



GEELONG CHILDREN'S CENTRE

PARENT HANDBOOK

Thank you for choosing an Exceeding Centre that meets the National Quality Standards (NQS).

The NQS includes 7 quality areas that are important outcomes for children.

Educational program and practice

Children's health and safety

Physical environment

Staffing arrangements

Relationships with children

Collaborative partnerships with families and communities

Governance and leadership

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

Our 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.

INDEX

Centre Philosophy	5
Centre Values	5
A Child Safe organisation	6
How We Care for and Educate Your Child	7
Primary Caregiving	10
Key Roles of Room Coordinator / Caregiver/Educator	10
National Quality Framework	12
Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework	12
Orientation Procedure	12
Operation of the Centre	13
Commonwealth Priority of Access Guidelines	15
Kindergarten Priority of Access Guidelines	16
Admission and Enrolment Information	17
Governance and Management of the Centre	17
Fee Structure	24
When you should pay your fees	24
Childcare Subsidy (CCS)	25
Immunisation	25
Communication	26
Grievance and Complaints	27
The Centre Supplies	28
What do I need to bring?	28

SAMPLE CENTRE POLICIES

Child Protection Policy	29
Confidentiality and Privacy Policy	33
Diversity, Anti-bias, Equity and Inclusion Policy	40
Health, Hygiene and Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy	44
Illness Policy	55

CENTRE PHILOSOPHY

Vision: To offer high quality care where respect, nurturing and wellbeing are the primary focus. Supporting and practicing inclusiveness while providing opportunities for all children to be successful, competent and capable learners.

Philosophy:

Our children: Building trusting and supportive relationships with children where their unique and individual needs and interests are celebrated, explored and promoted. Children's rights are upheld through providing a safe, supportive and nurturing environment.

Our Families and Community: Providing a welcoming and inclusive environment where all families are valued and supported. Connecting to our country and community by embedding cultural learning in our curriculum and promoting awareness, respect and understanding of the cultural diversity for all children.

Our Curriculum: Our holistic, innovative and emergent program focuses on stimulating, engaging and child led learning. Through play based learning children's imagination and creativeness is fostered. Educators support children's active participation and provide opportunities to children to be actively involved in their learning. Educators observe, recognise and assess children's learning on both individual and group settings with the VEYLDF guiding our practices.

Our team: Our team of quality Educators strive for excellence to provide the best early childhood education and care. Building and working in a diverse, supportive, professional, respectful and ethically strong team is the focus of all Educators. Continual professional and personal development in advancement of knowledge and skills.

Our Environment and World: Respecting and regenerating our environment through sustainable practices both within the learning and care setting and children's homes and community. Ensuring an environment that promotes wellbeing and mindfulness is offered through habitual yoga, exercise and meditation sessions. Maintaining community connections through incursions and excursions and centre focused celebrations.

CENTRE VALUES

Educators and management are expected to engage to a high standard with integrity of professional behaviour at all times throughout their workday, through following and implementing all centre's policies, practices and procedures, being respectful to each other, children and families.

Educators and management treat and show respect towards each other, exhibiting openness to critical reflection of their own and each other's performance and ways of doing and being.

Educators are expected to display professionalism in accordance to the Early Childhood of Australia's Code of ethics. Staff are valued and respected as educated professionals.

Educators commit to quality performance, individually and as an organisation, reflecting on their role within the centre, and their efforts being recognised and celebrated.

As an Educator team, we initiate and embrace change, accepting the changes encourages innovation, develops skills, develops staff and leads to better opportunities and improves staff morale.

Educators will have the opportunity to extend their professional development through attending appropriate training and in-services.

Fairness and equity is expected to be given and received by all stakeholders (Management, Educators, Children and Families).

Management will provide a safe working environment where Educators are active participants in maintaining Centre's resources and supervising safe work and play practices. It is an expectation of Educators to work within all OH&S policies and guidelines. Management will provide a positive environment where Educators wellbeing is supported.

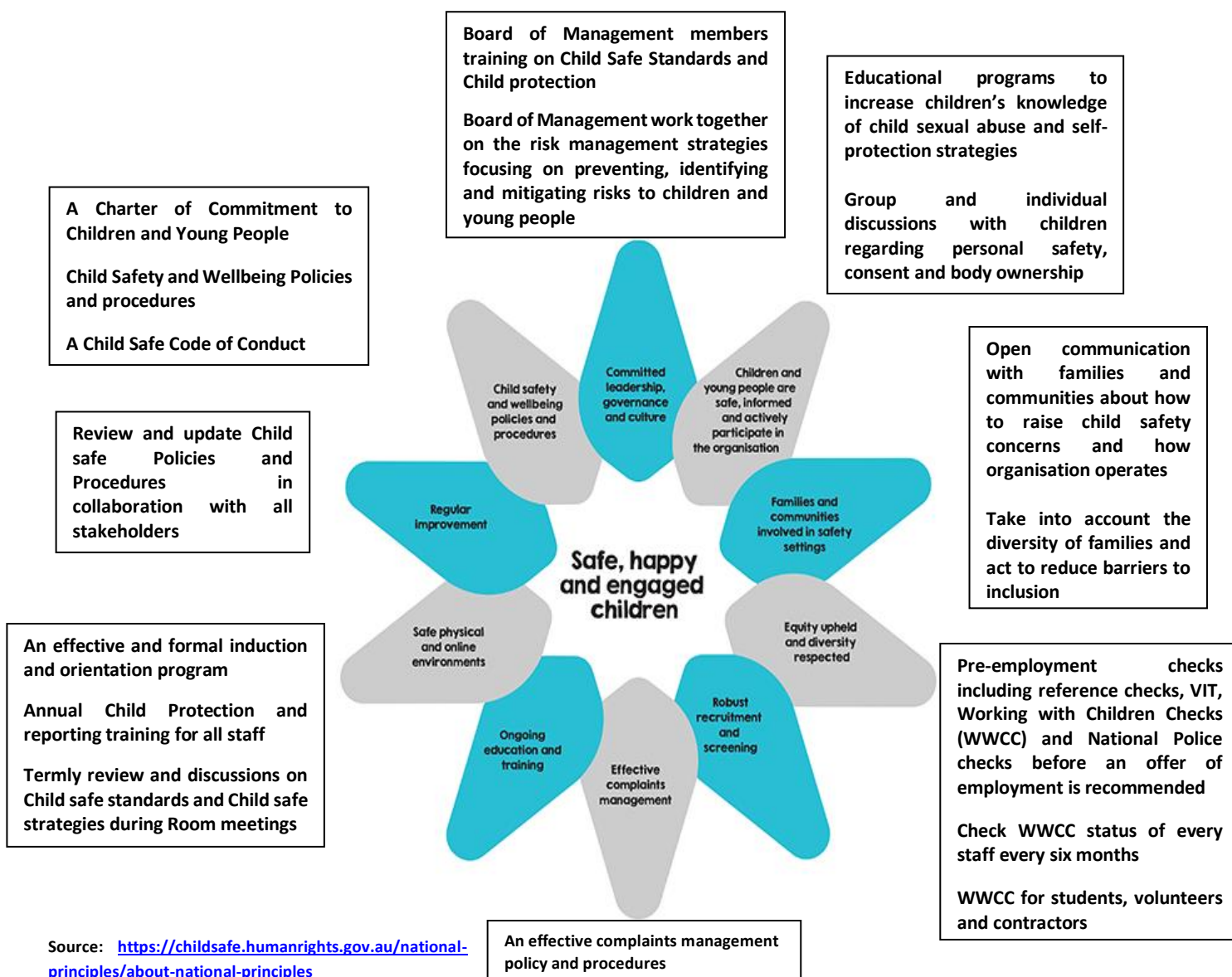
A CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION

Geelong Children's Centre is a child safe organisation puts the best interests of children and young people first.

We understand that policies and procedures alone are not enough to keep children safe and well in organisational settings. Hence as a child safe organisation we create a culture that adopts strategies and takes action to promote child wellbeing and prevent harm to children and young people.

A child safe organisation consciously and systematically:

- Creates an environment where children's safety and wellbeing is at the centre of thought, values and actions.
- Places emphasis on genuine engagement and valuing of children and young people.
- Creates conditions that increase the likelihood of identifying any harm thus reducing harm to children and young people.
- Responds to any concerns, disclosures, allegations or suspicions of harm.



Source: <https://childsafeforhumanrights.gov.au/national-principles/about-national-principles>

HOW WE CARE FOR AND EDUCATE YOUR CHILD

Our educational philosophy is guided by an **Emergent Curriculum** approach, where learning develops from children's interests, ideas, experiences and curiosities. We believe that children learn best when they are actively engaged in experiences that are relevant, meaningful and connected to their lives. This approach enables educators to design a program that reflects each child's strengths, interests, abilities and developmental needs.

Children's emerging interests may arise through play, family experiences, community events, seasonal changes, or conversations between children, educators and families. Educators intentionally observe, listen and interact with children to identify these interests and use them to inform planning. These meaningful interactions and observations form an important part of our intentional teaching practices and ensure that learning experiences are responsive, engaging and purposeful.

We embrace an **Inquiry-Based Learning** approach, encouraging children to become active participants in their own learning. Educators foster children's natural curiosity by creating opportunities for them to ask questions, investigate ideas, explore different perspectives, test theories and solve problems. Rather than simply providing answers, educators support children to think critically, make predictions, reflect on their discoveries and build new understandings through hands-on exploration. Inquiry-based learning empowers children to become confident, independent learners who are motivated to explore the world around them and develop a lifelong love of learning.

At our Centre, we are committed to providing rich opportunities for children to engage in **STEAM** learning, integrating **Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics** into everyday experiences. Through inquiry, experimentation, creativity and collaboration, children investigate concepts in meaningful and engaging ways. Presenting ideas across a variety of learning environments and experiences strengthens children's understanding and enables them to make connections between different areas of learning. Our STEAM experiences encourage children to observe, question, design, create, test, evaluate and refine their thinking, supporting both their cognitive development and their creativity.

Our programming and documentation also place a strong emphasis on developing and recognising children's **learning dispositions**. Dispositions are the attitudes, habits of mind and approaches to learning that support children to become confident, capable and lifelong learners. These include curiosity, creativity, courage, resilience, perseverance, confidence, responsibility, cooperation, trust and playfulness.

We recognise that positive learning dispositions flourish in environments where children feel safe, respected, valued and empowered. Educators intentionally create nurturing, inclusive and stimulating learning environments that encourage children to take appropriate risks, solve problems, build relationships, express their ideas and develop independence. Through intentional teaching, inquiry, play-based learning and meaningful relationships, we support children to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions they need to become active, engaged and lifelong learners.

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 approach.

The primary care giving approach 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 for each child.

Care giving is primary in two senses. Firstly - most of the care, nurturing and parent communication is provided by the educator who is the primary caregiver. Secondly - 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 resilience and mindfulness.

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 engage with. 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 during the day while your child is in care.

We provide two supervised separate sleep rooms so that the babies may sleep peacefully and undisturbed. Staff are proactive in following the safe sleeping practices in conjunction with Red Nose and ACECQA guidelines.

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 approach in the room for children aged between 18-36 months, 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 indoor and outdoor play.

We provide a range of teaching experiences and also intentional teaching that encompass 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 physical skills such as climbing, balancing, swinging, digging and bike riding.

We have visual displays that shows your child's learning during the day in the Toddlers Room. We value the opportunity

to talk 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 Educa, newsletters and e-mails about your child's learning and development.

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 family's participation in every facet of the Toddlers Room and most of all we aim for the children and educators to learning while having fun together.

3-5 Room

The 3-5 Room integrated pre-school curriculum for children aged 3-5years identifies key areas of development such as the arts, numeracy, literacy, technology, music and movement, social studies, science and motor development. The children who do not attend our funded 3 and 4 year old kinder program attend this room.

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, resilience, respect for themselves, others and the environment, encourage independence and provide challenges and enjoyment. We provide experiences that gives children the opportunity to gain knowledge and skills 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 individual and group experiences. We offer an indoor / outdoor program where children have a choice of playing indoors or outdoors throughout the day. The children have long periods of uninterrupted play time to explore the various activities, whilst having opportunity to have intentional teaching moments with educators to provide children skills to master these activities.

We provide above educator child ratios so educators can spend a lot of time interacting with individual children as well as focusing on small groups rather than large groups of children.

Our program compliments and extends the children's learning environment by providing some spontaneous special days to relax and unwind. The program includes incursions and excursions, multicultural days, dressing up, special person's day and visits from educational / community members for example police, SES, guide dog association, vet and dental visits, musicians and the animal nursery to name a few. Parents are encouraged to participate in incursions to showcase their skills.

The emergent curriculum which is inquiry based focuses on the interests and experiences of the children, educators 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.

Kindergarten

4 Year Old Kindergarten

The kinder follows an emergent curriculum which is inquiry based focuses on providing overall development of the children for school transition and teaching children everyday life skills. The benefit of this approach enables the program to be organised based on the children's budding interests, passions, strengths and needs. The topics of interest that emerge are often linked to children's play, their thinking, experiences at home, a community event, and priorities that emerge from conversations between children, children and teachers, children and parents, and parents and teachers etc. These interactions and observations are important as part of the teacher's intentional teaching practices. 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, using technology as a tool to provide more innovative teaching method, 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 strength's, abilities,

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 Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm. To meet the 15 hours Kindergarten requirement, children will be required to attend a minimum of 2 days. Children are only able to access one funded 4 year old kindergarten program. If children are enrolled at this Centre in a kindergarten program they cannot access another kinder.

In 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 different lunch routine. They are accompanied for visits by the pre-school teacher and a staff member.

3 Year old Kindergarten

The Government funded 3 year old program aims to provide the children with a rich learning experience through flexible routines in a structured environment to prepare them for a 4 year old Kindergarten. We are offering 15 hours of program children will be required to attend a minimum of 2 days, which will provide children the opportunity of longer periods of teaching times with a qualified kindergarten teacher to maximise their learning and development outcomes. 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 run Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.00pm. To meet the 15 hours Kindergarten requirement, children will be required to attend a minimum of 2 days. Children are only able to access one funded 3 year old kindergarten program. If children are enrolled at this Centre in a Kindergarten program they cannot access another kinder.

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 toddler's 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.

KEY ROLES

Room Coordinator

Room Coordinators are highly skilled 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.

Educational Leader

The Educational Leader has an influential role in inspiring, motivating, affirming and challenging or extending the practice and pedagogy of Educators. It is a joint endeavor involving inquiry and reflection, which can significantly impact on the important work Educators do with children and families.

Educational leader collaborates with educators and provides curriculum direction and guidance. Also supports educators to effectively implement the cycle of planning to enhance programs and practices, leading to the

development and implementation of an effective educational program in the service and ensures that children's learning and development are guided by the learning outcomes of the approved learning frameworks.

- The Approved Provider will nominate a qualified and experienced Educator to take on the Educational Leader role and responsibilities.
- The Educational Leader will keep a record about how they mentor and guide Educators of the Service to ensure continuous improvement.
- The Educational Leader will guide Educators to provide a compliant program.

The educational leader also has a significant role in building a culture of professional inquiry with educators, coordinators and staff members to develop professional knowledge, reflect on practice and generate new ideas.

For more information see at: <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/educational-leadership>

Early Childhood Teacher

An Early Childhood Teacher Is a person with an approved early childhood teaching qualification in accordance with ACECQA. A record must be kept containing the period the early childhood teacher is working directly with children.

- Our Service will comply and will engage and have access to an Early Childhood Teacher based on the number and age of children in our kindergarten program at the Service.

Primary 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 this 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. We ensure that prime 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.

NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF)

The National Quality Framework 2012 introduced a new quality standard to improve education and care across long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten, and outside school hours care services.

The NQF includes:

- [National Law and National Regulations](#)
- [National Quality Standard](#)
- [Assessment and quality rating process](#)
- [National approved learning frameworks](#)

As the NQF progress, every service in the country is be assessed to make sure it meets the new quality standard. Safety and supervision is paramount all day and every day and every service must comply with rigorous health and safety requirements. The NQS will also support the implementation of the Early Years Learning Framework 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.

See more at: www.acecqa.gov.au

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework>

VICTORIAN EARLY YEARS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

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 sensitively 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 communicator's (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.

