



**Charlestown
Childcare**
& Early Learning Centre Inc.

02 4943 7099
admin@charlestownchildcare.com.au
17 Mulbinga Street, Charlestown NSW 2290
ABN: 29 465 177 172

Charlestown Childcare & Early Learning Centre Inc.

Family Information Book

(Updated March 2023)

“The goal of early childhood education should be to
activate the child’s own natural desire to learn”

– Maria Montessori

Contents

1	WELCOME	1
1.1	About us	1
1.2	Types of care offered.....	1
1.3	Centre Operating Hours	1
2	OUR PHILOSOPHY	2
3	CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS	2
3.1	Centre Management	2
3.2	Our Staff	3
3.3	Our Rooms.....	3
3.4	Quality Management.....	3
3.5	Centre Policies.....	4
4	ENROLMENT FEES	4
4.1	Fees	4
4.2	Late Fee	5
4.3	Child Care Subsidy	5
4.4	Absences	5
4.5	Problems with payment	5
5	ENROLMENT PROCESS	6
5.1	Waiting list management	6
5.2	Enrolment.....	6
5.3	Terminating a position.....	6
5.4	Continuing a position	7
5.5	Extra days.....	7
6	OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.....	7
7	CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY.....	8
7.1	Behaviour guidelines	8
8	GENERAL INFORMATION	9
8.1	What to bring on enrolment and the beginning of each year	9
8.2	What to bring each day	10
8.3	What to wear	10
8.4	Centre supplies.....	10
8.5	Upon arrival.....	10
8.6	Settling in tips.....	10
8.7	Daily routine	11
8.8	Typical activities	11
8.9	Rest time	12
8.10	On departure	12
8.11	Late pick up procedure	13
8.12	Nutrition and meals	13
8.13	Accidents	13
9	SHARING INFORMATION.....	14
9.1	Parent/Staff Communication.....	14
9.2	Management Committee Communication	14
9.3	Parent library.....	14
9.4	Confidentiality.....	15
10	COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND FAMILY FEEDBACK.....	15
10.1	Feedback.....	15
10.2	Complaints.....	15
11	HEALTH AND SAFETY.....	16

11.1	General safety.....	16
11.2	Emergency procedures	17
11.3	Work Health and Safety	17
11.4	Sun protection policy	17
12	IMMUNISATION AND HEALTH POLICY FOR SICK CHILDREN	18
12.1	Immunisation.....	18
12.2	Infectious diseases in pregnancy	18
12.3	Health policy for sick children.....	18
12.4	Medication.....	20
13	CHILDREN AT RISK.....	21
13.1	Parental access to children	21
13.2	Child protection policy	21
13.3	Mandatory reporting	22
13.4	Disclosure of asbuse	22
13.5	Allegations of abuse against educators, staff, students or volunteers.....	22
14	FAMILY PARTICIPATION	23
15	IN CONCLUSION	24

1 WELCOME

On behalf of all our educators and committee we would like to welcome you and your child to Charlestown Child Care & Early Learning Centre. We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of and support your child's growth and development and are committed to providing a safe a nurturing environment that will see them create fun and happy memories during their time with us. We support belonging, being and becoming.

The information contained in this handbook aims to ensure you are well informed with regards to our Centre's policies, procedures, routines and activities. We encourage you to read and become familiar with this documentation to ensure you and your child have the best possible experience whilst at our Centre.

We would like to acknowledge the Awabakal people who are the traditional custodians of this land and pay respect to Elders past and present.

1.1 About us

Charlestown Child Care & Early Learning Centre has been operating since 1986 under approval by the NSW Department of Education. We are a community-based, non-profit service who are committed to providing the highest quality childcare for children aged 0 - 5 at a competitive price for the local area. We are rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standard.

We are operated by a Management Committee comprised of parents who volunteer their time to ensure that the Centre runs effectively; with the Centre Director running the Centre on a day-to-day basis. We value the input of families in our centre and aim to work in partnership with all families in order to provide the best possible environment for children to grow and learn.

The program offers a wide range of activities within the security of a daily routine. Individual needs and interests of children form the basis of our programming and planning. The children are given the opportunity to explore a variety of activities, enriching their learning experiences. We aim to make parents feel welcome at the Centre, and to visit and be involved in our program at any time.

Our Centre's aim is to:

- Provide quality early education & child care at a competitive price for the local area
- Provide a safe, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment
- Maintain a family-oriented environment and a sense of community within the Centre
- Have caring, dedicated and motivated staff
- Facilitate a culture of innovation that evolves and reflects changing social structure
- Demonstrate sound financial and business planning

1.2 Types of care offered

Routine care – care that can only occur on the specified days that have been agreed to. There can be no flexibility for changing agreed arrangements unless a vacancy becomes available during the year.

Casual care –on occasions when children are absent, we are able to offer extra days for enrolled children on a casual basis for those spaces.

