself in a manner that is consistent with the above principles and values.

Responsibility

The Director is responsible for monitoring this policy and procedures
SEXUAL HARASSMENT POLICY

Geelong Children’s Centre Inc. considers that sexual harassment and bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour which will not be tolerated under any circumstances. We believe that our employees, including our independent contractors, have the right to work in an environment which is free from sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment is not only unacceptable, it is unlawful pursuant to State Legislation (Equal Opportunity Act, 1995) and the Commonwealth Sex Discrimination Act (1984).

PRIVACY POLICY

Introduction
When you enrol your child at Geelong Children’s Centre, we request you to complete the enrolment form which includes personal information and contact details.

Geelong Children’s Centre is committed to ensuring that the confidentiality of the information given to us is maintained at all times. Our privacy policy sets out this commitment to protect your personal information against misuse.

The Health Records Act states all personal and health records are required to be kept in accordance with the National Privacy Principles applicable to both the public and private sectors. The National Privacy Principles control the way in which Geelong Children’s Centre may collect, store and disclose your personal information.

Consent and Personal Information
Personal information is any information which may identify you or your dependents and may include your name, address, contact details, your child’s health details which may be relevant whilst they are in care, and other sensitive information.

Geelong Children’s Centre will only collect personal information from you or about you from third parties with your consent. We will only use your personal information for any approved purposes with your consent.

Collection and Storage of Personal Information
Geelong Children’s Centre collects your personal information to enable us to provide a high quality childcare service and to fulfil our legal obligations under the Children’s Services Regulations. All information relating to clients and staff is kept in secure, locked filing cabinets and all steps are taken to protect your personal information from misuse, loss and from unauthorised access or disclosure. Where personal information is no longer required, it is destroyed.

Requests to Access Personal Information
You have a right of access in full to your personal information. You may request details of the personal information we hold about you or your children by writing to the Director of the Centre. The Centre may take up to a maximum of 45 days to provide you with the personal information requested and, if necessary, to verify your right to receive this information.

You may view the information on the premises in the presence of the Director or another named member of staff, but the information may not be removed from the premises.
Protection of Children’s Privacy in all Rooms of the Centre

All rooms will operate to protect your child’s privacy in regards to their toileting, behaviour, accidents and medication.

Denial of Access

Geelong Children’s Centre may refuse access to personal information where:

- providing access would pose a serious threat to the life or health of any individual, or
- providing access would have an unreasonable impact on the privacy of other individuals.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The staff in the Centre has a duty to protect all documentation and information regarding children and parents from being discussed or disclosed to unauthorised persons. Breaches of any confidential nature may mean dismissal of that staff member.

CLOTHING POLICY

If possible please dress your children in suitable clothes to enable them to partake in all activities e.g. sand pit, water play and painting. Some activities result in clothing being stained. Children need to wear clothes that do not restrict their play e.g. long skirts or tight fitting pants restricts climbing and running.

The Centre requires all children and staff to wear hats on every day of the year that the Centre is open. Staff to consult with parents on the appropriate clothing to be worn in all types of weather conditions. The Centre has a large array of clothing in case of emergencies.

Staff will ensure that all children are comfortable at all times when in care at the Centre. We have available spare clothes, if children have toileting accidents or water accidents.

All children’s clothes must be named at all times.

The Centre provides written information to parents regarding the type of clothing that is suitable for children.

Clothing and dressing play a vital role in children’s learning and development. Clothing incorporates what children wear; clothes provided by the Centre and dress up clothes.

Staff discuss with children their interests in clothing, and staff model dress e.g. Wearing of hats, proper shoes.

Safe, comfortable footwear that fits well is essential. Shoes must provide support as well as protection for the feet and allow for participation in all the activities.

Staff provide a variation of suitable dress up clothes and consider health and safety issues when choosing dress up clothes.

Staff advise of children’s comfort as regards, under or over dressing in all weather conditions – appropriate fabrics are advised to families.

Staff show respect to children, by giving them opportunities to dress and undress themselves in
particular if they have specific clothing preferences. Staff use dressing as a learning experience for children by encouraging children to try dressing themselves and only help as necessary.

Staff are aware of differing issues with families re dressing as regards their culture or religion, or if a parent does not want their child to get dirty. Effective communication with families that is non-judgemental and conveys a sense of working together shows respect to families re each families differences.

This policy is maintained by staff observing and taking action on children’s clothing comfort.

Source: “Sun Smart” - Cancer Council

**Babies and Toddlers:**
Babies and Toddlers should be dressed appropriately to suit all weather conditions.

It is policy that any child under 3 is **not permitted** to wear the following

1. Singlet t-shirts
2. Singlet dresses
3. Jeans
4. Tight fitting short or long pants (with buttons)
5. Belted pants
6. No open toe shoes, sandals and thongs.

**3-5 aged children**

These children should **NOT** wear:

1. Tight jeans or belts
2. Singlet t-shirts
3. Singlet dresses
4. No open toe shoes, sandals and thongs

**EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

Evacuation procedures are followed by each room throughout the Centre. Fire drills are carried out every term in each room to ensure the service safety standards.

The Centre follows the Emergency Management Plan to provide a detailed plan of how the Centre will prepare and respond to emergency situations.

A copy of the Emergency Management Plan is available for parents and the Evacuation Procedure for each room is displayed in the rooms and on the notice board in the foyer.
1. Director of the centre on site takes charge and decides who does what
2. Call 000;
3. Inform Emergency Services of the nature of the emergency (i.e. “There is smoke in the building, internal fire, gas leak, chemical spill, bush fire, bomb threat, flood”);
4. Seek advice from Emergency and Security Management Unit (03) 9589 6266.
5. If the decision to evacuate is made, using all available staff/volunteers calmly move/carry/walk the children out of the building; to your pre-determined outdoor assembly area if this is the evacuation option;
6. Take the children’s attendance list, contact numbers, mobile phone, medications, staff roster and your Emergency Kit/First Aid kit;
7. Once at assembly area, check all children and staff are accounted for;
8. Call 000 and inform them of your location at the outdoor assembly area;
9. Focus on safety and well-being of staff and children;
10. Wait for Emergency Services to arrive or for further information