SOURCE: [HTTPS://WWW.VIC.GOV.AU/VICTORIAN-EARLY-YEARS-LEARNING-DEVELOPMENT-FRAMEWORK-VEYLDF](https://www.vic.gov.au/victorian-early-years-learning-development-framework-veyldf)

ORIENTATION PROCEDURE

The orientation process is a compulsory part of your child's enrolment and must be completed before they commence care at the Centre.

We offer a comprehensive orientation program designed to support children and families as they transition into our learning community. We believe orientation is an important opportunity for children, families and educators to build trusting relationships, share valuable information about each child's individual needs, interests and routines, and establish the foundations for a successful partnership.

Orientation visits allow your child to become familiar with the environment, educators and daily routines at their own pace, helping them to develop a sense of safety, security and belonging before their first day of care.

Orientation usually begins with a visit of approximately 30 minutes to one hour, providing families with the opportunity to meet educators, explore the learning environment and discuss their child's individual needs, routines and interests. The length and frequency of visits are then gradually increased, depending on your child's comfort and confidence.

Families are required to complete a minimum of one week of orientation visits prior to their child's commencement date. During the orientation period, a parent or authorised guardian is required to remain at the Centre. Throughout this process, families are encouraged to share information about their child, family, culture, routines and any other details that will assist educators in supporting a smooth and positive transition.

Our educators will guide and support you throughout the orientation process, ensuring both you and your child feel welcomed, informed and confident. We are committed to making your child's transition into care a positive and enjoyable experience.

Please speak with the Director to arrange suitable orientation times.

There is no charge for orientation visits.

OPERATION OF THE CENTRE

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

Director: Jane Rathjen (Director / Nominated Supervisor)

Deputy Director: Payal Mahajan (Deputy Director / Responsible Person)

Educational Leader: Gemma Vokic

The Centre operates: 50 weeks of the year

Opening hours: Monday to Friday between 7:00 am and 6:00 pm (Excluding Public Holidays)

Christmas and New Year Closure

The Centre will be closed for two weeks during Christmas and New Year period.

Enrolment Information

Prior to commencing at our Centre, you will be required to complete enrolment documentation.

Please understand that it is essential we have up-to-date information in case of an emergency. It is important that you notify the Director/ Deputy Director of any changes to enrolment information including:

- Address
- Health information
- Telephone/mobile numbers
- Work numbers

- Contact details
- Family changes
- Emergency contact information details etc.

It is essential that we have copies of your child's updated immunisation status.

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 and the authorised contact person/s 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 your child's collection**.

Children attending the Centre can only be collected by an authorized person/s nominated by the parent/guardian on the enrolment form except where authorisation has been given by the parent or guardian, either personally or by phone. (Education & Care Services National Regulations 2023).

Security

To gain access into the main entry of the Centre you will be given a "pin" number. If you forget it, please press the intercom button on the security pad.

Court Orders

Parents must notify the Centre if there are any Court Orders, Intervention Orders or Parenting Orders relating to powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person in relation to the child or access to the child. A certified copy of the order is required by the Centre. Without a Court Order/ Intervention Order or Parenting Order we cannot stop a parent from collecting a child.

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.

Please contact office staff and complete a "buying/selling" form. Days bought or sold will be allocated in the order that the forms have been handed into the office. Any fee adjustments will be made in the next billing period through the Ezidebit system.

Buying Days

You **may** be able to buy extra days if there is availability. If you have booked extra days on a casual basis, you are obligated to pay for these days unless you give the Office **24 hours' notice to cancel**. The reason for this is that at times, we have high demand for care and other people miss out because of lack of notice.

Staff **cannot** make arrangements for buying or selling of days within the rooms. Parents need to contact the Office staff and follow the Centre procedure of buying/selling days.

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. Fees will be charged for the two weeks of notice period.

If termination from the Service is required without notification or if you withdraw your child without serving the notice period, families may lose their Child Care Subsidy, resulting in the payment of requirement for full fees to be charged.

In some circumstances CCS may not be paid for sessions if the child has not physically started care. Additionally, CCS may not be paid for absences submitted after a child's last physical day of care, unless conditions have been met as specified by Family Assistance Law.

Responsibility of Management

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. We will be able to offer a payment plan to support families who are unable to pay fees due to changed circumstances.

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 Board of Management.

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 and also sign in electronically. On collection of your child you are required to sign out on the attendance sheet and electronically.

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 6.00p.m. sharp), **you will be charged and invoiced**. 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.

COMMONWEALTH PRIORITY OF ACCESS GUIDELINES

The Australian 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.

These guidelines are used when there is a waiting list at the Centre and a number of parents are applying for a limited number of vacant places, or if the Centre is full and a Priority 1 or 2 child requires child care.

First Priority

Children at serious risk of abuse or neglect.

Second Priority

A child/children of a single parent or parents who satisfy, the WORK / TRAINING / STUDY test (under section 14 of the 'A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999).

Third Priority

Any other child.

Please Note

If you are a non-working/studying parent or on maternity leave or a priority 3 parent, you may be restricted to one day of care per week. Should a parent from higher priority group requires care, you will have to vacate your spot, 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.

KINDERGARTEN PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

The Government has determined priority of access guidelines that applies for allocating places when families are enrolling their children in a funded Kindergarten.

In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, Centre will:

- prioritise children based on the criteria listed below
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional Department office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

These criteria will be used by the Centre when prioritising enrolments. Information on funding guidance is available for families if required.

High priority children	Process that could be used to verify need(s)
Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care	The child is: • attending a three year old kindergarten program through Early Start Kindergarten or Access to Early Learning • family carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to child protection or in out of home care and/or • referred by one of the following: – Child Protection – Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) – Maternal and Child Health nurse, or – Out-of-Home Care provider.
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children	As part of the enrolment process, service providers must respectfully ask families 'is your child Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander?' and record this information in KIM.
Asylum seeker and refugee children	An appropriate visa identifies the child and/or parents as a refugee or asylum seeker.
Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy	• A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or • multiple birth children (triplets, quadruplets).
Children with additional needs, defined as children who: require additional assistance in order to fully participate in the kindergarten program require a combination of services which are individually planned have an identified specific disability or developmental delay	The child: • is assessed as having delays in two or more areas and is declared eligible for a second funded year of kindergarten • holds a Child Disability Health Care Card • has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support Package, or referred by: – the National Disability Insurance Scheme – Early Childhood Intervention Service – Preschool Field Officer, or – Maternal and Child Health nurse.

ADMISSION AND ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

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. **Parents are required to re-enrol each year. Please make sure you have completed all the details in the enrolment form. Incomplete enrolment form will not be accepted.**

Current Clients:

- The Centre will take enrolments for current clients for 2027 on Monday, 21st July and Tuesday, 22nd July 2026.
- Parents can access the Enrolment Form from our website www.geelongchildrenscentre.com.au. Please hand in the completed Enrolment Form and your child's updated Immunisation Statement to the Office staff between 7.00am and 5.00pm on the above dates.
- Management will allocate your booked days for 2026 for 2027.
- Current clients will be notified of their child/children's booked days for 2027 in the third week of September 2026 by email. If your current booked days for 2026 are unavailable for 2027, 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 based on the available spots and the time when the enrolment form was handed.
- 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 5.00pm on the 12th July 2026 they will not get preference over the families who have requested additional days.

New Clients:

- The Centre will take enrolments for 2027 for new clients as a rolling enrolment.
- New clients will be notified of their child/children's booked days for 2027 in the third week of September 2026 by email.
- If you are not successful in obtaining the requested days you will be placed on the wait list based on the Commonwealth priority of access guidelines.
- You will be offered positions for your child/children as a vacancy occurs.

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRE

The Governance Policy provides the overall direction, effectiveness, supervision and accountability of a Centre. Management are responsible for guiding the direction of the service, ensuring that its goals and objectives are met in line with the philosophy, and all legal and regulatory requirements governing the operation of the Centre.

The Board of Management provides families and the local community with the opportunity to participate in the management and structure of the Centre. When they are involved in decision-making processes, families and the community are more likely to understand the scope of the centre's organisation and activities, local issues and priorities, policies and procedures and assist in the continual improvement of the quality of education and care provided to children within the Centre.

Our Centre aims to engage educators, staff and Nominated Supervisors who have the qualifications and experience to develop warm, nurturing and respectful relationships with children. We are committed to ensuring that children's health, safety, and wellbeing is protected at all times through providing appropriate and effective supervision according to legislated ratios and best practice. Our educators, in collaboration with our Educational Leader, design and implement programs that support children's participation and engagement, interests, learning, and development.

The Centre is registered for 150 children, 49 children under 3 years of age and 101 children over 3 years of age.

Our Centre aims to ensure all legal and financial requirements are implemented and recognised through appropriate governance practices, providing quality education and care, meeting the principles, practices and elements of the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standard.

We are committed to providing a strong Board of Management team who are aware of their roles and responsibilities to the Centre, children, families, educators and the community. The Board of Management will adhere to Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations and the National Quality Standard, ensuring positive working relationships are formed. The Board of Management will maintain their professionalism at all times, performing in an ethical manner, which is reflective of the Centre's philosophy.

To ensure our Centre adheres to the Education and Care Services National Regulations we employ educators who are suitably qualified, implement the required staffing requirements and adhere to regulated educator to child ratios.

Governance is the process that directs and controls our Centre, ensuring accountability and supporting decision making.

A Board of Management provides a means to give families a say in what happens within our Centre. We believe in providing families with the opportunity to work in partnerships with our management team to assist in making decisions about how our Centre is operating, including policy review and practice which is reflective of our Centre's philosophy.

The Board of Management is elected each year at our Annual General Meeting (AGM). The members of the board include: Executive Committee (Chairperson, Treasurer, and Administrator and Public Officer), Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Director, Deputy Director, Community members, Parent representatives and two staff representatives.

The Board of Management has an overall responsibility for the sustainability and relevance of the Centre.

The Board provides effective governance to support the operation of our quality education and care Centre and actively supports families to meaningfully engage with the Centre philosophy, policies and procedures and provide feedback to ensure continual improvement.

Our Centre will comply with the required educators to children ratios, taking into consideration qualification requirements and experience, in order to meet the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

The Approved Provider and Nominated Supervisor of the Centre accept the legal responsibilities associated with establishing, administering, and maintaining the Centre.

IN RELATION TO THE SERVICE:

- board members must ensure they take their role and responsibilities seriously
- the Board of Management consists of community members and the parent representatives
- all members must adhere to the Service's *Code of Conduct* and *Confidentiality and Privacy Policy*
- all members of the Board of Management must have a valid Working with Children Check/Vulnerable Person check or Criminal History check (where relevant)
- each new Board Member will have to fill an expression of interest form and attach their resumes,
- each new board member will receive an induction regarding their roles and responsibilities as per the *New Board Member Handbook*
- service management will email details of Board meeting schedules, agendas and minutes to all families who request this information.
- the Board of Management will be involved in conjunction with families and Educators in the development and review process for all policies and procedures

- names of the Board members including the parent representatives and community members with are job title will be placed on the notice board at the Centre's entrance.
- the Board of Management will reflect upon and provide feedback on the Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) documenting continuous improvement
- the Board of Management will ensure all ideas and concerns are recognised and addressed in a professional and timely manner
- the Service management will encourage family participation in the Board of Management to have parent representation in the Service
- written information regarding the Service's management structure will be available to families at all times.
- whilst the Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the day to day running of the Service, it is to be in accordance with the decisions of the Board of Management providing they comply with all regulations and standards
- the members of the Board of Management (other than the Nominated Supervisor and staff representatives), are elected through an election process. Families may join the Board at any time throughout the year if there is requirement of a board member.
- meetings are held every month on the third Tuesday 7:00pm onwards.
- a copy of the minutes of Board of Management meetings is available to all families on request
- notice of forthcoming meetings are displayed in the front foyer
- families may request minutes, meeting schedules and/or agendas to be emailed if more convenient
- the Board of Management will be made aware of the Service's grievance policy and procedure.

FUNCTIONS OF THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management sets the strategic direction of the Service and is responsible for the overall operation of the Service.

Essentially, the Board of Management has four vital functions and Board members contribute to one or more of these functions, depending on their interests and skills:

- **Finance:** day to day finances, administration issues, employee duties, general organisation; annual budget, financial statements; legal requirements; insurance policies; reporting requirements to Government bodies- (CCS);
- **Communication:** Publicity and public relations, keeping the Service's community informed of Board decisions, new policies, events, etc.
- **Future planning:** Being actively involved in the Service's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) and the Professional Development Plan for Service staff.
- **Policy development:** Formulating and updating the Service's policies, procedures, and philosophy as required, in conjunction with the Nominated Supervisor, staff, and families.

The complete set of policies is available from the Nominated Supervisor at any time. Families are encouraged to consult these regularly.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER IS LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- ensuring compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations
- complying with Family Assistance Law
- appointing a Nominated Supervisor, an Educational Leader and a Deputy Director for the Service
- ensuring background checks, including criminal history and working with children checks, are completed for all staff and educators
- determining whether or not a person working in the service is a 'fit and proper person'

- supporting the Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Persons in their role, providing adequate resources to ensure effective administration of the Service
- developing a clear and agreed philosophy, which guides business decisions and the work of management and staff
- acting honestly and with due diligence
- ensuring there is a sound foundation of policies and procedures that complies with all legislative and regulatory requirements, and that enables the daily operation of the Service to be in line with the Service's philosophy and goals
- maintaining up to date and current policies and procedures for compliance by all educators
- confirming incident, injury, illness or trauma records are stored in a safe and secure place until the child is 25 years of age. In the event of a death of child while being cared for by the service or may have occurred as a result of an incident, the records must be kept until 7 (seven) years after the death.
- being an employer, including all legal and ethical responsibilities that this entails
- appointing staff and monitoring their performance
- ensuring educator qualification requirements are current
- ensuring all educators and staff have a clear understanding of the hierarchy of management.
- providing clear and direct written and verbal feedback and instruction that is suitable and appropriate to the task
- ensuring the Service remains financially viable and can meet its debts and other obligations as they fall due
- managing control and accountability systems
- reviewing the Service's budget and monitoring financial performance and management to ensure the Service is solvent at all times and has sound financial strength
- approving annual financial statements and providing required reports to government bodies and maintaining appropriate delegations and internal controls
- complying with funding agreements where appropriate
- reviewing the work process regularly
- completing a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for the Service and updating it at least annually
- developing coherent aims and goals that reflect the interests, values and beliefs of all stakeholders of the Service
- establishing clearly defined roles and responsibilities for the members of the Management Committee and staff, individually and as a collective, and clearly articulating the relationship between all stakeholders
- evaluating and improving the performance of the Board of Management.
- ensuring the educational program is based on an approved learning framework (EYLF) and contributes to each child's sense of identity and wellbeing
- complying with all other Victorian and Australian governments' legislation that impacts upon the management and operations of a Service.
- authority, accountability and control.
- over seeing legal functions and responsibilities.

Nominated Supervisor

The Nominated Supervisor is a suitable person appointed by the Approved Provider who is placed in day-to-day charge of an approved Service. The Approved Provider must provide sufficient evidence and information to demonstrate compliance to the Regulatory Authority of the suitability of this person. Nominated Supervisors have a range of responsibilities under the National Law and Regulations including programming, supervision and safety of children, entry to and exit from the premises, food and beverage, administration of medication, excursions, staffing, sleep and rest.

The Approved Provider will display the name of the Nominated Supervisor in a place that is clearly visible to staff, educators, families and visitors.