1.3 Centre Operating Hours

The Centre is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am-5.30pm. Our administration office is open 9:00-2:00; and 8:00-4:00 on Wednesdays. We are open for 50 weeks a year. We are closed on public holidays, the first and last day of the year for preparation, two weeks over the Christmas period and on one day mid-year for staff development. Dates for closures are advised well in advance to allow parents to plan ahead for alternative care as required. Fees are not charged for these days.

2 OUR PHILOSOPHY

Our Centre's philosophy has been developed as a collaborative process involving educators and staff, committee, families and children. It reflects the importance that we place on connections within our service:

Connections – We strongly value the connections between our educators and the children and families who become part of our centre community. Through effective, personalised communication and an appreciation for the uniqueness of children, families, educators, and the community, we strive to build meaningful and long-lasting connections.

Opportunities – Our service believes that on any given day there are hundreds of opportunities, just waiting to be embraced. We believe that children should have opportunities to play and simply BE children and as such, provide an environment and program that is engaging, respectful and play focussed. Our environment supports children to make choices about their play and lead their own learning. We believe that our educators should have opportunities for ongoing professional development, supporting them to reflect, grow, and to advocate for children.

Nature – We value a deep connection with the natural world and believe that it is crucial that children are encouraged to appreciate, engage with, and fully experience the wonder of the natural world. This value is embedded in our physical environment, our program and our way of being with children.

Nurture – When we build nurturing, supportive relationships that are mutually respectful and understanding, both children and adults are able to feel secure, confident and a sense of belonging. We nurture each child's sense of wellbeing by nourishing healthy bodies and minds. We promote physical activity, healthy lifestyles and provide nutritious meals.

Explore – We believe that children thrive when they are given time, freedom and opportunities to explore their world. This is reflected in our program, which promotes lifelong learning dispositions.

Community – Community is at the heart of our service. We believe that not only are we our own small community, but that we are also a part of the larger community. As such, it is important for children to make connections with other members of the community. We aim to involve the wider community in our service in meaningful ways.

Teamwork – We believe that teamwork is crucial to our ability to provide a high-quality service for children, families and the community. We value relationships that are respectful, collaborative and honest and feel that when educators work together with a common vision, everyone benefits.

Interactions – Interactions that are meaningful and positive set the tone for a harmonious environment for children, families and educators. We believe that interactions with children should be genuine and respectful, supporting children to feel valued as individuals. Our approach to supporting and guiding children's behaviour is underpinned by this belief. Intentional and responsive interactions are imperative to the quality of our programs.

Open – We have an open-door approach, which welcomes children, families and the community. We value open and honest communication between families and educators. We also believe that an open-ended environment and resources are important for encouraging freedom, imagination, and the joy in children's play.

Not for Profit – We believe that children are too precious for profit. As a proud community-based service, our financial decisions are made with children and the community at the forefront. We seek and value the family and community involvement and collaboration that are essential aspects of not-for-profit services. We are advocates for the rights of children and for community-based early education & child care.

Support – We believe it is important for children, families and educators to feel supported and have a sense of self and place in our service. Diversity is embraced and we value each person's unique beliefs, culture, and experience. We respect and encourage each person's interests, skills, abilities, learning styles and needs. The Early Years Learning Framework supports us to ensure that learning is inclusive, engaging, and meaningful for all.

3 CENTRE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATIONS

3.1 Centre Management

The Centre is managed by a Management Committee comprised of parents who volunteer their time to ensure that the Centre runs effectively. Committee meetings are every 6 weeks at the Centre. We welcome and encourage all parents to attend committee meetings or join a position on the committee. Committee meetings involve the Centre Director and staff reporting on the Centre's day-to-day operations; issues are discussed, and decisions made. By becoming a committee member you are giving back to your community by volunteering to assist in organising events and improving the running of the centre with your valuable feedback, new and innovative ideas and enthusiasm to

provide the best possible learning environment for your child/children. Please contact the Centre Director if you are interested in becoming a committee member or attending committee meetings.

3.2 Our Staff

The Centre's full time and part time staff have been chosen for their range of qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience within the early childhood field. A high emphasis on staff development and inservice training.

Rosters are organised with the aim to ensure only one educator in each room is on leave at any one time. This helps to maintain consistency with who is caring for your child. If more than one educator is absent, the Centre has a pool of regular relief staff that we call on.

We also have an administration assistant and cook who work part time. A chart in each room shows which educator is rostered on to each shift for the day and lists the names of any relief staff. Permanent staff are always rostered on with relief staff so if you are unsure of a new face, please ask one of the educators.

Staff members for 2023:

Sugar Glider Room:

Catherine: Early Childhood Teacher/Director. In the office on Wednesdays, and in the room on the other four days; Nikki: Monday-Friday; Rosie: Monday-Friday; Sam: Monday-Wednesday; Bec: Monday-Tuesday; Sachiko: Wednesday-Friday; Mel: Wednesday-Friday

Lilly Pilly Room:

Leanne: Early Childhood Teacher/Educational Leader (Monday, Tuesday & Friday); Ruth: Early Childhood Teacher (Wednesday-Thursday); Alison: Monday-Friday; Vikki: Monday/Wednesday/Friday; Katrina: Tuesday/Thursday; Genevieve: Monday-Friday).