THE NOMINATED SUPERVISOR IS RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- adhering to the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations
- accepting the role in writing, to ensure they have a clear understanding about their role and responsibilities
- developing ethical standards and a code of conduct which guide actions and decisions in a way that is consistent and reflective of the Service's expectations
- focusing on the strategic directions of the Service and maintain confidentiality
- undertaking periodical planning and risk assessments and having appropriate risk management strategies in place to manage risks faced by the Service
- ensuring that actions taken and decisions made are clear and consistent and will help build confidence in all stakeholders
- monitoring and oversee management including ensuring that good management practices and appropriate checks and balances are in place
- the day to day management of the Service
- ensuring the Service program is reflective of the approved learning framework, incorporate the children's developmental needs, interests and experiences and consider the individual differences of each child
- the effectiveness of the Service's well-defined partnership between the Board of Management and the Nominated Supervisor. The partnership requires clear understanding of roles and responsibilities and regular and open communication.
- producing outcomes together with educators and staff. Educators must agree on their responsibilities and work according to current policies and procedures.
- providing educators with training, resources and support
- identifying and reporting if something significant occurs (for example: Work Health and Safety; Fraud Prevention; Child Protection and Reportable Conduct Scheme, Complaint handling)
- identifying work required for completion and delegate to the appropriate educator/staff
- ensuring educators and staff do not delegate responsibilities for which they are accountable for or have been delegated to them by Management
- delegating all tasks in writing with a clear due date
- ensuring educators are adhering to service policies and procedures ensuring a safe and healthy environment is provided

SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

- The development and review of the philosophy and policies will be a continuous process on an annual basis or when required.
- The philosophy and associated statement of purpose will reinforce all other documentation and the practices of the Service. The philosophy will reflect the principles of the approved national framework "*Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*".
- There will be a collaborative and consultative process to support the development and maintenance of the philosophy that will include children, parents and educators.
- All documents will be dated and include nominated review dates.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The standards of behaviour outlined in our Staff Code of Conduct Policy provide guidance for all staff to make personal and ethical decisions related to confidentiality, recruitment, duty of care, record keeping, professional relationships and appropriate use of resources within the Service.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

All members of the Board of Management along with the Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Person, Educational Leaders, Leadership Team, Educators and Staff who gain access to confidential information, whether in the course of their work or otherwise, shall not disclose information to anyone unless the disclosure of such information is required by law and will respect the confidentiality of all documents and meetings that occur.

This also includes:

- using information acquired for their personal or financial benefit, or for the benefit of any other person.
- permitting any unauthorised person to inspect or have access to any confidential documents or other information.
- any information received or transmitted via mobile telephone (including text/SMS) or any other electronic device (e.g. email) shall be treated with the same confidentiality as any other written form of communication and must be stored confidentially.
- Adhering to the Service's Confidentiality and Privacy Policy and Privacy Law in relation to children and their families, or matters relating to the Service and will at no time take part in inappropriate or unlawful conversations or discussions.

This obligation, placed on a member of the Board of Management, Nominated Supervisor, Deputy Director, Responsible Person, educator, and staff shall continue even after the individual has completed their term and is no longer on the Board of Management or employed by the Service. The obligation to maintain confidentiality also applies to any person who is invited to any meetings of the Board of Management.

ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING

Our Service will make decisions which are consistent with our policies and procedures and that work in conjunction with the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, our approved learning framework (EYLF), and the ethical standards within the ECA Code of Ethics.

ETHICAL PRACTICE

The following principles provide an ethical framework to guide the delivery of services

- treating colleagues, parents/guardians, children, suppliers, students, volunteers, public and other stakeholders respectfully and professionally at all times dealing courteously with those who hold differing opinions
- respecting cultural differences and diversity within the service, and making every effort to encourage and include all children and families in the community
- having an open and transparent relationship with government, supporters and other funders
- operating with honesty and integrity in all work
- being open and transparent in making decisions and undertaking activities, and if that is not possible, explaining why
- working to the standards set under the *National Quality Framework* and all applicable legislation as a minimum, and striving to continually improve the quality of the services delivered to the community

REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF THE SERVICE

- Ongoing review and evaluation will support the continuing development of the Service. We will ensure that the evaluation involves all stakeholders.
- The development of a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) will form part of the reflection procedure. Reflection on what works within the Service and what needs additional development will be included in the QIP.

MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

- The Service will adhere to record keeping requirements outlined in the National Regulations (177).
- The Service will adhere to the storage of confidential records outlined in the National Regulations (181-184).
- The Service has a responsibility to keep sufficient records about staff, families, and children in order to operate dependably and lawfully.
- The Service will safeguard the interests of all children, their families, and the staff, using procedures to ensure appropriate privacy and confidentiality practices are upheld.

- The Approved Provider assists in determining the process, storage location, and time line for storage of records, using the National Regulations as a minimum standard.
- The Service's orientation and induction processes will include the provision of significant information to managers, educators, children, and families to comply with National Regulations and Standards.
- The Approved Provider will ensure that the record retention procedure meets the requirements of the following government departments and laws:
 - Australian Tax Office (ATO)
 - Family Assistance Office (FAO)
 - Family Assistance Law
 - National Law and Regulations

MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- Conflict of interest, whether actual, potential or perceived, must be declared by all members of the Board of Management /Nominated Supervisor, Deputy Director, Room Coordinators, Room Leaders and managed effectively to ensure integrity.
- Every stakeholder that is in a position of management has a responsibility to ensure their transactions, external business interests and relationships will not cause potential conflicts and to make such disclosures in a timely manner as they arise.
- The following process will be followed to manage any conflicts of interest:
 1. Whenever there is a conflict of interest, the member concerned must notify the Approved Provider about the conflict.
 2. The member with a conflict of interest must not be present during the meeting of the Board of Management or Management meeting where the matter is being discussed, or participate in any decisions made on that matter. The member concerned must provide the Board with any and all relevant information they possess on the particular matter.
 3. The minutes of the meeting must reflect that the conflict of interest was disclosed and appropriate processes followed to manage the conflict.

A Conflict of interest disclosure statement must be completed by each member of the Board of Management / Staff member upon his or her appointment and annually thereafter. If the information in this statement changes during the year, the member shall disclose the change to the Approved Provider/ and revise the disclosure statement accordingly.

STAFFING RATIO

Management ensures that all children in the Centre have regulated staff coverage at all times. In absence of Nominated Supervisor, there is a Responsible Person on duty at all times while the Centre is in operation. All staff holding current first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis qualifications. This Centre employs staff ABOVE the minimum requirement. We do not employ casual staff in our Centre. We employ permanent relievers who are trained to work in all the rooms across the Centre.

The Service will comply with the National Quality Framework and ensure 50 percent of Educators meet the relevant Diploma qualification requirement, or be actively working towards an approved diploma level education and care qualification. If an educator is 'actively working towards' approved diploma level qualification, they can be counted as a diploma level educator.

All other educators are '*suitably qualified persons*' and have an approved certificate III level education and care qualification or are actively working towards their qualification.

The Centre has a staff of 65, consisting of 30 Diploma Qualified staff, 25 childcare Assistant and 4 kindergarten teachers. Other staff includes 2 administrative assistants, 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 additional staff are employed for special needs children.

The staff coverage for each group is as follows:

Babies' Room	2 diploma qualified staff member and 4 assistants for up to 17 babies aged 6 weeks to 18 months.
Toddlers' Room	3 diploma qualified staff members and 6 assistants for up to 32 children aged 18 months to 3 yrs.
3-5 Room	4 diploma qualified staff members and 3 assistants for up to 35 children.
4 year old Kinder Room	2 qualified Kindergarten Teachers, 1 qualified staff member and 4 assistants for upto 30 children.
3 year old Kinder Room	2 qualified Kindergarten Teacher, 1 qualified staff member and 3 assistants for upto 30 children.

FEE STRUCTURE

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

(Centre is closed for 2 weeks over Christmas – New Year)

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

Please note:

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.

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

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 parents with concerns with this arrangement must put these concerns in writing to the Board 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 \$5.50.

Ongoing fees for this service which parents will also meet the cost of are as follows:

Transactions from a Bank Account:	\$1.40 per transaction
Transactions from Visa/MasterCard:	2.37% (minimum \$1.40)
Transactions from AMEX/Diners:	4.40% (minimum \$1.40)
Failed Payment Fee:	\$14.80

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (CCS)

The government provides Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to families to help with the cost of childcare

There are three factors that determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy. These are:

- Combined annual family income
- **Activity test** – the activity level of both parents
- **Service type** – type of child care service

The Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to service providers, to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Families pay the Gap Fee which is the difference between the daily childcare fee less the Childcare Subsidy (CCS).

The person who is liable to pay the childcare fees will have to apply for CCS using their Centrelink online account through myGov. The Child's enrolment details are required to be confirmed on the myGov website and ensure that they match the Complying Written Agreement (CWA) including fees and sessions of care.

A CWA is an agreement between you and Geelong Childrens Centre to give care in return for fees.

Further information is available on the link below.

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

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 absent 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.

IMMUNISATION

All children at the Centre are to have been immunised and up to date documentation forwarded to the Centre throughout the child's time at the Centre.

Immunisation is an important health measure for children and families. It is the simplest, safest and most effective way of protecting children against harmful diseases. Immunisation not only protects children, but also others in the community by reducing the spread of disease.

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, before enrolling your child you must first obtain evidence that the child is: immunised in accordance with the National Immunisation Program schedule or be on a recognised catch-up schedule according to the current Australian Immunisation Handbook or have a valid immunisation exemption recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register.

If a child is not immunised due to a medical condition that has been certified by a medical practitioner and there is an outbreak of infectious disease at the Centre, that child is excluded from the Centre until the disease outbreak is under control. The Centre provides information and encourages all children and staff to have up to date age appropriate immunisation in accordance with the current Australian Vaccination Standards.

COMMUNICATION

The Board of Management and staff welcome your opinions and views on any aspect pertaining to your child's care at this Centre. We aim to ensure open communication is concurrent through the enrolment and orientation process, policy reviews, feedback forms, children's program, documentation, formal and informal meetings, emails and conversations. We will provide regular information about the Centre and continuous prospects for families to contribute in our curriculum. 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 educators regarding their children's learning and development throughout the day. If you require a more detailed discussion or meeting with the Kindergarten teacher or room coordinators, 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 wellbeing 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, Educa, flyers, whiteboards, notices on doors, posters, suggestion boxes.

If staff have any concerns about the development of the children in their room they first talk to the Room Coordinator and then a meeting is organised with the parents, with all the documented information and observations recorded on the child. If a referral is needed to an outside agency, requests are made on official forms, by letter or by email. 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.

Please feel free to contact any of your room staff, administration or management on the below e-mail addresses.

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
Educational leader:	educatorleader@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au
Administration	admin@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au
Director:	director@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au
Deputy Director:	deputydirector@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au

GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINTS

If parents have any concerns at all regarding their child's care and education, please see the Director/ Deputy Director immediately.

We understand that there may be instances where families have concerns about aspects of the Centre which need to be addressed and resolved. We are committed to creating and maintaining a supportive environment where families, educators and staff can work together in partnership to build a positive relationship.

Geelong Children's Centre will investigate all complaints and grievances fairly and document it in a timely manner. Complaints or grievances may be received from anyone who comes into contact with Geelong Children's Centre parents/guardians, volunteers, students, members of the local community and other agencies.

We aim to investigate all complaints and grievances with a high standard of equity and fairness. We will ensure that all persons making a complaint are guided by the following policy values:

- Procedural fairness and natural justice
- Code of Ethics and Conduct
- Culture free from discrimination and harassment
- Transparent policies and procedures
- Opportunities for further investigation
- Adhering to our Service philosophy

Procedural fairness and natural justice

Our Service believes in procedural fairness and natural justice that govern the strategies and practices, which include:

- The right to be heard fairly
- The right to an unbiased decision made by an objective decision maker
- The right to have the decision based on relevant evidence.

Grievances can transpire in any workplace. Handling them appropriately is imperative for sustaining a safe, healthy, harmonious and productive work environment. The Grievance Policy ensures that all persons are presented with procedures that:

- Value the opportunity to be heard
- Promote conflict resolution
- Encourage the development of harmonious partnerships
- Ensure that conflicts and grievances are mediated fairly
- Are transparent and equitable.

Management and Educators will adhere to our Confidentiality and Privacy Policy when dealing with grievances. However, if a grievance involves a staff member or child protection issues, a Government agency may need to be informed.

- 1) If a **parent/guardian/student/volunteer/ members of the local community and other agencies** has a complaint relating to the Children's Service, they may approach the Director (Jane Rathjen) or in her absence the Deputy Director (Payal Mahajan) Phone: 5229 1326 or email: director@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au or deputydirecto@geelongchildrenscentre.com.au who will respond and deal with the complaint as promptly and discreetly as practicable.
- 2) If the complaint cannot be rectified by the Director, the complainant should put the complaint in writing to the **Board of Management**. Further action will take place as soon as practicable after the complaint is made. A member of the Board will contact the complainant and inform them if the further action or a discussion would take place with a representative of the **Board of Management**, the Director and the concerned complainant,

or in such other way which satisfactorily deals with the complaint.

- 3) If the complainant still feels that the complaint has not been handled adequately and there is no resolution, the complainant would be directed to the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority (VECRA), Attention: Manager Quality Assessment and Regulation, Barwon-South Western Region, 75 High Street, Belmont 3216. Phone: (03) 5215 5136. The complainant may make the complaint in writing or email to vecra@education.vic.gov.au Quality Assessment & Regulation Team.
- 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 Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, the Director will notify VECRA within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

Conflict of Interest

It is important for the complainant to feel confident in:

- Being heard fairly
- Having an unbiased decision making process

Should a conflict of interest arise during a grievance or complaint that involves the Approved Provider and/or the Nominated Supervisor a representative from Management will be nominated as an alternative mediator.

Our Service may also engage the resources of an Independent Conflict Resolution Service to assist with the mediation of a dispute. We will ensure that throughout the conflict resolution process the services Code of Conduct will be adhered to.

THE CENTRE SUPPLIES

All food and drinks, nappies, feeders, washers, sheets and blankets.

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 or sensitivity.

Your child will be provided with a named locker or a hook 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.

WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING?

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

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

Babies	Spare changes of clothes, disposable nappy for going home. Formula and bottles with child's name on it.
Toddlers	Several complete changes of clothing and shoes in case of toilet training and also as we provide water play and other sensory experiences Disposable nappy for going home.
Pre-Schoolers	Spare set of clothes and shoes as we provide water play, mud play and other sensory experiences.

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 / sandals).

- Long dresses can be a hazard while climbing or running.

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.

Children are not to wear jewellery at the Centre

Children are not allowed to wear amber beads teething necklace, bracelets or any jewellery as they can be a choking and strangulation hazard. The Australian Government has recently issued a warning notice about the use of amber teething necklaces (bracelets and necklaces of amber beads) present a choking hazard to children under three years of age. Hair ties, hair clips and any other hair accessory will be removed before children are put to bed.

Source: <https://rednose.org.au/article/is-it-ok-for-babies-to-wear-a-necklace-or-beads>

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, blanket, 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, hair accessory etc. that are 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.

Where can I park?

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

SAMPLE CENTRE POLICIES

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

PURPOSE

We aim to implement effective strategies to assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children. Our Service will act in the best interest of each child, assisting them to develop to their full potential in a secure and child safe environment.

This policy affirms Geelong Children's Centre (**GCC**) commitment to child safety and wellbeing and communicates GCC's approach to complying with Victoria's Child Safe Standards. It is to be read together with GCC's Code of Conduct and Child Protection and Reporting Obligations Policy.

SCOPE

This policy relates to:

- GCC staff including educators, management, administrators and other support staff;
- members of GCC's Board of Management;
- any volunteers undertaking child-related work at GCC including persons accompanying children on excursions; and
- students undertaking placements at GCC, (collectively, **GCC Personnel**).

IMPLEMENTATION

Our statement of commitment

GCC is Child Safe organisation and is committed to child safety and acting in the best interests of children. We have a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse. We will take all safety concerns and allegations of child abuse

and/or reportable conduct seriously, ensuring that such matters are dealt with in accordance with our Child Protection and Reporting Obligations Policy and any applicable legislative requirements.

We will uphold the right of children in our care to feel safe and protected. We are committed to preventing child abuse by identifying risks early and removing and reducing those risks, maintaining robust human resources practices, providing training and education on child abuse risks and actively listening to and empowering all children in GCC's care.

1. Our Centre establishes a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued (Standard 1)

We recognise that some children face increased risk of victimisation and challenges in reporting abuse. Accordingly, we will promote cultural safety for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and providing a safe environment for children with a disability. Our Centre will ensure the organisation's policies, procedures, systems, processes and measures create a culturally safe and inclusive environment for Aboriginal children and young people.