Other Staff: Diane (Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday) and Mary Ann (Wednesday): Permanently employed working in both rooms to replace staff on leave; Katrina: (Monday/Wednesday/Friday) and Tracey (Tuesday/Thursday) in both rooms replacing educators for programming time; Administration Assistant: Monday-Thursday; Cook: Lynda.

3.3 Our Rooms

We are licensed for 40 children per day, in two rooms as follows:

Room Name	Ages	Numbers	Educators
Sugar Gliders	0-3	15 (max. 5 under 2 years)	5
Lilly Pilly	3-5	25	4

We pride ourselves on providing above the minimum teacher-child ratio as required by the Regulations, which allows greater one-on-one or small group interaction with our children and educators.

3.4 Quality Management

Our centre is engaged in a program of ongoing quality improvement through the National Quality Framework (NQF), which involves following:

- the National Education and Care Services law and regulations
- the National Quality Standard (NQS); and
- the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

We are currently rated at **Exceeding** National Quality Standard. Under this system, the Centre conducts an ongoing quality improvement process to complete our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), involving self-study against the quality areas, standards, and elements of the NQS. You can be involved in this continuous improvement process by:

- reading the QIP
- completing centre surveys

- participating in policy review
- contributing feedback to centre feedback boards or verbally to educators
- attending committee meetings
- reading information in the Parent Library

3.5 Centre Policies

Please make sure you ask the staff or consult the Policy Folder if you are unsure of the Centre's position in relation to any matter; a copy is available in the parent library located in the Centre's foyer. We review our policies in an ongoing manner and develop new policies as the need arises. We value and invite parent involvement in this process as we are here to meet your needs, and our policies should reflect this. Please feel free to have input into these. There is an area set aside in the foyer for this process; we also email out policies we are reviewing. Other professionals and governing bodies also have input into many of our policies and procedures. The staff like to stay up to date with current trends and procedures and these are reflected in the systems we have in place.

The centre currently operates under the following policies:

Centre Goals & Operations: Philosophy; Goals & Responsibilities; Centre Governance & Management; Inclusion, Diversity & Anti-Bias; Staff Goals & Aims; Determining a Responsible Person; Ethical Conduct; Centre Operations; Family Enrolment & Orientation; Fees; Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations; Parental Access to Children; Late Pick-up Procedure; Unfit to Pick-up Procedure; Termination of a Child's Position; Communication; Complaints and Feedback; Equal Employment Opportunity; Management of Information; Review of Policies; Environmental Sustainability.

Health & Safety: Work Health & Safety; Child Protection; Child Safe Environment; Smoke Free Environment; Health Policy (Exclusion for Infectious Diseases and Ill Children; Infectious Diseases in Pregnancy; Immunisation; Medication; Asthma Management; H.I.V./A.I.D.S.; Dental Health); Infection Control Policy (Hand Hygiene; Cleaning; Bathroom Hygiene; Nappy Change); Food Safety; Nutrition Policy; Safe Sleep and Rest Time; Clothing; Sun Protection; Water Safety; Safety Checklist; Management of Chemicals.

The Program: Behaviour Guidance; Supervision; Interactions with Children; Excursion; Curriculum & Programming; Transition to School; Biting; Road Safety Education; Media Policy; Physical Activity.

Staffing Policies & Job Descriptions: Staff Leave; Miscellaneous Staff Policies; Staff Children at the Centre; Relief; Staff Recruitment; Termination of Employment; Staff Study Leave; Parental Leave; Student, Volunteer & Visitor; Staff Job Descriptions; Shift Duties; Room Routines.

Management Committee & Constitution: Role of the Management Committee; Management Committee Job Descriptions; Constitution.

4 ENROLMENT FEES

4.1 Fees

Fees must be paid to the Centre one week in advance for the duration of the child's enrolment. Families are emailed a statement weekly which outlines any amount in arrears and fees charged to your account for the next two-week period.

Our current fees (2023) are as follows:

- Fees are **\$117 per day** and are set annually in accordance with the Centre's budget, generally rising by about \$3/day each year.
- Enrolment Levy: **\$50 per child per year** (including association membership fee);
- Fundraising levy of **\$20 per term**. We generally do not undertake fundraising activities. Past feedback from families supported a \$20 per term levy in lieu of fundraising.

Upon enrolment, the following levies must be paid:

- Holding Fee (bond): **refundable \$250 or two-weeks' full fees (whichever is higher)**, held in your account and refunded when the child ceases care (GST free); (see also *Terminating a Position Policy*)

Fees can be paid via internet banking. Internet banking needs to be arranged with your financial institution. When making the transfer from your account please identify your child's name so that the payment will be processed against your account at the Centre.

Our Banking details are as follows:

Newcastle Permanent Building Society

BSB: 650-000

Acc No: 958540507

Reference: *You child's full name*

Fees will be charged when your child does not attend due to sickness or holidays, but will not be charged for the public holidays, the Christmas closure or designated pupil free days.