Our Centre will continue to be inclusive and culturally safe place for children and parents. Younger children, children with a disability, indigenous children and those other children from culturally diverse backgrounds will be provided greater levels of support and consideration by providing variety of experiences in the environment which is spiritually, socially and emotionally safe, as well as physically safe for people; where there is no assault, instances of racism, challenge or denial of their identity, of who they are and what they need.

2. How we embed an organisational culture of child safety and wellbeing through effective leadership arrangements, governance and culture. (Standards 2)

The Director is GCC's Child Safety Officer. The Director is also the Nominated Supervisor under the *Education and Care National Law Act* and Head of the Organisation for the purposes of the Reportable Conduct Scheme.

The Director reports to the Board of Management on all key matters affecting GCC at board monthly meetings, including in relation to child safety. The Director is also obliged to promptly notify the Board of Management of any breach of policies or the Code of Conduct. The Director along with management team and Board of Management work together on the risk management strategies focus on preventing, identifying and mitigating risks to children and young people. Staff and volunteers understand their obligations on information sharing and record keeping.

The Director works closely with the Deputy Director, Room Leaders, Kinder Teachers and Board of Management to "lead from the top" and foster a culture that makes child safety, respect for diversity and good governance paramount in GCC's operations and interactions.

At GCC we have:

- (a) a **Code of Conduct** to establish clear expectations for safe and appropriate behaviour with children;
- (b) this **Child Safe Policy** to demonstrate GCC's commitment and approach to child safety;
- (c) a **Child Protection and Reporting Obligations Policy** to make GCC Personnel aware of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children and reporting on abuse; and
- (d) a variety of other policies and procedures that contribute to our child safe and child friendly environment.

GCC's policies are available for viewing at our premises. We also publish on our website the Code of Conduct and this Child Safe Policy. All GCC Personnel are required to read, understand and comply with the above documents and are encouraged to seek any assistance from the Director as necessary.

3. Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously (Standard 3)

Our policies, procedures, training and programming reflect our commitment to:

- (a) encouraging all children to participate in and celebrate their identity;
- (b) valuing diversity and inclusion;

- (c) supporting children to understand their rights;
- (d) promoting children's participation in decision-making and be heard;
- (e) valuing and respecting children's opinions including about what makes them feel safe and unsafe; and
- (f) the right to live and grow up healthy
- (g) establishing an environment of trust and inclusion that enables children to ask questions and speak up if they are worried or feeling unsafe.
- (h) the right to information, such as information about the policies and procedures that affect them

GCC understands their obligations to:

- recognise the importance of friendships and encourage support from peers, to help children and young people feel safe and be connected
- equip staff and volunteers to identify the signs of harm to children.

Relevant training is provided to equip staff and volunteers to communicate with children and young people in a way that is appropriate for their age, maturity and capability.

At GCC through BRAVE HEARTS we provide twice a year educational programs to increase children's knowledge of child sexual abuse and self-protection strategies. Group and individual discussions with children also books available on the book shelf regarding personal safety, consent and body ownership.

(The Royal Commission into institutional responses to child sexual abuse recommended that, as part of a national strategy to prevent child abuse, sexual abuse prevention programs should be delivered through preschool, school and other community institutional settings to increase children's knowledge of child sexual abuse and self-protection strategies. Where relevant, organisations should ensure children and young people are offered programs of this kind.)

4. Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing (Standard 4)

GCC involves families and communities to support consistent practice across organisations to foster a more open and transparent child safe culture for families and communities. By creating a safe and inclusive culture, children and young people, families and communities can feel their identity and culture are respected and valued.

We have procedure in place to take action to ensure that we:

- seek the input of families and communities in decisions impacting children and young people
- involve families and communities in the development and review of their child safe policies and practices
- communicate effectively with families and communities about how to raise child safety concerns and how the organisation operates
- take into account the diversity of families and act to reduce barriers to inclusion.

5. In our service Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice (Standard 5)

Our focus will continue to be on understanding children's diverse circumstances. We will also give attention to the needs of non-binary and gender diverse children. Our staff will give particular attention to the needs of children and young people with disability, children and young people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, those who are unable to live at home, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex children and young people.

6. Staff working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice. (Standard 6)

GCC has strategies to child safety and wellbeing as a primary consideration in all decisions to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse. We use those strategies to inform our policy, procedures and activity planning. We ensure:

- (a) GCC Personnel understand and comply with the Code of Conduct and policies including the Child Protection and Reporting Obligations Policy to the extent that those documents apply to them;
- (b) Ongoing supervision and people management is focused on child safety and wellbeing;
- (c) GCC Personnel understand and comply with recruitment, including advertising, referee checks and staff and volunteer pre-employment screening, emphasise child safety and wellbeing.

- (d) GCC Personnel assesses the suitability of potential staff or volunteers through screening including identity checks, qualification verifications, work history checks and verbal referee checks
- (e) conducting values-based interviews to assess the suitability of applicants and make sure they value and respect children's rights, and
- (f) GCC Personnel understands and comply with the requirements of Working with Children Checks and Police checks for relevant staff and volunteers.
- (g) GCC staff and volunteers receive training on child protection and reporting;
- (h) GCC staff, volunteers and students on placements receive supervision and support to identify and reduce or remove risks of child abuse; and
- (i) child safe strategies are discussed at regular staff meetings so that we may continuously improve.

Additionally, the Director is responsible for reporting to the Board of Management on the potential risks to children in GCC's care and the strategies in place to reduce or remove those risks.

7. Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused (Standard 7)

At GCC, we believe children have unique insights into their lives, their needs and the world around them. GCC emphasises the importance of processes for complaints being child focused and accessible to children and young people and their families, as well as staff and volunteers. We encourage children and their families to give us feedback about things that are important to them through ongoing communication and also periodic surveys and requests for input.

GCC has obligations to:

- a) take complaints seriously, and respond to them promptly and thoroughly
- b) co-operate with law enforcement agencies regarding complaints and concerns, and report to relevant authorities, regardless of legal obligation to report
- c) have child focused complaints handling policies and processes, and compliance with privacy laws, reporting obligations and employment law
- d) have complaints processes that are understood broadly (including by children young people, their families, staff and volunteers) and are culturally safe

8. Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training (Standard 8)

We require all adult GCC Personnel and anyone other adult wishing to accompany a child on an excursion to hold a valid Working with Children Check.

GCC seeks to recruit and retain the best staff and has a robust recruitment process including interviews and referee checks. We actively encourage applications from Aboriginal people, people from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and people with a disability. Our commitment to child safety and our screening requirements are included in all advertisements. While existing qualifications in child safety are highly regarded, all GCC staff receive rigorous induction program and ongoing professional development covering child safety and responding effectively to child safety issues and concerns and supporting colleagues who disclose harm.

GCC staff have clear position descriptions to understand their roles and responsibilities and are subject to regular performance reviews.

We will ensure that families, children and young people are provided with access to information, support and complaints processes that are culturally safe and easy to understand.

9. Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed (Standard 9)

GCC Personnel understand and ensure that all policies, procedures and practices, code of Conduct are updated also to make sure that staff are keeping up with the changing risks to children and young people and properly manage the risks in online environments in addition to physical environments due to the COVID-19 pandemic

GCC personnel will ensure that procurement policies ensure the safety of children and young people if the organisation contracts facilities and services from third parties.

GCC staff ensures relevant environments promote child safety and wellbeing (not just on identifying and removing possible harm in those environments), including addressing risks from adult to child and child to child interactions.

10. Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved (Standard 10)

GCC personnel emphasises the importance of continuous improvement in child safe practices by regularly reviewing, evaluating to improve child safe practices. At GCC we have obligations to:

- (a) analyse complaints, concerns and safety incidents to identify causes and systemic failures to inform continuous improvement
- (b) reports on the findings of relevant reviews of child safe practices to staff and volunteers, community and families and children and young people.

11. Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people (Standard 11)

At GCC we will ensure that all eleven of the Child Safe Standards are incorporated in our policies and procedures. All GCC's policies and procedures are available to staff, families and volunteers to read and ensure that they understand them. All policies and procedures are accessible and we will ensure that they are understood by children and young people. A broader range of material will be available to be shared in different formats, including child-friendly, plain language, accessible and translated versions to ensure everyone can understand child safe policies and procedures.

The development, implementation and review of policies and procedures is done in consultation with relevant stakeholders, including children and young people. Policies and procedures are accessible to all staff, families and volunteers, supported by leadership team, well understood by those they apply to and implemented effectively.



If you suspect a child is in immediate danger, call Triple Zero (000)

For guidance on other reporting, refer to **Child Protection and Reporting Obligations Policy**

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY POLICY

Privacy is acknowledged as a fundamental human right. Our Service has an ethical and legal responsibility to protect the privacy and confidentiality of children, individuals and families as outlined in Early Childhood Code of Ethics, National Education and Care Regulations and the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). The right to privacy of all children, their families, and educators and staff of the Service will be upheld and respected, whilst ensuring that all children have access to high quality early years care and education. All staff members will maintain confidentiality of personal and sensitive information to foster positive trusting relationships with families.

PURPOSE

To ensure that the confidentiality of information and files relating to the children, families, staff, and visitors using the Service is upheld at all times. We aim to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all information and records about individual children, families, educators, staff and management by ensuring continuous review and improvement on our current systems, storage, and methods of disposal of records. We will ensure that all records and information are held in a secure place and are only retrieved by or released to people who have a legal right to access this information. Our Service takes data integrity very seriously, we strive to assure all records and data is protected from unauthorised access and that it is available to authorised persons when needed. This policy provides procedures to ensure data is stored, used and accessed in accordance with relevant policies and procedures, example enrolment policy, CCS Account policy.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, nominated supervisor, approved provider, students and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

The right to confidentiality and privacy of the child and the family is outlined in Early Childhood Code of Ethics and National Education and Care Regulations. We will respect the privacy of children and their parents and educators, while ensuring that they access high quality early years care and education in our Centre.

Under National Law, Section 263, Early Childhood Services are required to comply with Australian privacy law which includes the Privacy Act 1988 (the Act) aimed at protecting the privacy of individuals. Schedule 1 of the Privacy Act (1988) includes 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) which all services are required to apply. The APPs set out the standards, rights and legal obligations in relation to collecting, handling, holding and accessing personal information.

The new law introduces a Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme that requires Early Childhood Services, Family Day Care Services, and Out of School Hours Care Services to provide notice to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (formerly known as the Privacy Commissioner) and affected individuals of any data breaches that are “likely” to result in “serious harm.”

Businesses that suspect an eligible data breach may have occurred, must undertake a reasonable and expeditious assessment to determine if the data breach is likely to result in serious harm to any individual affected. A breach of an Australian Privacy Principle is viewed as an ‘interference with the privacy of an individual’ and can lead to regulatory action and penalties.

source: OAIC Australian Privacy Principles

Approved provider / Management will:

- provide staff and educators with relevant information regarding changes to Australian privacy law and Service policy
- ensure all relevant staff understand the requirements under Australia's privacy law and Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme
- keep up to date with the Australian Privacy Principles
- ensure personal information is protected in accordance with our obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 and Privacy amendments (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012
- ensure all records and documents are maintained and stored in accordance with Education and Care Service National Regulations
- ensure the service acts in accordance with the requirements of the Privacy Principles and Privacy Act 1988 by developing, reviewing and implementing procedures and practices that identify
 - the name and contact details of the service;
 - what information the service collects and the source of information
 - the purpose for collecting information;
 - who will have access to the information
 - what types of information will be disclosed to the public or other agencies;
 - Collection, storage, use, disclosure and disposal of personal information collected by the service
 - any law that requires the particular information to be collected;
 - the right of the individual to view their personal information;
 - adequate and appropriate storage for personal information collect by the service
 - protection of personal information from unauthorised access
 - the length of time information needs to be archived;
- ensure the appropriate and permitted use of images of children
- ensure all employees, students, volunteers and families are provided with a copy of this policy
- deal with privacy complaints promptly and in a consistent manner, following the Centre’s Grievance Procedures. Where the aggrieved person is dissatisfied after going through the grievance policy and procedure

- ensure families only have access to the files and records of their own children. Parents/ guardians 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. Parents may view the information on the premises in the presence of the Director or Deputy Director or other named staff, but the information may not be removed from the premises.
- ensure information given to Educators will be treated with respect and in a professional manner
- ensure individual child and staff files are stored in a locked and secure cabinet
- ensure Information relating to staff employment will remain confidential to the people directly involved with making personnel decisions.
- ensure that Information shared with us by the family will be treated as confidential unless told otherwise.
- The 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.

A Nominated Supervisor (Director) and/or Responsible Person will:

- adhere to Centre policies and procedures at all times
- ensure educators, staff, students, volunteers and families are aware of the confidentiality and privacy policy
- ensure the Centre obtains consent from parents/ guardian of children who will be photographed or videoed by the Centre
- ensure families only have access to the files and records of their own children
- ensure information given to Educators will be treated with respect and in a confidential and professional manner
- ensure only necessary information regarding the children's day to day health and wellbeing is given to non-primary contact educators – for example food allergies
- not discuss individual children with people other than the family of that child, except for the purposes of curriculum planning or group management. Communication in other settings must be approved by the family beforehand.
- ensure that information shared with us by the family will be treated as confidential unless told otherwise.
- Ensure that information related to Court/ Intervention orders, which will be disclosed only to the Director and then at Director's discretion the information will be disclosed to the Deputy Director/ Room coordinators/ kinder Teachers or relevant staff directly working with the child or if needed to the administration staff.
- inform persons, prior to collecting information, of the circumstances when information will be disclosed to other parties. This can include where staff qualifications or first aid status may be disclosed to a selection committee or to families in a newsletter. It may also include any issues of a child protection nature, where information obtained by the service is required to be disclosed to the relevant government authorities.

Responsible Persons (Certified Supervisors), Educators and Staff will:

- read and adhere to the confidentiality and privacy policy at all times
- ensure documented information and photographs of children are kept secure but may be accessed at any time by the child's parents or guardian
- ensure families only have access to the files and records of their own children
- treat private and confidential information with respect in a professional manner
- not discuss individual children with people other than the family of that child, except for the purposes of curriculum planning or group management. Communication in other settings must be approved by the family beforehand.
- ensure information shared with us by the family will be treated as confidential unless told otherwise.
- maintain individual and Centre information and store documentation according to this policy at all times.

- not to share information about the individual or Centre, management information, or other staff as per legislative authority.

Australian Privacy Principles- Personal Information

Geelong Children's Centre is committed to protecting personal information in accordance with our obligations under the Privacy Act 1988 and Privacy Amendments (Enhancing Privacy Protection) Act 2012.

Personal information includes a broad range of information, or an opinion, that could identify an individual.

Sensitive information is personal information that includes information or an opinion about a range of personal information that has a higher level of privacy protection than other personal information.

(Source: OAIC-Australian Privacy Laws, Privacy Act 1988)

Personal information will be collected and held securely and confidentially about you and your child to assist our Service provide quality education and care to your child whilst promoting and maintaining a child safe environment for all stakeholders.

Personal information our Service may request regarding enrolled children:

Child's name

- Gender
- Date of birth
- Address
- Birth Certificate
- Religion
- Language spoken at home
- Emergency contact details and persons authorised to collect individual children
- Children's health requirements
- Immunisation records- (Immunisation History Statement)
- Developmental records and summaries
- External agency information
- Custodial arrangements or parenting orders
- Incident reports
- Medication reports
- Child Care Subsidy information
- Medical records
- Permission forms – including permission to take and publish photographs, video, work samples
- Doctor's contact information
- Centrelink Customer Reference number (CRN)
- Dietary requirements

Personal information our Service may request regarding parents and caregivers

- Parent/Guardian full name
- Address
- Phone number (mobile & work)
- Email address
- Bank account or credit card detail for payments
- Centrelink Customer Reference number (CRN)
- Custody arrangements or parental agreement

Personal information our Service may request regarding staff, students and volunteers:

- Tax information

- Banking details
- Working contract
- Emergency contact details
- Medical details
- Immunisation details
- Working with Children Check verification
- Educational Qualifications
- Medical history
- Resume
- Superannuation details
- Child Protection qualifications
- First Aid, Asthma and Anaphylaxis certificates
- Professional Development certificates
- PRODA related documents such as RA number and related background checks

Method of Collection

Information is generally collected using standard forms at the time of enrolment or employment. Additional information may be provided to the Service through email, surveys, telephone calls or other written communication. Information may be collected online through the use of software such as CCS software or program software

How we protect your personal information.