4.2 Late Fee

The Centre closes at 5.30pm each day. If your child is left after this time, a late fee will be charged at the rate of **\$25 per five minutes** or part thereof.

4.3 Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a payment made by the federal government to assist families with the cost of child care.

To claim CCS, families need to create and sign in to a myGov account and complete the Child Care Subsidy Assessment through Centrelink. This needs to be updated and reassessed each financial year by Centrelink. The amount of CCS will depend on combined family income and activity level.

Until you provide the centre with your and your child's Centrelink Customer Reference Number and your income has been assessed by Centrelink, you will be required to pay full fees. CCS is only payable from the child's first date of attendance. If your child is absent on their first day(s), full fees will be payable until the first day of attendance.

If there are any changes in your employment situation it is your responsibility to be re-assessed by Centrelink, so your fees can be adjusted accordingly. If the Centre has not received documentation from Centrelink, we have no alternative but to charge full fees.

For more information on the process, visit the Department of Education's website: education.gov.au/childcare.

4.4 Start Strong Preschool Fee Relief

From 2023 parents of children turning 4 years old on or before 31 July will receive up to \$2,110 in fee relief (in addition to Child Care Subsidy). This will be applied as a reduction to weekly fees of up to \$42.20 each week.

4.5 Absences

Each child is entitled to up to 42 days of absence each financial year (excluding public holidays, Christmas closure and Staff Development Days) while claiming Child Care Subsidy. After 42 days have been taken, any further absence days will be charged at full fees. The number of allowable absences your child has used is included on fee statements and will include absences recorded at another service if applicable.

4.6 Problems with payment

People having difficulty paying their fees should discuss their situation with the Director. Parents whose fees fall into arrears of two weeks or more may have their child's position terminated. The centre will attempt to recover unpaid fees using a debt collection agency. Should this be required, an additional charge will be added to the outstanding

amount to cover debt collection costs. Full fees will also be charged for non-attendance in final days of care as per family assistance law.

5 ENROLMENT PROCESS

5.1 Waiting list management

If a place is not immediately available at the Centre, children may be put on a waiting list. When a place becomes available the family will be contacted and enrolment may proceed.

The Centre abides by these guidelines to be eligible to provide the Child Care Subsidy.

Priority 1: A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

Priority 2: A child of a single parent or of two parents who are working/training/studying.

Priority 3: Any other child.

Within each category the following children are to be given priority: children in Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander families; children in families including a disabled person; children in families with a non-English speaking background; children in socially isolated families; and children of single parents.

Priority 3 status families may be required to change days of attendance if a child of a higher priority requires it. Within these guidelines, priority is also given to siblings of children enrolled at the centre, and children of staff members.

5.2 Enrolment

Once you have paid the position holding fee (bond) (refer to Section 4.1) and received an enrolment package, please return the necessary forms before the first day your child commences care.

The enrolment package will consist of the following: An Offer of Placement; Enrolment Form; Association Membership Form (as we are an Incorporated Association); Privacy Statement and Family Information Book.

5.2.1 Additional information required

In order to complete enrolment, parents are asked to:

- Complete all forms for each child requiring care;
- Providing bond payment;
- Provide Centrelink CRN numbers for your child and yourself. If you or your child do not have a Centrelink CRN number you must register with Centrelink to obtain this so Child Care Benefit can be received immediately when your child starts at the Centre. Full fees will be charged until a CRN number is provided;
- Provide a copy of the Medicare 'Immunisation History Statement' for your child. This can be accessed via your myGov Medicare link;
- Provide a copy of your child's birth certificate or passport;
- Return forms and bond prior to the date listed on the Offer of Placement.

5.2.2 Orientation Visit

All parents and children are encouraged to conduct a minimum of one orientation visit before they leave their child in our care. These visits allow your child to become familiar with the environment they will be in and the staff who will be caring for them. It also provides an opportunity for us to get to know you and for you to share important information about your child with us, such as routines and interests. We encourage you to visit as many times as you feel necessary for your child to feel comfortable on their first day. You are welcome to come play and join in the Centre activities and routines of the day whilst supervising your child.

5.3 Terminating a position

Twenty working days' notice must be given in writing when the days your child attends the Centre are to be altered or when a child's place is to be terminated. If your child does not attend the centre during the notice period, full fees will be charged from the last date of attendance.

5.4 Continuing a position

During September each year letters will be distributed to every family with a child at the Centre, asking for the days of care required for the following year. Allocation of days will be subject to the Priority of Access guidelines and be dependent upon fees not being in arrears. A holding fee must be maintained to secure the place. Attempts will be made to offer each family the days requested, but if demand exceeds our licensed number of places, this may not be possible.

5.5 Extra days

If you would like to enrol your child on extra days, please ask at the office. Your child's name will be placed on an internal waiting list, and we'll let you know when a position becomes available. On occasions when children are absent, we are able to offer extra days for enrolled children. Please see a staff member or email the Centre if you would like to put your child's name down for extra care.