To protect your personal and sensitive information, we maintain physical, technical and administrative safeguards. All hard copies of information are stored in children's individual files or staff individual files in a locked cupboard. Hard copy information is stored securely at the Service and archived in accordance with regulatory requirements when no longer needed. All computers used to store personal information are password protected. Each staff member will be provided with a unique username and password for access to CCS software and program software. Staff will be advised not to share usernames and passwords.

Access to personal and sensitive information is restricted to key personal only.

Security software is installed on all computers and updated automatically when patches are released
Data is regularly backed up on external drive and/or through a cloud storage solution
Any notifiable breach to data is reported
All staff are aware of the importance of confidentiality and maintaining the privacy and security of all your information. Procedures are in place to ensure information is communicated to intended recipients only, example invoices and payment enquiries

Access to personal and sensitive information

Personal and sensitive information about staff, families and children will be stored securely at all times. Families who have access to enrolment or program information online will be provided with a unique username and password. Families will be advised not to share username and passwords.

The Approved Provider will ensure that information kept in a child's record is not divulged or communicated through direct or indirect means to another person other than:

- the extent necessary for the education and care or medical treatment of the child to whom the information relates
- a parent of the child to whom the information relates, except in the case of information kept in a staff record
- the Regulatory Authority or an authorised officer
- as expressly authorised, permitted or required to be given by or under any Act or law

- with the written consent of the person who provided the information.

Disclosing personal and sensitive information

Our Service will only disclose personal or sensitive information to:

- a third-party provider with parent permission (for example CCS software provider)
- Child Protection Agency- Office of the Children's Guardian and Regulatory Authority as per our *Child Safe Policy and Child Safe Environment Policies*
- as part of the purchase of our business asset with parental permission
- Government employees
- Authorised officers during Assessment and Rating
- Software companies that provide computer based educational programs which use children's personal information
- Lawyers in relation to a legal claim
- Debt collection agency where fees are outstanding
- Officers carrying out an external dispute resolution process
- Protecting individuals from serious misconduct or to prevent a serious threat to a life, health or safety.

Complaints and Grievances

If a parent, employee or volunteer has a complaint or concern about our Service, or they believe there has been a data breach of the Australian Privacy Principles, they are requested to contact the Approved Provider so reasonable steps to investigate the complaint can be made and a response provided.

If there are further concerns about how the matter has been handled, please contact the Office of Australian Information Commissioner on 1300 363 992 or:

https://forms.business.gov.au/smartforms/landing.htm?formCode=APC_PC

For any other general concerns, please contact the Nominated Supervisor / Approved Provider directly on: (03) 5229 1326

APPENDIX

In particular, the principles cover how personal information can be used and disclosed (including overseas), keeping personal information secure, and the open and transparent management of personal information.

The Australian Privacy Principles (APPs) outline:

- The open and transparent management of personal information, including having a privacy policy
- An individual having the option of transacting anonymously or using a pseudonym where practicable
- The collection of solicited personal information and receipt of unsolicited personal information including giving notice about collection
- How personal information can be used and disclosed (including overseas)
- Maintaining the quality of personal information
- Keeping personal information secure
- Right for individuals to access and correct their personal information

The APPs place more stringent obligations on APP entities when they handle 'sensitive information'. Sensitive information is a type of personal information and includes information about an individual's:

- Health (including predictive genetic information)
- Racial or ethnic origin
- Political opinions
- Membership of a political association, professional or trade association or trade union
- Religious beliefs or affiliations
- Philosophical beliefs
- Sexual orientation or practices
- Criminal record

- Biometric information that is to be used for certain purposes

Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)

APP 1 – Open and transparent management of personal information

Ensures that APP entities manage personal information in an open and transparent way. This includes having a clearly expressed and up to date APP privacy policy.

APP 2 – Anonymity and Pseudonymity

Requires APP entities to give individuals the option of not identifying themselves, or of using a pseudonym. Limited exceptions apply.

APP 3 – Collection of solicited personal information

Outlines when an APP entity can collect personal information that is solicited. It applies higher standards to the collection of 'sensitive' information.

APP 4 – Dealing with unsolicited personal information

Outlines how APP entities must deal with unsolicited personal information.

APP 5 – Notification of the collection of personal information

Outlines when and in what circumstances an APP entity that collects personal information must notify an individual of certain matters.

APP 6 – Use or disclosure of personal information

Outlines the circumstances in which an APP entity may use or disclose personal information that it holds.

APP 7 – Direct marketing

An organisation may only use or disclose personal information for direct marketing purposes if certain conditions are met.

APP 8 – Cross-order disclosure of personal information

Outlines the steps an APP entity must take to protect personal information before it is disclosed overseas.

APP 9 – Adoption, use or disclosure of government related identifiers

Outlines the limited circumstances when an organisation may adopt a government related identifier of an individual as its own identifier or use or disclose a government related identifier of an individual.

APP 10 – Quality of personal information

An APP entity must take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it collects is accurate, up to date and complete. An entity must also take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it uses or discloses is accurate, up to date, complete and relevant, having regard to the purpose of the use or disclosure.

APP 11 – Security of personal information

An APP entity must take reasonable steps to protect personal information it holds from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. An entity has obligations to destroy or de-identify personal information in certain circumstances.

APP 12 – Access to personal information

Outlines an APP entity's obligations when an individual request to be given access to personal information held about them by the entity. This includes a requirement to provide access unless a specific exception applies.

APP 13 – Correction of personal information

Outlines an APP entity's obligations in relation to correcting the personal information it holds about individuals.

Source: Australian Government Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC)

<https://www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/2>

DIVERSITY, ANTI-BIAS, EQUITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

Our Service believes that children have the right to be treated equally and our goal is to develop children's identity and self-esteem in a trusting and supportive environment. We embrace diversity in all its forms to help develop positive and accepting attitudes in children, and to help them gain a better understanding of their environment, community, country, and the world.

In order to create an environment that supports, reflects and promotes gender equitable and inclusive behaviours and practices, it is crucial for our Service to examine our value and belief systems. We are committed to promoting confidence and self-esteem in all children and acknowledge the uniqueness and potential of each child.

Anti-bias is the practice of inclusion and underpins our Service philosophy. It is the acceptance that all children are valued and respected. We believe in the statement of inclusion as advocated by Early Childhood Australia (ECA) that *'Inclusion means every child has access to, participates meaningfully in, and experiences positive outcomes from early childhood education and care programs.'* (2016).

PURPOSE

To ensure children are treated with respect and equality, our Service affirms the right for all children to have access to and participation in, the same experiences and activities irrespective of gender. To ensure that positive attitudes towards gender equity are encouraged and supported within our Service and community. Children will be encouraged to develop a sense of pride and self-worth, as they develop respect for each other's rights and responsibilities.

We aim to provide an inclusive environment for all children, families and educators, acknowledging the uniqueness of every person regardless of their race, gender, sexuality, religion, culture, physical and mental abilities and socio-economic background. This policy ensures all children, families, and staff are welcomed and treated equitably and with respect.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, approved provider, nominated supervisor, student and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Early Childhood Educators are in a unique position to influence children's development and create environments that encourage equal and respectful relationships. Gender plays a significant role in the lives of children as it defines masculinity and femininity. These are socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that society considers 'appropriate' for a person based on their sex. Breaking down gender stereotypes from a young age, helps stop the negative consequences of inequality and discrimination. Educators working with children need to observe the implication of gender in children's choice of friends, activities, language, interactions, group dynamics and behaviour. These observations can lead to valuable insight into children's understandings about gender and assist educators to promote challenges to gender stereotypes and embrace diversity.

The role of Educators is to encourage children to share and learn about the individuality of each child and their family and their role in the Service. This policy aims to assist children to form positive social relationships, develop their identity and self-awareness and to learn to accept the diversity of members within and outside of the Service community which also underpins the philosophy of our Service.

The Anti-Bias Approach in Early Childhood suggests the following principles as a basis to challenge sexism and promote anti-bias behaviour:

- be prepared to challenge sexist attitudes and behaviours
- ensure that you protect the child or adult who has been treated unfairly
- explain what you think is unfair about their attitudes and behaviours and if appropriate, model anti-sexist attitudes and behaviours

- correct any incorrect and sexist assumptions a child has about gender
- plan a strategy for how to deal with a similar situation in the future.

(Red Ruby Scarlet (Ed.). 2018)

Creating Inclusion

Inclusion supports children's rights, fosters diversity and overcomes bias and barriers that may exist preventing children to participate in experiences within our Service. We will ensure children are provided with access to activities and environments, meaningful participation to foster a sense of belonging and opportunities to experience positive learning outcomes.

Cultural or National Origin and Racial Identity

Our Service values and promotes equity, respect and awareness of different cultures. We ensure a cultural inclusive curriculum that reflects the cultural, linguistic and religious diversity of our society.

The Nominated Supervisor, Responsible Persons and Educators will:

- ensure our program design and deliver builds on community and cultural strengths
- develop strong partnerships with families and children to extend their individual and communities' cultural competence
- ensure children have opportunities to participate with a wide variety of resources from the daily life of a variety of families and cultures
- where possible, engage educators that reflect a variety of cultural, national origin, and racial identities.
- affirm and foster children's knowledge and pride in cultural identity
- foster children's curiosity, enjoyment and empathetic awareness of cultural differences and similarities
- provide children with tools to respond appropriately to bias- build on children's strengths, interests and individuality
- teach children to overcome any inappropriate responses triggered by cultural differences
- encourage children to ask about differences in physical characteristics - what makes us all human
- enable children to feel pride, but not superiority, about their racial identity
- help children to become aware of our shared physical characteristics – what makes us all human
- be mindful and respectful of how activities and experiences provided may impact on the expectations, interests, and behaviours of all genders
- provide a stimulating learning environment in which boys and girls are equally encouraged to explore a full range of experiences and emotions
- encourage children to express emotions and display affection and empathy
- act as advocates of children in dealing with other adults who act in a bias manner against a child due to their gender
- discourage the identification of particular skills, behaviours, and/or feelings as 'boys' and 'girls'.
- encourage children to look upon both sexes as equal
- support the gender equity policy review by focusing on how children construct gender, and the effects of gender in curriculum, teaching and learning
- be responsive and ensure their actions are relevant to the specific and changing gender dynamics that emerge from the different ways in which different children interpret gender
- monitor language, attitudes, and assumptions with regard to gender and anti-bias of themselves, other educators, and children.
- give positive messages about gender equity through their actions and words and avoid giving messages that promote traditional gender roles and gender bias
- critically reflect on their practices and environment and model a positive attitude towards gender equality
- encourage and support all children to participate in the full range of experiences and activities

- regularly review resources, equipment, materials, and images used with children to make sure they include gender diversity, non-stereotypical images, and non-traditional family lifestyles such as single or same sex parents
- encourage children to explore their own gender identities and the impact of gender relations in their play
- regularly review the book collection to ensure a range of different stories and experiences are depicted beyond stereotypical narratives
- encourage parent input into the program and to participate on a level that they feel comfortable with, sharing their culture, and, for example, their language
- collect information from each family on enrolment and incorporate it into the program to meet individual family needs in regard to ethnicity and home language
- where possible use both the Educators and children's first language as appropriate within the Service environment
- respect all cultures by presenting photographs, pictures, play equipment, books, posters, music, dramatic play resources, and dolls that will encourage open discussion and exploration of a variety of cultures
- provide resources and activities that include diversity and skin tone to foster respect and understanding for people of all backgrounds
- develop an understanding of the needs, strengths, and attitudes of each culture represented at the Service
- challenge inappropriate or stereotypical conversations or remarks by children.

Management and the Nominated Supervisor will:

- provide families with information about the importance of a gender equity approach in achieving positive outcomes for all children
- provide information about the Service's gender equity work
- ensure all staff have access to professional development activities
- engage staff in reflective practice about their own biases about gender
- foster an inclusive and gender equitable environment
- promote a positive understanding of gender equity
- ensure educators and staff are aware of the service's expectations regarding positive, respectful and appropriate behaviour when working with children and families
- ensure that any behaviour or circumstances that may constitute discrimination or prejudice are dealt with in an appropriate manner

Diversity in Family Composition

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- create an environment that is welcoming to all families
- respect each family, and work in partnership to support the child's emergent identity as an individual, member of their family, our Service, and the community
- engage in simple discussions about families that focus on fact rather than values e.g. "some children live with their mum or dad, some children live with their mum and dad, some with grandparents, and some with two mums or two dads".
- be encouraged to seek awareness and reflect on his/her own feelings, beliefs and background and evaluate the effect these may have on their attitudes and interactions with families.
- respect family lifestyle choices
- treat all families respectfully regardless of socioeconomic background
- discuss how members of the community can support one another and less fortunate people through the provision of resources, donations of goods or time etc.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- show respect and a commitment to reconciliation by developing a Reconciliation Action Plan
- reflect on the current level of cultural competence of our staff
- promote the inclusion of children's voices in all decisions that affect them
- build and strengthen our knowledge and understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and contributions
- attend professional development to support our understandings of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and perspectives
- provide opportunities for professional reflection
- identify and challenge our own cultural assumptions, beliefs and commitments to cultural competency
- engage with local Aboriginal families and communities through Aboriginal Education Consultative Groups
- invite Elders and Traditional Owners to speak to children, staff and families about the histories and cultures of the local area
- develop an Acknowledgement of Country in collaboration with Elders, community members, children and families which will be displayed and given will be conveyed during special events and incorporated into the program on a regular basis
- develop awareness and meaningful understanding about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people as part of the cultural heritage of all Australians
- encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities access children services
- show sensitivity and respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages by incorporating verbal and visual languages into the Service environment.

Ability

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- provide an inclusive educational environment in which all children can succeed
- promote acceptance, respect and appreciation for individual's varying abilities
- consult with all families and other professionals to enable full participation in the program for children with varying abilities.
- evaluate and adjust the environment to provide access and enable all children to develop autonomy, independence, competency, confidence and pride.
- provide children and parents with developmentally appropriate information about varying abilities to foster understandings that we are all similar and different
- empower children in their own learning to ensure that they gain a feeling of self-respect
- treat all children fairly and develop an understanding that everyone has something important to contribute
- find examples in books, movies and tv shows that reflect attitudes about diversity, ability and disability
- observe all children and with family consultation, provide an individualised program to extend each child's interests and abilities
- create an environment where all children can participate in activities and experiences.

Promoting Inclusion and Diversity into the Curriculum

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- promote positive influences, modelling appropriate communication, non-bias or gender specific language and attitudes
- develop appropriate expectations for each child based on their individual strengths, developmental needs, and interests
- assist Educators with the development of required skills and knowledge for working with all children and families.
- work with Inclusion Support Professionals to assist in the inclusion of children with additional needs

- explore the values and uniqueness of the diversity within the Service. These opportunities will form part of the curriculum.
- treat children with respect by answering their questions honestly
- adapt activities, interactions, communication, the environment, and documentation to ensure all children and families are actively included and supported to participate in the curriculum
- provide children with a range of resources, equipment and opportunities to enhance their awareness of diversity
- reflect on the curriculum ensuring inclusive practice and goals set for children are realistic and being met.
- involve families in the planning of learning opportunities reflective of their culture.

Promoting and Supporting Children's Home Languages

The Nominated Supervisor and Educators will:

- acknowledge that the use of children's home language underpins their sense of identity and conceptual development (EYLF)
- promote and support children's home languages in the Service
- present books that reflect different languages and children's first language
- create an environment which supports natural language learning and interaction
- assist parents to understand the value and importance both their home language and English
- engage in professional development about cultural diversity and building linguistic capacity
- subscribe to [Early Learning Languages Australia](#) (ELLA) or other online programs to support children's learning with play-based language learning experiences. (check eligibility for ELLA)

HEALTH, HYGIENE AND DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Based on current recommendations from Health Authorities, when a vaccine preventable disease is present or suspected in the Centre, families and parents/guardians of all immunised and unimmunised children at risk of contracting the disease are notified. Unimmunised children are excluded from the centre during the outbreak of some infectious illness or diseases. The risks of infectious disease are typically greater in unimmunised children who are too young to be immunised or who have got required evidence to determine whether the child has an approved exemption from immunisation. For more information on approved exemptions from immunisation click on the link: <http://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/2/1/3/40>

The spread of infections in the early childhood environment is facilitated by crowding and microbial contamination of the environment, as well as the unhygienic behaviours and greater exposure of young children. Our Centre will minimise children's exposure to infectious diseases by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases, promoting practices that reduce the transmission of infection, ensuring the exclusion of sick children and educators, supporting child immunisation and implement effective hygiene practices. The Centre will implement the recommendations from Staying Healthy in Child Care – Preventing the spread of Infectious Diseases in the early childhood environment. Children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the Service.