6 OUR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

“Since the jobs that our pre-schoolers will do probably don't exist yet, our priority is to teach them the skills to adapt and inquire and question and cooperation....life skills”
– Caroline Bellouse

The staffing team at Charlestown Childcare and Early Learning Centre take great pride in providing quality educational programs. Our program is based on the national early learning framework for children from birth to five years. This is known as the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Research tells us:

- The first years of a child's life is when they do their most important learning;
- This time should give children time to play and opportunities to explore the world around them;
- From birth, learning and development at each stage of life forms the building blocks for the next.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of **belonging, being and becoming**.

Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture, and place.

Being is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun.

Becoming is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

6.1.1 Learning outcomes

When planning and documenting your child's experiences, educators will assist your child to develop by building on their interests and abilities and working towards the skills and dispositions outlined in the five outcomes of the EYLF.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

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

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators.

6.1.2 Understanding your child

At the beginning of the year children are allocated a focus teacher who is responsible for supporting and documenting your child's learning journey. This involves collecting information on each child, analysing what the information tells

them about how to support the child's learning further, documenting, planning experiences to incorporate into the program and then reflecting on what has been learned.

During January and February our primary aim is to settle children into the routines of the centre so that they can feel secure and confident in their environment. We have a strong emphasis on developing trusting relationships and building self-esteem and making strong connections. We use these two months to get to know the children and families and the dynamics of the group. We observe children to learn about their interests and development.

6.1.3 Planning and goal setting

From March we take on a collaborative approach with families to set goals for each child. Each child's interests are also used to contribute towards the planning of our future programs for both indoor and outdoor play experiences.

Records of your child's progress and learning journey are documented by your child's focus teacher on an ongoing basis throughout the year and you will receive a written summary of their progress. Part of our programming system also includes the development of individual portfolios. This portfolio is a collection of the daily documentation sheets which are displayed in the room. It is a snapshot of your child's learning journey and a wonderful keepsake for you to take home at the end of the year. Children and families are able to view their portfolio at any time and revisit experiences by looking at photos and work samples and sharing with others.

Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support their learning. Our program relies heavily on the active involvement of teachers, parents/carers, families, and the community so we welcome all input and feedback.

6.1.4 School readiness

We believe that children are developing the skills required for school from the moment they start at our centre. Our Philosophy and programs focus on child-led free play, with opportunities to develop confidence, independence, social skills, emotional maturity, motor skills, communication skills, concentration, problem-solving skills and resilience.

6.1.5 Excursions and visitors

Excursions and incursions are organised to extend the children's knowledge and experiences, and to have some fun as well. We usually ask for help with supervision, and welcome parents, grandparents, etc to come along and join us. We have in the past had difficulty getting enough helpers, so we now tend to invite the community to come to us... we have visitors such as the fire truck, local librarian, dog safety educator. We also have visiting performers and shows come to the Centre to widen the experiences available to the children. As the cost of these can be quite expensive, the Centre subsidises them, and each child is charged a maximum of \$7.00 to attend. Parents are always welcome to attend, as are children who attend on other days (accompanied by an adult).

7 CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE POLICY

Two major challenges faced by children are learning acceptable behaviours and being able to regulate their own behaviour. Behaviour guidance refers to all the things that we do and say to help children learn and demonstrate acceptable behaviour, with the aim of children controlling their own behaviour. This requires the child to not only understand what is acceptable but develop the will power and self-control to manage their own behaviour.

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Encourage acceptable forms of behaviour using strategies that build confidence and self-esteem
- Provide children with support, guidance, and opportunities to manage their own behaviour
- To identify challenging behaviour and promote collaborative approaches to behaviour guidance between the centre, families, and external agencies; and seek the necessary resources to support the child, family, and staff.

7.1 Behaviour guidelines

- We don't hurt others or ourselves, and don't use words or actions as weapons
- We respect the ideas and feelings of others and are respectful of our own and other people's belongings and do not deliberately damage things

- We are gently with insects, animals and plants and respect and care for the environment
- We move safely indoors and outdoors
- We find positive ways to express feelings such as anger and frustration

7.1.1 Implementation of our behaviour policy

When guiding behaviour, staff will:

- Display consistency, respect, and empathy, and label the behaviour not the child;
- Be aware of factors that may affect behaviour: age and development; general health and wellbeing; family relationships; environmental factors (physical setting, weather, time of day);
- Take into account the child's level of understanding and abilities;
- Be aware of speaking positively (e.g. "please walk" rather than "don't run");
- Give simple explanations and offer alternatives so children can make choices;
- Be aware of factors that may affect behaviour, such as: anger or frustration; boredom; desire for attention; imitation; emotional state; jealousy; language or social skills;
- Work with children to resolve issues, model language and help them to express their feelings;
- Work with children to establish play and safety rules and limits, and consequences involved when limits are not adhered to;
- Acknowledge and accept the feelings of children, even if the reaction seems out of proportion to the cause. The feelings should be distinguished from what the child does about the feelings;
- Provide a balance of quiet activities and more vigorous, active ones;
- Never use physical punishment, isolation, humiliation, intimidation, or negative labelling;
- Avoid power struggles and try to come up with win-win situations;
- Acknowledge desirable behaviour;
- Avoid "hollow" gestures such as requiring children to say sorry when they are too young to understand what it means, or if they do not feel sorry.

On occasions a child may need to move away from an activity for a short period of time if they are unable to manage their behaviour. This involves explaining to the child what behaviour was unacceptable and moving them away from their current activity for a few minutes, while still being supervised by staff. Under no circumstances is there to be a "naughty chair/corner". Staff will discuss what happened with the child and whether they are ready to re-join the activity with appropriate behaviour.

7.1.2 Behaviour Guidance Management Plans

A Behaviour Guidance Management Plan may be developed to observe, plan, implement, evaluate, and document strategies when a child is non-compliant to the established limits of play and interactions, for example swearing, hurting other children or adults, or potentially causing harm to themselves. These plans will:

- Be based on evidence that the displayed behaviour is inappropriate and could possibly harm another child or adult;
- Involve observation and documentation over a period of time that suggests a pattern is forming;
- Include documentation of inappropriate behaviours that occur frequently, and observed triggers of inappropriate behaviour, and define the context in which the behaviour occurs;
- Reflect a collaborative approach with the child's family and other professionals involved with the child where possible;
- Document the implemented strategies and communication with families, including planning, implementation, and evaluation.

8 GENERAL INFORMATION

8.1 What to bring on enrolment and the beginning of each year

On enrolment and at the beginning of each year, each family is asked to donate the following items to assist in keeping the Centre's costs down:

- 1 box of tissues
- 1 toilet roll

- 1 liquid soap refill

8.2 What to bring each day

Your child will need to bring each day:

- a small bag for their belongings
- drink bottle labelled with child's name for access to water throughout the day
- a change of clothes (warm and cool changes at the turn of seasons) labelled with child's name including socks and underwear
- a jacket in winter
- if in nappies, 5 disposable nappies per day (If your child wears pull-ups or nappy pants instead of nappies, these need to be side-opening with tabs, rather than full elastic sides). You are welcome to stockpile nappies in the change table room above your child's name label
- for babies needing formula or breast milk: made up bottles, labelled with the child's name.
- comforter (e.g. dummy, special toy)

We ask that parents not allow children to bring toys to the Centre. This often causes conflict when toys are broken or lost. A security toy is more than welcome (e.g. teddy for rest time).

8.3 What to wear

It is essential that all clothing/ belongings be clearly marked with the child's name. Children should wear comfortable clothing and footwear that is easily removed. Joggers or sandals are recommended (gumboots/thongs are not safe for climbing and running). Scarves/clothes with cords (in hoods/waistbands) are not to be worn due to the risk of strangulation. Clothing should be sun safe, protecting as much skin as possible, particularly the shoulders, back and stomach, i.e.: loose fitting garments with collars and sleeves, longer style shorts in closely woven fabrics. Singlet and midriff tops are not to be worn

Babies in nappies are to arrive in a disposable nappy. If wearing "pull -up" nappies, they should be the type with tabs rather than elastic sides.

8.4 Centre supplies

The Centre supplies:

- All meals and drinks (water and milk);
- Sunhats, sun cream (Woolworths Everyday SPF50+) and insect repellent;
- Wipes;
- Sheets for beds and cots;

8.5 Upon arrival

Each child must be signed in and out daily by an adult via the TABLET in their room. This is a government regulation.

Please sign in and out each day using the tablet by selecting your child's name and providing a signature each day. On your child's daily routine chart, please record an approximate pick-up time, and a contact name and phone number. This is essential, particularly if we need to contact you urgently. Place your child's belongings in their designated locker. Notify staff of any changes in people to collect your child, or any questions you may have. Read notices and emails to keep informed of daily happenings and events.

If your child requires medication, complete a medication form and hand medication to a staff member (medication can only be given if prescribed by a doctor).

8.6 Settling in tips

Starting childcare is a very big step in children's lives. It's often an even bigger one for their parents! The staff are very experienced in the difficulties some children and parents face in this process and are here to make the transition as

smooth as possible. All children react differently to separation. Some separate happily but then become upset later in the day; others are upset on separation but quickly settle after their parent has left. Others don't become upset at all or become upset on the second or third day of attendance. These reactions are all normal.

We encourage you to stay as long as you like on arrival, interacting with your child at an activity. When you are ready to leave, let a staff member know so that we can assist you with separation if needed. Make sure that you say goodbye to your child, even if you know they will cry-this will ultimately make them feel more secure and not be afraid that you are going to disappear. Experience has shown children settle quite quickly after parents depart. Please feel free to phone the centre throughout the day to check on your child for reassurance.