PURPOSE

Children encounter many other children and adults within the Service environment which can result in the contraction of infectious illnesses. Our Service has a duty of care to ensure that children, families, educators, and visitors of the Service are provided with a high level of protection during the hours of the Service's operation. We aim to manage illnesses and prevent the spread of infectious diseases throughout the Service.

Immunisation is a simple, safe, and effective way of protecting people against harmful diseases before they come into contact with them in the community. Immunisation not only protects individuals, but also others within the community, by reducing the spread of disease and illnesses.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, staff, management, the approved provider, nominated supervisor, students and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

Our Service is committed to minimise the spread of infectious diseases and viruses by implementing recommendations as stated in the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council and advice provided from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the *Australian Government- Department of Health* and local Public Health Units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act. Recommendations for managing positive cases of COVID-19 in early education and care is provided by Public Health Unit Victoria.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded from the Service depends on:

- how easily the infection can spread
- how long the person is likely to be infectious and
- the severity of the infectious disease or illness.

PREVENTING INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Children enter education and care services when their immune systems are still developing. They have not been exposed to many common germs and therefore are susceptible to bacteria that may cause infections. Given the close physical contact children have with other children in early childhood and care, it is very easy for infectious diseases and illnesses to spread through normal daily activities.

Our Service implements rigorous hygienic practices to limit the spread of illness and infectious diseases including:

- effective hand washing hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- appropriate use of gloves
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective environmental cleaning including toys and resources (including bedding)
- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Service
- physical distancing (if recommended by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee [AHPPC] and/or Safe Work Australia)
- use of face masks (as mandated by PHU or Service decision)
- restricting parents and visitors from entering our service to reduce threat of spread of a community disease (e.g. COVID-19)
- ensuring adequate ventilation
- encouraging children, educators or staff to seek medical attention and get tested if they show symptoms of an infectious disease or virus, including COVID-19.

Immunisation requirements

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent many childhood infectious diseases. As of January 2018, unvaccinated children due to their parent's conscientious objection are no longer able to be enrolled in approved early childcare services. Children who cannot be fully vaccinated due to a medical condition or who are on a recognised catch-up schedule may still be enrolled upon presentation of the appropriate form signed by a medical practitioner who meets the criteria stated by the Australian Government.

Only parents of children (less than 20 years of age) who are fully immunised or are on a recognised catch-up schedule can receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The relevant vaccinations are those under the *National Immunisation Program* (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Our Service recommends educators and children keep up to date with vaccinations for COVID 19.

Educators and other staff at our Service are highly recommended to keep up to date with all immunisations including yearly influenza vaccinations. These include vaccinations recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Reporting Outbreaks to the Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority

Outbreaks of communicable diseases and contagious viruses represent a threat to public health. To help prevent outbreaks, the Department of Health monitors the number of people who contract certain infectious diseases and their characteristics, the recent travel or attendance of infected people in a public place or on public transport and works with health specialists and doctors to help prevent the transmission of diseases to other people.

The Public Health Act 2010 lawfully requires and authorises doctors, hospitals, laboratories, school principals and childcare centre directors to confidentially notify the Public Health Unit (PHU) of patients with certain conditions, and to provide the required information on the notification forms. Specialist trained public health staff review this information and if necessary, contact the patient's doctor, and sometimes the patient, to provide advice about disease control and to complete the collection of information.

All information is held confidentially in order to protect the patient's privacy. The Commonwealth Privacy Acts only release/disclose patient information where it is lawfully required or authorised.

Management is required to notify the local PHU by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the Service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases:

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness

Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak.

The Approved Provider / Director must also notify the Regulatory Authority of any incidence of a notifiable infectious disease or illness. [acecqa contact regulatory authority](#)

MANAGING A POSITIVE CASE OF COVID-19 IN ECEC SETTINGS

Changes may occur to how our Service manages positive cases of COVID-19. We will be directed by our regulatory authority as to what procedures need to be followed to ensure the health and safety of all staff, children and families.

As COVID-19 is easily transmissible in education and care services, our Service has implemented a range of risk mitigation strategies to assist in protecting children, adults and visitors at the service.

Although it is no longer a legal requirement for a child or adult to self-isolate if diagnosed with COVID-19 our Service strongly recommends that any person who tests positive to COVID-19 informs their workplace/employer and education and care service as soon as possible. Children, educators and staff who test positive for COVID-19 will be/may be required to be excluded whilst unwell.

If a child or staff member has attended the service while infectious, management will:

- identify the period of time that the positive case was in the service during the infectious period
- if this is part of an outbreak of 5 or more people with COVID-19 in a 7 day period the Nominated Supervisor/Responsible Person will notify the service community as soon as practicable
- undertake a thorough clean of the service.

The Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor must notify families and the Regulatory Authority when an outbreak of COVID-19 has occurred at the Service. [5 or more cases within a 7-day period] (Reg 88, 175).

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/MANAGEMENT WILL ENSURE:

- safe health and hygiene practices are implemented at all times
- that all information regarding the prevention and transmission of infectious diseases is sourced from a recognised Government Health authority [Australian Government Department of Health](#)
- exclusion periods for people with infectious diseases recommended by Government Authorities are implemented for all staff, children, parents, families, students and visitors
- the Service implements recommendations from [Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services](#) to maintain a healthy environment
- advice and recommendations from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) and Safe Work Australia will be implemented where reasonably possible
- children are protected from harm by ensuring relevant policies and procedures are followed regarding health and safety within the Service
- required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored
- the Public Health Unit is notified as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled has a vaccinated preventable disease
- the Public Health Unit is notified in the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis. Management must document the number of cases, dates of onset, duration of symptoms. An outbreak is when two or more children or staff have a sudden onset of diarrhoea or vomiting within 48 hours of each other.
- a notice is clearly displayed stating that there has been an occurrence of an infectious disease at the service
- required enrolment information, including health and immunisation records of enrolled children is collected, maintained and appropriately and securely stored
- daily attendance records for staff, children and visitors are up to date at all times
- existing risk assessments for emergencies include a response to COVID-19.

In the event of a confirmed COVID-19 case the Public Health Unit and Regulatory Authority will be notified, and advice followed to ensure the safety of children, educators and visitors to the service. [\(NQA ITS\)](#)

- the Department of Education, Skills and Employment in (VIC) is notified of a positive case of COVID-19
- directions from the PHU are followed to close the service and an industrial/deep clean of the service is conducted
- all families and staff are notified of the closure of the service if advised to do so by the PHU
- privacy and confidentiality laws are adhered to- the person who has the confirmed case of COVID-19 will be on a 'need to know' basis only
- information is provided to the PHU for contact tracing
- COVID-19 testing will be conducted for educators and staff at the Service

- COVID-19 testing will be required for all children and families as advised by PHU
- re-opening dates will be confirmed to the Regulatory Authority, DESE and families when advised by the PHU.

A NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/ RESPONSIBLE PERSON WILL ENSURE:

- a hygienic environment is promoted and maintained
- children are supported in their understanding of health and hygiene practices throughout the daily program and routine (hand washing, hand drying, cough and sneeze etiquette)
- educators and staff are aware of relevant immunisation guidelines for children and themselves
- wall charts about immunisation are displayed in each room
- an Immunisation History Statement for each child is collected on enrolment and maintained/updated regarding the child's immunisation status (AIR) and any medical conditions
- families are provided with relevant sourced materials and information on infectious diseases, health, and hygiene including:
 - the current National Immunisation Schedule
 - exclusion guidelines in the event of a vaccine preventable illness at the Service for children that are not immunised or have not yet received all their immunisations
 - advice and information regarding any infectious diseases in general and information regarding any specific infectious illnesses that are suspected/present in the Service.
- families are provided with information about an infectious disease verbally and on Educa (digital platform)
- information or factsheets related to the disease/infection and the necessary precautions/exclusions required will be provided to families in hardcopy and as a PDF document
- families are advised that they are requested to alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an Infectious Illness, including COVID-19
- all educators are mindful and maintain confidentiality of individual children's medical circumstances
- that opportunities for educators to source pertinent up to date information from trusted sources on the prevention of infectious diseases and maintaining health and hygiene are provided
- that opportunities for staff, children, and families to have access to health professionals by organising visits/guest speakers to attend the service to confirm best practice are provided
- families are advised to keep children at home if they are unwell. If a child has been sick, they must be well for 24hrs before returning to the Service. For example, if a child is absent due to illness or is sent home due to illness, they will be unable to attend the next day as a minimum. The Nominated Supervisor may approve the child's return to the Service if families provide a doctor's certificate/clearance certifying that the child is no longer contagious and is in good health. Please note; it is not always possible to obtain a doctor's certificate or clearance for suspected cases of an illness. The decision to approve a child's return is up to the Approved Provider/Nominated supervisor
- to complete the Illness sheets when children go home sick and document incidents of infectious diseases no later than 24 hours of an illness or infectious disease occurring in the Service
- educators or staff who have diarrhoea or an infectious disease do not handle food for others and are not to return to work until they have been symptom free for 48 hours
- any risk to a child or adult with complex medical needs is minimised in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus. This may require a risk assessment and decision-making regarding the suitability of attendance of the child or staff member during this time.
- educators and staff are encouraged to be immunised. Management provides relevant information on vaccinations and infectious diseases that are predominantly a risk to educators and staff, especially against Hep. A and Hep B.
- educators and staff are encouraged to take flu vaccines and other relevant vaccines; Centre provides Flu Vaccine free of cost to all staff.

- encourages any staff member who may be thinking of becoming pregnant to avail themselves to any immunisations as recommended and to provide staff with information about diseases that are preventable by immunisation, fact sheets or in-service training.

EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- that any child suspected of having an infectious illness is responded to and their health and emotional needs supported at all times
- any child suspected of having an infectious illness is isolated from other children and supervised whilst waiting for collection by parents or guardian
- that appropriate health and safety procedures are implemented when treating ill children- wear disposable gloves, face mask or other PPE if needed
- families are aware of the need to collect their unwell child/ children as soon as practicable from the Service
- after confirmation that a child is suffering from an infectious disease, and as soon as practical, the family of each child must be notified whilst maintaining the privacy of the ill/infectious child. Communication may be:
 - verbally
 - through a letter from the educator or Approved Provider
 - via electronic message- text message, email or digital platform
- all resources or items touched by a child with a suspected illness are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected- (cushions, pillows, toys)
- their own immunisation status is maintained, and the Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor is advised of any updates to their immunisation status
- opportunities are provided for children to participate in hygiene practices, including routine opportunities, and intentional practice such as hand washing, sneezing and cough etiquette
- consideration is given to the combination of children to decrease the risk of attaining an infectious illness when planning the routines/program of the day
- they adhere to the Service's health and hygiene policy including:
 - hand washing
 - daily cleaning of the surfaces, equipment, furniture, toys and outdoor play space and resources
 - wearing gloves (particularly when in direct contact with bodily fluids- nappy changing and toileting)
 - appropriate and hygienic handling and preparation of food
 - wearing face masks (if mandated by PHU)
- they maintain up-to-date knowledge with respect to Health and Safety through on-going professional development opportunities
- that children rest 'head to toe' to avoid cross infection while resting or sleeping
- that cots or mattresses are placed at least 1.5m away from each other if physical distancing measures are required to be implemented
- children do not to share beds at the same time
- bedding is cleaned using detergent and water if the surface is known to be contaminated with a potential infectious disease, disinfectant spray is used to clean beds after each use
- that all play dough is freshly made every week. If there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, or any other contagious communicable disease, play dough is to be discarded at the end of each day and a new batch made each day for the duration of the outbreak
- children wash their hands before and after using play dough.

Prevention strategies for minimising the spread of disease within our Service include all staff ensuring:

- full adherence to the NHMRC childcare cleaning guidelines

- the Service will use structured cleaning schedules to ensure that all cleaning is carried out regularly and thoroughly.
- to clean surfaces first with detergent and water before using disinfectants. (Disinfectants cannot kill germs unless areas are clean)
- separate mops are used for food area and toilets. Mops used for toilet accidents are to be soaked in disinfectant in a bucket in the laundry sink and then air-dried
- that a daily clean is carried out on other surfaces that may transmit germs such as high touch surfaces and objects including doorknobs, tables, light switches, handles, remotes, play gyms, low shelving, tap handles and toilet flush buttons etc. This will be increased to several times a day if an outbreak of an infectious disease/virus has been recorded in the Service or to minimise the risk of transmission of a virus such as COVID-19
- that if a child has a toileting accident, the items are placed in child's wet bag. The wet bag will be stored away from children on a shelf or in a container labelled 'soiled/wet clothing' for parents to take home
- chucks used to clean floors, bathroom, art and craft, and meal surfaces and is colour coded
- that any toy that is mouthed by a child is immediately washed with warm soapy water or at the end of the day. All washable toys out on display for the children are to be washed on a weekly basis to decrease the risk of cross contamination
- toys and equipment (that are difficult to wash) will be washed with detergent (or soap and water) and air-dried in sunlight
- washable toys and equipment will be washed in detergent and hot water or the dishwasher and aired to dry (toys will not be washed in the dishwasher at the same time as dishes).
- furnishings, fabric tablecloths and pillowcases will be laundered at the end of each week and hung out to dry. This will be increased to every Monday, Wednesday and Friday during winter months or daily during an outbreak of illness in the Service.
- floor surfaces will be cleaned on a daily basis after each meal and whenever required with sand, spills or messy activities
- toilets/bathrooms will be cleaned in the morning, middle of the day and at the end of the day and whenever needed throughout the day using detergent and water followed by disinfectant and paper towel and floors will be swept so that it is safe from hazards e.g. sand, water spillage etc. They are also checked regularly throughout the day to ensure cleanliness is maintained
- nappy change area must be cleaned after every individual change
- when cleaning up spills of faeces, vomit or urine off beds, floors, bathrooms etc. educators will use disinfectant on the surface after cleaning it with detergent and warm water
- pregnant staff members should take extra precaution when change nappies or assist in toileting or cleaning up toileting accidents to prevent unexpected cross contamination
- professional cleaners will hygienically clean the Service every night to ensure that the service gets thoroughly cleaned also risk of contamination is removed as per Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19

FAMILIES WILL:

- adhere to the Service's policies and exclusion requirements
- adhere to the Service's restrictions of entry into the Service in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus
- exclude their child from care if they display symptoms of an infectious illness or disease or in the event of a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Service and their child is not immunised fully
- alert the Service if their child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, including COVID-19
- advise the Service of their child's immunisation status, by providing a current Immunisation History Statement recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for the Service to copy and place in the child's file
- advise the Service when their child's medical action plan is updated

- provide sufficient spare clothing, particularly if the child is toilet training
- adhere to the Service's risk minimisation strategies if their child has complex medical needs in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease or virus

MINIMISING POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES

Our Service minimises the use of potentially dangerous substances. Ordinary detergents will be used to help remove dirt from surfaces. Colour-coded sponges (e.g. pink for the kitchen, yellow for the bathroom) will be used in order to eliminate cross contamination. Different rubber gloves will also be used in each room then hung out to air-dry. Before returning to the children educators will wash and dry hands.

DISINFECTANTS

Disinfectants are usually unnecessary as very few germs can survive exposure to fresh air and natural light. In an outbreak situation, such as gastroenteritis or other infectious virus (COVID-19) the Public Health Unit or SafeWork Australia, may specify the use of a particular disinfectant and increased frequency of cleaning. In this situation, for the disinfectant to work effectively, there still needs to be thorough cleaning using a detergent beforehand.

Essentially, there is no ideal disinfectant. Disinfectants cannot kill germs if the surface is not clean. It is more important to ensure that surfaces have been cleaned with detergent and warm water than to use a disinfectant.