8.7 Daily routine

Flexible Sugar Glider Routine (0-3's)

- 7:30 Arrival; indoor play
- 9:00 Progressive morning tea.
- 9:15 Outdoor play.
- 10:00 Indoor/outdoor play.
- 11:05 Pack away time together.
- 11:10 Group time (Acknowledgement of country and then singing/dancing/stories).
- 11:30 Lunch time.
- 12:00 Relaxation time.
- 12:30 Rest time.
- 1:30 Quiet play upon waking.
- 2:15 Progressive afternoon tea.
- 3:00 Outdoor play.
- 5:00 Indoor play and late afternoon tea.
- 5:30 Centre closes.

Flexible Lilly Pilly Routine (3-5's)

- 7:30 Arrival; indoor play
- 8:45 Progressive morning tea.
- 9:00 Indoor/outdoor play.
- 11:00 Pack away time and transition group time: nature/sustainability focus, Acknowledgement of country
- 11:30 Lunch time.
- 12:00 Rest time for children who wish to sleep; relaxation for children not sleeping.
- 12:30 Indoor play; sharing circle.
- 2:30 Group time; progressive afternoon tea;
- 3:00 Outdoor play.
- 5:00 Indoor play and late afternoon tea.
- 5:30 Centre closes.

8.8 Typical activities

Throughout the day the children are involved in a variety of opportunities to engage in learning and development through play. Please feel free to share with us your child's personal interests so they can be incorporated into daily activities, for example, their favourite song or new found interest. This can assist your child in their sense of being, belonging and becoming, and helps encourage conversation with teachers and other children.

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."

Most of our day is spent in free play with a variety of resources such as: construction materials, art and craft materials, loose parts, dramatic play props; music and instruments; books, puppets and felt boards; sensory play (sand, water, dough).

Group times involve singing, dancing, acting, stories, sharing information, felt board songs and stories.

8.9 Rest time

All children have individual needs for sleep and rest. Children need a comfortable relaxing rest environment that is safe and well-supervised. Educators will endeavour to ensure that each child's needs for sleep and rest are met, with regard to age, developmental stage and individual need. Information will be gathered from families about each child's specific needs for sleep and rest.

The physical and social environment is critical to a positive rest time. Educators will come to know how each child prefers to rest and arrange the room accordingly. Lights will be turned off, curtains closed, and relaxing music played. Staff will sit with the children and assist them to settle. Opportunities for rest and relaxation will be provided as well as sleep. Children in the Lilly Pilly room can choose whether they wish to sleep on a bed or engage in relaxation activities.

Family Preferences regarding sleep and rest will be respected, but children will neither be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping. If a child requests a rest or shows clear signs of tiredness at any time of the day a comfortable, safe rest area will be provided. Children who do not go to sleep may have a rest time activity to use prior to moving to quiet activities.

Children in cots:

The current recommendations for safe sleeping for babies will be followed, a copy of which will be displayed in the cot room.

- Babies will be placed on their backs to sleep, with their feet at the end of the bed ensuring that the head is uncovered and that they are not overdressed or wearing any head coverings.
- Cot sides are to be raised at all times, except when putting a child into or out of a cot or patting a child.
- Ventilation needs should be assessed, and the window opened, or fan turned on if required.
- Bed linen is to be changed for each child, and at the end of each week for those with sole use of a cot.
- Mattresses are to be wiped down with neutral detergent and paper towel between each linen change.
- Pillows, cot bumpers, lambskins and quilts will not be used.
- Chains and attachments on dummies will not be used while a child is in a cot.
- Infants may be wrapped to go to sleep; the wrap should be muslin or light cotton and must not cover the baby's face or head. It should be firm but not tight, and the baby should not be overdressed or have a fever.
- Wrapping will be discontinued when the baby can roll from back to tummy (4-6months).
- As an alternative to wrapping, a safe sleeping bag can be used. A sleeping bag must be the correct size for the child and have fitted neck and armholes and no hood.
- The baby monitor will be turned on and the receiver unit carried while a child is in the cot room.
- Sleeping children will be monitored at regular intervals with the time recorded on the cot room chart.
- Cots will be checked to ensure that they meet current Australian Standards.
- Educators will refer to the Red Nose Australia website if required to confirm any concerns regarding safe sleeping practices.

8.10 On departure

All children must be dropped off and picked up by an authorised adult as specified on your enrolment forms. Please ensure staff know you are collecting your child. Sign your child out on the tablet. Collect your child's belongings, craft, medicine etc. After you have greeted your child and signed out, you are responsible for the supervision of your child. Please ensure your child stays with you.

Children are to be collected only by those adults authorised on the enrolment form, unless notified in writing by the parent. Children cannot be collected by another child. Should someone else other than yourself be collecting your

child from care, please inform us. Any person collecting a child can be asked by a staff member to show a form of ID; please advise authorised adults of this and ensure they carry ID when collecting your child.

N.B.: Signing your child in and out each day is essential for your child's safety and is also required for payment of the Childcare Subsidy.

8.11 Late pick up procedure

It is vitally important for parents to contact the Centre if they will be late picking up their child. The following procedure will be followed for a late pick up:

5.30pm: If a child is still at the Centre at 5.30pm, one staff member will begin trying to contact the parent(s)/emergency contacts.