To kill germs, any disinfectant needs:

- A clean surface to be able to penetrate the germ
- To be able to act against those particular germs
- To be of the right concentrate
- Enough time to kill the germs, which is generally at least 10 minutes

DETERGENTS

To work in accordance with *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*, proper cleaning with detergent and warm water, followed by rinsing and air-drying kills most germs from surfaces as they are unable to multiply in a clean environment. Cleaning equipment should be stored and taken care of so it can dry between uses and not allow germs to multiply.

HANDWASHING

Effective handwashing is a vital strategy in the prevention of spreading many infectious diseases. Our Service will ensure [signs and posters](#) remind employees and visitors of the importance of handwashing to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

All children on entering the rooms must wash and dry their hands before becoming involved in the program. Our service will provide the appropriate height basins for children to wash their hands in as well as basins height appropriate for adults. Liquid soap and Sanitizers will be provided to all individuals to wash their hands. The service will also provide paper towel for people to dry their hands. All adults and children should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water and/or alcohol-based sanitiser:

- upon arrival at the Service
- before starting work in rooms
- when hands are visibly dirty
- when coming inside from being outside
- before and after eating meals
- before feeding a child
- before putting on disposable gloves
- before preparing food items

- before and after toileting children and coming into contact with any body fluids such as blood, urine, vomit, faeces, noses or breast milk
- before and after wearing gloves to change nappies
- after touching animals or pets
- after blowing your nose or sneezing and after assisting a child to blow their nose, clean mouth or sores. If you can't wash hands use sanitizer.
- after going to the toilet
- before and after administering first aid
- before and after administering medication. If giving medication to more than one child between each child.
- before and after preparing children's bottles
- after removing protective gloves
- after using any chemical or cleaning fluid
- after cleaning
- after smoking, coughing, sneezing, using a tissue or drinking water

NAPPY CHANGE AREA

Nappy change areas must be cleaned after each use with disinfectant and warm water and dried with paper towel. Placing paper towel on the change mat and removing this after each nappy change is recommended. Nappy change mats should be placed in the sunlight after being cleaned.

PROCEDURE FOR NAPPY CHANGING

- Wash your hands.
- Place paper on the changing mat.
- Place the child on the clean change mat.
- Always wear gloves when changing nappies.
- Remove the child's nappy and put it in a 'hands-free' lidded bin.
- Remove any clothes with urine and/or faeces on them.
- Clean child's bottom with warm washer, then dispose of washer in linen bag.
- Remove the paper and put it in a 'hands-free' lidded bin.
- Remove your gloves now, before you touch the child's clean clothes.
- Remove gloves by peeling them back from your wrists, turning them inside out as you go. Do not let your skin touch the outer contaminated surface of the glove.
- Put the gloves in the bin.
- Put clean nappy on the child
- Dress the child. Now you can hold the child close to you. Remove child from change table and encourage child to wash their hands, wash babies' and toddlers' hands.
- Take the child away from the change table.
- Clean the change table with disinfectant spray, paying particular attention to the mat, at the completion of each nappy change.
- Wash your hands.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR LAUNDERING OF SOILED ITEMS

Soiled clothing will be returned to a child's home for laundering. Educators will remove soiled content prior to placing clothing into a recycle/reusable bag. Items will be stored securely in a sealed container or on top of the bathroom shelf and not placed in the child's bag till the children get picked up to go home. Parents/guardians are required to provide the recycle / reusable bag for their child/ren. If the child doesn't have a recycle / reusable bag, parents will be asked to bring a bag or purchase a bag from the Centre.

CLOTHING

- Educators clothing should be washed daily.
- Educators should also have a change of clothes available in case of accidents.
- Dress-up and play clothes out on display should be washed once a week.

TOY CLEANING

Educators are required to clean the children's equipment and toys on a regular basis, and on a daily basis in rooms with younger children, in order to minimise cross contamination and the spread of illnesses. Educators will wash a toy immediately if it has been sneezed on, mouthed, and/or soiled or if it has been discarded after play by a child who has been unwell. The Service will have washable toys for younger children. Toys and equipment must be cleaned more often in the event of an infectious disease or virus is present in the service or community- (COVID-19)

RECOMMENDED CLEANING MATERIALS

- Most toys can be washed with normal dishwashing liquid and rinsed with clean water.
- Get into corners with a toothbrush and allow to air dry (if possible, in the natural sunlight).
- Leaving items such as LEGO and construction blocks to drain on a clean tea-towel overnight is ideal.

WOODEN TOYS / PUZZLES AND GAMES

- Should be wiped over with a slightly damp cloth – please do not immerse in water as this can destroy the equipment.

PLAY DOUGH

Our Service will reduce the risk of the spread of disease when playing with play dough by:

- encouraging hand washing before and after using play dough
- storing the play dough in a sealed container between uses
- making a new batch of play dough each week, and
- if there is an outbreak of vomiting and/or diarrhoea, discarding the playdough at the end of each day during the outbreak.

RATTLES AND BABY TOYS

- Must not be immersed in water as it can get inside, rendering the toy useless.
- Wipe thoroughly with hot water or spray with no rinse sanitiser

RIDE-ON VEHICLES AND OUTDOOR TOYS

- Must be cleaned (children can often help with this activity).
- Please take care not leave outdoor toys exposed to the elements as this reduces their lifespan.

LINEN

- All linen is disposed in the linen bags which goes to a contract laundry. All bedding and linen for children is supplied by the Centre.

DUMMIES

- Parents/Guardians will provide the dummies for their child attending the service if required.
- Dummies are stored in separate containers with the child's name clearly written on it and stored out of reach of children.
- Dummies are to be taken home and sterilised at home.
- Dummies forgotten at care are sterilised in boiling hot water/dishwasher and stored in separate containers.

BOTTLES AND TEATS

- Parents/Guardians are expected to provide bottles and teats for the children.

- Bottles have to be clearly labelled with the child's name on it.
- Bottles are to be taken home and sterilised at home.
- Bottles are rinsed with hot soapy water and returned to parents at the end of the day.
- Bottles forgotten at care are sterilised in boiling hot water/dishwasher and returned to parents the next day.
- Centre bottles and teats are soaked in hot soapy water and sterilized in dishwasher as required.

COTS AND STRETCHER BEDS

- Wash cots or stretchers with hot soapy water/if soiled.
- Cots and stretcher beds are wiped and cleaned with hot soapy water or disinfectant spray before making bed for another child.

CARPETS/FLOORS AND WALLS /WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Carpets are vacuumed daily and windows washed daily.
- Floors are mopped daily. Walls are cleaned twice a year or as required.
- Windows, doors and glass are cleaned daily or as required.
- Carpets are cleaned every 6 months or as required. Please refer to cleaning schedule for details.
- All educators follow the cleaning and yard check schedule (attached to the policy).

TOILET TRAINING PROCEDURE

- Educators will encourage interest in imitation when they see other children using the toilet and will demonstrate a positive approach to the child gaining control and sense of competence.
- Toileting and toilet training at our Centre is supported and are positive experiences for all children. Educators will assist and support all families in any way possible when the time comes to take the step of toilet training.
- Toileting and nappy changing will be carried out at frequent intervals throughout the day.
- Children who are in nappies will have this detail recorded on the nappy changing list which staff will complete. This is located in the bathroom and also on the main board for parents to check. Staff will be aware to maintain privacy when toileting and dressing.

TOILETING PROCEDURE

Toileting occurs at any time of the day and is specific to individual needs. Educators will communicate with parents to develop consistency with their child's toileting habits. Educators must be aware of and consider any special requirements related to culture, religion or privacy needs. Names of children who are toileting will be placed on the nappy checklist.

- encourage parents/guardians to bring along clean supplies of clothes - easy for the child to pull down and up themselves - limit fasteners
- encourage and assist the child to sit on the potty or toilet at intervals throughout the day
- staff will help the child to remove their clothing if needed
- encourage the child to be independent in their toileting habits and provide assistance as and when needed
- help the child to wipe themselves, encouraging them to wipe from front to back
- encourage the child to flush the toilet
- encourage and assist the child to wash their hands, then dry their hands on a clean washer and dispose in the correct bin.

TOILET ACCIDENTS

- Clean and dry the child
- Assist the child to get dressed
- Encourage and assist the child to wash and dry their hands
- Ask the child to leave the bathroom and ask a staff member to resettle the child back into the program
- Disinfect the toilet and the area and clean any spills (following the procedure for cleaning spills of body fluids)

- Rinse out any wet and soiled clothes. Parents/guardians are required to provide the recycle/reusable bag to for their child/ren
- Place any wet or soiled clothes in a recycle/reusable bag and place it on the shelf for parents to collect at the end of the day
- Remove and dispose of your gloves and wash and dry your hands.

CLEANING OF CHANGE MATS

- Wear gloves.
- Use paper on change mat if child has a soiled nappy.
- After each change, spray mat with disinfectant spray and dry mat with paper towel then dispose of the paper towel in the rubbish bin.
- Dispose of washer if used into linen bag immediately after nappy change.
- If mat has urine or faeces on it, spray with disinfectant spray. Dry mat with paper towel and dispose of paper towel in the rubbish bin.
- Thoroughly wash hands with soap and dry on paper towel.

GLOVES

Gloves aid in minimising the risk of infection or cross-contamination, disposable gloves must be worn and changed frequently by educators and other staff whenever they:

- Come into contact with blood (Centre provides special gloves which are non-absorbable).
- Come into contact with bodily waste products (Centre provides special gloves which are non-absorbable).
- Apply First Aid and administering medication
- Changing nappies or soiled pants/clothes.
- Wiping noses.
- Have cuts or skin lesions on their own hands that are not covered.
- Are cleaning or laundering.
- Preparing and handling uncooked/cooked food.

ILLNESS POLICY

We acknowledge that in early education and care services, illness and disease can spread easily from one child to another, even when implementing the recommended hygiene and infection control practices. Our Service aims to minimise illnesses by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant government authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases and adhere to exclusion periods recommended by public health units. The National Quality Standard requires early childhood education and care services to implement specific strategies to minimise the spread of infectious illness and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators and families. We acknowledge the difficulty of keeping children at home or away from childcare when they are sick and the pressures this causes for parents, however our Service aims to minimise the transmission of infectious diseases by adhering to regulations and policies protecting the health of all children, staff, families and visitors.

PURPOSE

Our Service has a duty of care to respond to and manage illnesses that may occur at the Service to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children, educators, staff and visitors. This policy will guide educators and staff to manage illness and the spread of infectious diseases and provide guidance of the required action to be taken in the event of an illness occurring when a child is educated and cared for.

SCOPE

This policy applies to children, families, students, volunteers, staff, management and visitors of the Service.

IMPLEMENTATION

We acknowledge that in early education and care services, illness and disease can spread easily from one child to another, even when implementing the recommended hygiene and infection control practices. Our Service aims to minimise illnesses by adhering to all recommended guidelines from relevant government authorities regarding the prevention of infectious diseases and adhere to exclusion periods recommended by public health units.

Our Service has adopted the *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* (Fifth Edition) publication recommendations developed by the Australian Government National Health and Medical Research Council to guide our practices to help limit the spread of illness and disease. We aim to provide families with up to date information regarding specific illnesses and ways to minimise the spread of infection within the Service and at home. We are guided by decisions regarding exclusion periods and notification of infectious diseases by the Australian Government- Department of Health and local public health units in our jurisdiction as per the Public Health Act.

Minimizing the spread of infections and diseases in early education and care services

We understand that it can be difficult for families to know when their child is sick. Families may experience problems taking time off work or study to care for their child at home. Obtaining leave from work or study can contribute to negative attitudes in the workplace which can cause stress on families. Families may also experience guilt when they send their child to care who is not well.

However, it is imperative that families maintain a focus not only on the well-being of their own child but also upon the well-being of other children and the early childhood professionals at the Service. To protect the health of children and staff within the Service, it is important that children and staff who are ill are kept away from the Service for the recommended period. We expect parent/guardian to be honest with staff in letting staff know if their child has been awake for most of the night, or if the parent/guardian had to administer pain relief or fever medication or they have been sick. Children who appear unwell at the Service will be closely monitored and if any symptoms described below are noticed, or the child is not well enough to participate in normal activities, parents or an emergency contact person will be contacted to collect the child as soon as possible. Management will assess each individual case prior to sending the child home.

It is not possible to prevent the spread of all infections and illnesses within Centre. 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 Form recording the temperature or other signs and symptoms of illness and action taken. Making sure to clean and disinfect the relevant equipment and area. Parent/guardian must read and sign this form on collection of their child. Centre will inform other families and staff once confirmed by the medical practitioner of the infectious illness or disease.

When groups of children play together and are in new surroundings illnesses may occur. Children with obvious infectious illness are to be excluded from the Centre immediately. If a child is unwell or displaying symptoms of a cold or flu virus, parents are requested to keep the child away from the Service. Infectious illnesses can be spread quickly from one person to another usually through respiratory droplets or from a child or person touching their own mouth or nose and then touching an object or surface. 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.

Our educators and staff are not medical practitioners and are not able to diagnose whether or not a child has an infectious illness. However, if an infectious illness is suspected, our Service may ask the family to collect their child from care as soon as possible or not bring the child to care.

In order to prevent the spread of disease, families are required to monitor their child's health and not allow them to attend childcare if they have an infectious illness or display symptoms of an illness. Families are asked to obtain a RAT test if their child is symptomatic for COVID-19. Management and educators may request families seek medical advice and provide a medical certificate stating that the child is no longer infectious prior to returning to care. The Director

or Deputy Director are 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 Director or Deputy Director.

A child who is displaying symptoms of a contagious illness or virus (vomiting, diarrhoea, fever) will be moved away from the rest of the group and supervised until he/she is collected by a parent or emergency contact person.

Symptoms indicating illness may include:

- runny, green nasal discharge
- behaviour that is unusual for the individual child
- high temperature or fevers
- diarrhoea / loose bowels
- faeces that are grey, pale or contains blood
- vomiting
- discharge from the eye or ear
- red, swollen or discharging eyes (bacterial conjunctivitis)
- skin that display rashes (red, purple), blisters, spots, crusty or weeping sores
- loss of appetite
- dark urine
- headaches
- stiff muscles or joint pain
- continuous scratching of scalp or skin
- difficulty in swallowing or complaining of a sore throat
- persistent, prolonged or severe coughing
- difficulty breathing
- a stiff neck or sensitivity to light
- irritability, unusually tired or lethargic
- drowsiness
- poor circulation
- mouth sores that cause drooling
- impetigo

To help minimise the spread of illness and infectious diseases our Service implements rigorous hygiene and infection control procedures and cleaning routines including:

- mandatory vaccinations for COVID-19 for all staff and educators
- effective hand washing hygiene
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- appropriate use of protective gloves
- exclusion of children, educators or staff when they are unwell or displaying symptoms of an infectious disease or virus
- effective environmental cleaning including toys and resources and bedding
- requesting parents and visitors to wash their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer upon arrival and departure at the Service
- physical distancing (when recommended by Australian Health Protection Principal Committee [AHPPC] and/or Work Safe Victoria)
- wearing of masks when mandated by Public Health Order
- maximising ventilation to increase air flow in learning spaces.

Children arriving at the service who are unwell

Management will not accept a child into care if they:

- are unwell and unable to participate in normal activities or require additional attention
- have a contagious illness or infectious disease
- have had a temperature/fever, or vomiting in the last 24 hours after the last vomiting episode
- have had diarrhoea in the last 24 hours after the last diarrhoea episode
- have been given medication for a temperature prior to arriving at the Service or in the last 24 hours
- have started a course of anti-biotic in the last 24 hours or after the first initial dose
- are unwell due to a cold, cough or general illness and are not able to participate in the program and the routines
- have discharge coming from the eyes. The child will be excluded from the service until the discharge has stopped even if they have been prescribed eye drops or eye cream, unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis or the eye infection is not contagious
- have an unexplained rash, a clearance will be required from a medical practitioner when returning
- have broken bone or fracture, a clearance will be required from a medical practitioner when returning
- if we have reasonable grounds to believe that a child has a contagious or infectious disease (this includes COVID-19)

Children who become ill at the Service

Children may become unwell throughout the day, in which case management and educators will respond to children's individual symptoms of illness and provide immediate comfort and care.

- Educators will closely monitor and document the child's symptoms on the *Illness Record*
- Children who are unwell at the Service will be able to rest in a supervised area away from other children until parents or the emergency contact person is able to collect them
- A child who has passed runny stools/vomited whilst at the Service will be sent home and may only return after 24 hours
- Educators will take the child's temperature. If the child's temperature is 38°C or higher, management will contact the child's parents/guardian/emergency contacts as soon as possible to have the child collected (within 30 minutes)
- For infants under three months old with a temperature/fever over 38°C, parents will be immediately notified and requested to seek medical assistance.
- Educators will monitor the child closely and be alerted to vomiting, coughing or convulsions
- Educators will attempt to lower the child's temperature by:
 - removing excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumper, pants)
 - encouraging the child to take small sips of water
 - moving the child to a quiet area where they can rest whilst being supervised
- Accurate records will be kept of the child's temperature, time taken, staff member's full name and name of staff member who witnessed the administration of medication (if relevant)
- Educators will continue to document any progressing symptoms
- Educators will complete the *Illness Record*, ensuring the form has been completed correctly and signed by the parent/guardian/emergency contact upon collection of their child

- Educators will thoroughly clean and disinfect any toys, resources or equipment that may be contaminated by a sick child.

NOT ABLE TO COME

The following illnesses are the examples of when children and staff members are not able to come to the Centre.

- Vomiting / Diarrhea/ Gastroenteritis (24 hours' exclusion after the last one)
- Temperature /fever (24 hours' exclusion)
- Chicken Pox
- Giardiasis
- Conjunctivitis (exclude until discharge has stopped, unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis)
- Hand, Foot & Mouth exclude until all blisters have dried
- Slap cheek syndrome

If a staff member has been unable to attend the service because of an infectious illness or disease or had a broken bone or fracture, the individual must provide a doctor's certificate which specifically states that the staff member is fit and able to return to the service on normal duties.

HIGH TEMPERATURES OR FEVERS

Children get fevers or temperatures for all kinds of reasons. Most fevers and the illnesses that cause them last only a few days. However sometimes a fever will last much longer and might be the sign of an underlying chronic or long-term illness or disease.

Recognised authorities suggest a child's normal temperature will range between 36.0°C and 37.5°C, but this will often depend on the age of the child and the time of day. Any child with a high fever or temperature reaching 38°C or higher will not be permitted to attend the Service until 24 hours after the temperature/fever has subsided.

WHEN A CHILD DEVELOPS A HIGH TEMPERATURE OR FEVER AT THE SERVICE

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, educators will respond to their individual symptoms of illness and provide comfort and care. Educators will closely monitor the child focusing on how the child looks and behaves and be alert to the possibility of vomiting, coughing or convulsions. The child will be cared for in an area that is separated from other children in the service to await pick up from their parent/guardian.

- For infants under 3 months old, parents/guardian will be notified immediately for any fever over 38°C for immediate medical assistance.
- Educators will notify parents when a child registers a temperature of 38°C or higher.
- The child will need to be collected from the Service and will not be permitted back for a further 24 hours.
- In case if parent/guardian are not contactable and if the temperature reaches 39 degrees emergency/authorised contacts as per the enrolment form will be contacted to come and pick up the child.
- Emergency services will be contacted if the temperature goes up to 40 degrees and if the child is not being collected or parent/guardian or emergency/authorised contacts are not contactable or if the child has trouble breathing, becomes drowsy or unresponsive or suffers a convulsion lasting longer than five minutes.
- Educators will complete an Illness Sheet and note down any other symptoms that may have developed along with the temperature (for example, a rash, vomiting, shivering etc.).

In the event of any child requiring ambulance transportation and medical intervention, a serious incident will be reported to the regulatory authority (Reg. 12) by the approved provider.

METHODS TO REDUCE A CHILD'S TEMPERATURE OR FEVER

- encourage the child to drink plenty of water (small sips), unless there are reasons why the child is only allowed limited fluids.
- remove excessive clothing (shoes, socks, jumpers, pants etc.) Educators will be mindful of cultural beliefs and not to remove clothes quickly.

DEALING WITH COLDS/FLU (RUNNY NOSE)

In circumstances where a child appears to have cold or flu symptoms, management will determine if the child is well enough to continue at the Service or if the child requires parental care. As cold and flu symptoms are very similar to COVID-19, children with these symptoms may be required to obtain a RAT or PCR test. If any child, parent, employee, student or visitor has any infectious or respiratory symptoms (such as sore throat, headache, fever, shortness of breath, muscle aches, cough or runny nose) they are requested to either stay at home till the symptoms persist and be tested for COVID-19.

see: Australian Government [Identifying the symptoms](#)

Colds are the most common cause of illness in children and adults. Symptoms include a runny or blocked nose, sneezing and coughing, watery eyes, headache, a mild sore throat, and possibly a slight fever. Nasal discharge may start to clear, but can become thicker and turn yellow or green over a day or so. It is not unusual for children to have five or more colds a year, and children in education and care services may have as many as 8–12 colds a year. As children get older, and as they are exposed to greater numbers of children, they get fewer colds each year because of increased immunity. By 3 years of age, children who have been in group care since infancy have the same number of colds, or fewer, as children who are cared for only at home.

Children can become distressed and lethargic when unwell. Discharge coming from a child's nose and coughing can lead to germs spreading to other children, educators, toys, and equipment.

Our Service aims to support the family's need for childcare however, families should understand that a child who is unwell will need one-on-one attention which places additional pressure on staff ratios and the needs of other children.

Children who are generally healthy, will recover from a common cold in a few days. Keeping a child home and away from childcare, helps to prevent the spread of germs. Management has the right to send children home if they appear unwell due to a cold, cough or general illness.

Influenza is a highly contagious illness and can spread to others for 24 hours before symptoms start. To prevent the spread of influenza our service encourages staff and children to be vaccinated once a year.

DIARRHOEA AND VOMITING

If a child has diarrhoea and/or vomiting whilst at the Service, Management will notify parents or an emergency contact to collect the child immediately. Children that have had diarrhoea and/or vomiting will be asked to stay away from the Service for 24 hours after the last diarrhoea or vomiting episode and when the symptoms have ceased, to control the infection transmission. If there is a gastroenteritis outbreak at the Service, children displaying the symptoms will be excluded from the Service until the diarrhoea and/or vomiting has stopped and the family will be required to get a medical clearance from their doctor before attending the Service.

Educators and staff with diarrhoea and/or vomiting will be excluded until the diarrhoea and/or vomiting has stopped for at least 24 hours after the last diarrhoea or vomiting episode.

In the event of an outbreak of viral gastroenteritis, management will contact the local Public Health Unit.

[Public Health Unit- Local state and territory health departments](#)

INFECTIOUS CAUSES OF GASTROENTERITIS INCLUDE:

- Viruses such as rotavirus, adenoviruses and norovirus

- Bacteria such as Campylobacter, Salmonella and Shigella
- Bacterial toxins such as staphylococcal toxins
- Parasites such as Giardia and Cryptosporidium

NON-INFECTIOUS CAUSES OF GASTROENTERITIS INCLUDE:

- Medication such as antibiotics
- Chemical exposure such as zinc poisoning
- Introducing solid foods to a young child
- Anxiety or emotional stress

PREVENTING THE SPREAD OF ILLNESS

To reduce the transmission of infectious illness, our Service implements effective hygiene and infection control routines and procedures as per the Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services guidelines.

If a child is unwell or displaying symptoms of a cold or flu virus, parents are requested to keep the child away from the Service. Infectious illnesses can be spread quickly from one person to another usually through respiratory droplets or from a child or person touching their own mouth or nose and then touching an object or surface.

PREVENTION STRATEGIES

- Practising effective hygiene helps to minimise the risk of cross infection within our Service.
- Signs and posters remind employees and visitors of the risks of infectious diseases, including COVID-19 and the measures necessary to stop the spread.
- Educators model good hygiene practices and remind children to cough or sneeze into their elbow or use a disposable tissue and wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after touching their mouth, eyes or nose.
- Handwashing techniques are practised by all educators and children routinely using soap and water before and after eating and when using the toilet and drying hands thoroughly with paper towel.
- After wiping a child's nose with a tissue, educators will dispose the tissue in a plastic-lined bin and wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water and dry using paper towel or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- All surfaces including bedding (pillows, mat, cushion) used by a child who is unwell, will be cleaned with soap and water and then disinfected.
- Cleaning contractors hygienically clean the service to ensure risk of contamination is removed as per [Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Principles for COVID-19](#)
- Parents, families and visitors are requested to wash their hands upon arrival and departure at the Service or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer. (Note: alcohol-based sanitizers must be kept out of reach of children and used only with adult supervision.)
- Parents will be notified of any outbreak of an infectious illness within the Service via Educa or email and information sheets will be provided in the rooms to assist in reducing the spread of illness.

Reporting outbreaks to the public health unit

Management is required to notify the local [Public Health Unit](#) (PHU) by phone (call 1300 066 055) as soon as possible after they are made aware that a child enrolled at the Service is suffering from one of the following vaccine preventable diseases, any confirmed case of COVID-19 or outbreak of gastroenteritis.

- Diphtheria
- Mumps
- Poliomyelitis
- Haemophilus influenzae Type b (Hib)
- Meningococcal disease
- Rubella ('German measles')
- Measles
- Pertussis ('whooping cough')
- Tetanus
- An outbreak of 2 or more people with gastrointestinal or respiratory illness.

Management will closely monitor health alerts and guidelines from Public Health Units and the Australian Government- Department of Health for any advice and emergency health management in the event of a contagious illness outbreak such as coronavirus- COVID-19. The Approved Provider will notify the [Regulatory Authority](#) within 24 hours of any closure due to COVID-19 via the [NQA IT System](#).

Excluding children from the Service

When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the Service will refer to information about recommended exclusion periods from the [Public Health Unit](#) (PHU) and *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services*.

Please see exclusion table on:

[Minimum periods for exclusion from childcare services \(Victoria\)](#)

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 an appropriate manner.

- When an infectious disease has been diagnosed, the Service will display appropriate documentation and alerts for families including information on the illness/disease, symptoms, infectious period and the exclusion period. (This information can be obtained from *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care and Public Health Unit, or Department of Health*).
- If a vaccine preventable disease occurs in the Service, children who have not been fully immunised will be excluded from care
- Management will check all children's Immunisation records and alert parents as required
- A medical clearance from the child's General Practitioner stating that the child is cleared to return to the childcare setting will also be required before the child returns to care
- Children that have had diarrhoea and vomiting will be asked to stay away from the Service for 24 hours after symptoms have ceased to reduce infection transmission as symptoms can develop again after 24 hours in many instances
- Children who test positive to COVID-19 are required to self-isolate for at least 7 days before returning to care

Notifying families and emergency contact – Sickness or Infectious Illness

- It is a requirement of the Service that all emergency contacts are able to pick up an ill child within a 30-minute timeframe
- In the event that the parent / guardian are not able to collect the ill child the emergency contacts on the enrolment form will be contacted to collect the child.

- Parents or guardians are notified as soon as practicable and no later than 24 hours of the illness, accident, or trauma occurring
- Families will be notified of any outbreak of an infectious illness (e.g.: Gastroenteritis, whooping cough) within the Service via our notice board, online app or email to assist in reducing the spread of the illness
- When a child has been diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease, the Service will refer to information about recommended exclusion periods from the Public Health Unit (PHU) and Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.
- Exclusion periods for illness and infectious diseases are provided to families and included in our Family Handbook and Dealing with Infectious Disease Policy.

THE APPROVED PROVIDER/ MANAGEMENT/NOMINATED SUPERVISOR/RESPONSIBLE PERSON AND EDUCATORS WILL ENSURE:

- that obligations under the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations are met
- educators, staff, students, visitors and volunteers have knowledge of and adhere to this policy and associated procedure
- effective hygiene policies and procedures are adhered to at all times to prevent the spread of illnesses
- they promote effective hand hygiene and cough etiquette
- effective environmental cleaning policies and procedures are adhered to all times
- each child's enrolment records include authorisations by a parent or person named in the record for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or educator to seek medical treatment for the child from a registered medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service and if required, transportation by an ambulance service
- all families are provided access to relevant policies upon enrolment which will be explained by management including: *Health Hygiene and Control of Infectious Diseases Policy, Illness Policy, Accident, Incident, Injury, Trauma Policy and Medical Conditions Policy.*
- families are provided with relevant information from a trusted source about preventing the spread of illnesses
- that any child who registers a temperature of 38°C or above is collected from the Service and excluded for 24 hours after the last elevated temperature *or* until the Service receives a doctor's clearance letter stating that the child is cleared of any infection and able to return to childcare
- a child who has not been immunised will be excluded from the Service if a vaccine preventable disease is reported within the Service community and that child is deemed to be in danger of contracting the illness.
- families of a child with complex and chronic medical conditions will be notified in the event of an outbreak of an illness or infectious disease that could compromise their health
- families are notified to collect their child if they have vomited or had diarrhoea whilst at the Service and to exclude the child for 24 hours after the last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.
- notification is made to the Regulatory Authorities within 24 hours of any incident involving serious injury or trauma to, or illness of, a child while being educated and cared for by an Education and Care Service, which:
 - (i) a reasonable person would consider required urgent medical attention from a registered medical practitioner *or*
 - (ii) for which the child attended, or ought reasonably to have attended, a hospital. For example: whooping cough, broken limb and anaphylaxis reaction
- if the incident, situation or event presents imminent or severe risk to the health, safety and wellbeing of any person present at the Service, or if an ambulance was called in response to the emergency (not as a precaution) the regulatory authority will be notified within 24 hours of the incident
- any incident or emergency where the attendance of emergency services at the Education and Care Service premises was sought, or ought reasonably to have been sought (eg: severe asthma attack, seizure or anaphylaxis)

- parents or guardians are notified as soon as practicable and no later than 24 hours of the illness, accident, or trauma occurring.
- an Illness Record is completed accurately and in a timely manner as soon after the event as possible (within 24 hours)
- children or staff members who are diagnosed with an illness or infectious disease may be excluded as per recommended exclusion periods
- families are notified of any infectious disease circulating the Service within 24 hours of detection

FAMILIES WILL:

- adhere to the Service's policies regarding *Illness*
- provide authorisation in the child's enrolment record for the approved provider, nominated supervisor or educator to seek medical treatment from a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service and if required, transportation by ambulance service
- provide up to date medical and contact information in case of an emergency
- provide emergency contact details and ensure details are kept up to date
- ensure that their child is able to be collected from the Service within a 30-minute timeframe if required due to illness by either a parent or emergency contact
- provide the Service with all relevant medical information, including Medicare and private health insurance
- provide a copy of their child's medical management plans and update these annually or whenever medication/medical needs change
- adhere to recommended periods of exclusion if their child has a virus or infectious illness
- keep up to date with their child's immunisation, providing a copy of the updated AIR Immunisation History Statement to the Service following each immunisation on the National Immunisation Schedule
- complete documentation as requested by the educator and/or approved provider- *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness record* and acknowledge that they were made aware of the incident, injury, trauma or illness
- inform the Service if their child has an infectious disease or illness
- provide evidence as required from doctors or specialists that the child is fit to return to care if required- including post-surgery
- complete and acknowledge details in the *Administration of Medication Record* if required.

BREACH OF POLICY

Staff members or educators who fail to adhere to this policy may be in breach of their terms of employment and may face disciplinary action.

Returning to Care After Surgery, Illness or a Fracture

The health, safety and wellbeing of all children is our priority. If your child has undergone surgery, experienced a significant illness, or sustained a fracture or broken bone, families must seek advice from their treating medical practitioner or surgeon regarding when it is safe for their child to return to the Centre.

Before returning to care, families are required to provide a medical clearance confirming that their child is fit to attend the Service. The clearance should outline any restrictions, ongoing treatment requirements, medication, or adjustments that may be necessary to support your child's safe participation in the program.

Children returning after illness must no longer be infectious and must meet the recommended exclusion requirements to minimise the risk of spreading illness to other children, educators and families.

Where temporary restrictions apply, the Centre will work in partnership with families to determine whether the child's care needs can be safely met within the Service, while ensuring appropriate supervision and maintaining the safety and wellbeing of all children.