6.00pm: at 6.00pm the Centre is out of licence and cannot legally care for children on the premises. If no contact has been made with the parent(s) by this time, staff will phone Belmont Police and ask for their assistance in locating them. Staff will remain at the Centre with the child until the parent or designated contact collects them.

7.00pm: If no contact has been made by 7.00pm (or earlier if staff are unable to remain at the centre), staff will arrange for a taxi to take the child and themselves to the Belmont Police Station. Urgent action by the police will be requested.

A late fee (refer to 4.2 Late Fee) will be charged per five minutes after 5.30pm or part thereof.

A child's place may be terminated if parents/guardians arrive late more than three times; or parents/guardians bring or collect their children outside the times nominated on the enrolment forms.

8.12 Nutrition and meals

Meal times will provide positive learning experiences for children who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Teachers sit with children and interact with them to encourage good eating habits and an appreciation for a variety of foods. Children will be assisted where required but are encouraged to be independent.

The Centre supplies nutritious meals prepared daily by our cook, comprising of morning tea, lunch, dessert, afternoon tea and late afternoon tea. The weekly menu is displayed on the kitchen door and in each room. A feedback board is also located on the kitchen door, so that you can have input into our menus.

Please notify the Centre of any specific instructions regarding your child's diet, such as food allergies, food intolerance or special preferences. We may need written information from your child's doctor regarding any dietary restrictions. Whilst the Centre will attempt to cater for all dietary needs, it may be necessary in certain cases for parents to provide for their child's special needs. We have policies on nutrition and food handling should you require further information. No nut products are allowed at the centre due to the risk of severe allergic reactions. Due to the high number of children with allergies, we ask that you don't allow your child to bring any food to the Centre.

We encourage and support breastfeeding, and parents are able to bring expressed breast milk for their baby. We are also able to arrange a quiet space for mothers to breastfeed at the centre if needed.

8.12.1 Birthdays and celebrations

Birthdays are very important events in a child's life and we'd love to celebrate this milestone at the Centre. We can supply a plain iced cake for your child to have at the Centre for a cost of \$6.00. Please let us know a week in advance. We regret that home-made cakes cannot be shared at the Centre due to the possibility of children with allergies. We also encourage families to share their traditional celebrations and culture. Please see staff if there is an occasion you would like us to celebrate

8.13 Accidents

In the case of a minor injury, information will be recorded on a green accident form which parents will be asked to read and sign when they arrive to collect their child. The green original is for parent's records and the duplicate is to be filed at the centre. Major injuries will be treated according to the *Accident Procedure* and *Medical Emergency* policies. Parents will be notified in cases of emergency and medical treatment sought if necessary. Details of any serious accident will be forwarded to NSW Early Education and Care Directorate and Guild Insurance.

9 SHARING INFORMATION

We encourage all parents to take an active role in the Centre. We are here to best meet your needs and value the input you have to help make us successful. Regular communication through newsletters, emails, our private Facebook group, and notice boards keep families informed of current happenings at the Centre. We have feedback boards to enable you to provide feedback on the program and menus, and we also have a suggestion box in the foyer that we hope you will feel free to use.

9.1 Parent/Staff Communication

The Centre aims to have positive relationships between staff and parents by encouraging parents to participate in the daily activities of the Centre, as well as supporting parents in caring for their child. We believe in working in partnership with families.

Staff can help parents to increase their competence and confidence in themselves, as well as their understanding of their children. Parents can help staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of their child. This can be fostered through day-to-day contact between parents and staff.

Parent interviews are available with the Director and/or other educators as required. These generally need to be organised in advance, so we can ensure adequate supervision of the children is maintained and the necessary records available. As confidentiality is to be maintained within the Centre at all times, staff are not able to discuss issues relating to children and families with other parents.

We value the contributions our families make to the Centre and aim for family members to feel comfortable visiting the Centre at any time and being a part of our program.

9.2 Management Committee Communication

Management Committee meetings are held monthly, on the last Wednesday day of the month, with all parents welcome to attend. An agenda is available in the foyer should you wish to raise any issues. Staff and parents can also approach the Management Committee in writing by leaving letters at the office. This correspondence will be addressed at the next committee meeting.

Following the meeting, the minutes, outlining decisions made, are displayed in the foyer, with a copy given to anyone who attended or put in apologies. The committee may also share information through notes, signs, or newsletters. If you would like to share information with the committee, please feel free to add an item to the agenda or speak to a committee member (names are displayed in the foyer). If you have any suggestions for improving the way that information from the Management Committee is shared with parents, please see the Director or a committee member.

9.3 Parent library

We have a collection of books available for families to borrow. Items are listed in the green index and may be borrowed for two weeks. Please see a staff member if you wish to borrow something. If there are any titles that you would like to see added to our collection, please leave a note in the suggestion box. We aim to provide any information that would be useful for our families.

We currently have books on the following topics: child development, behaviour management, ideas for activities, school readiness, special needs, sleep, immunisation, toilet training, biting, health and safety, child protection, asthma, nutrition and first aid.

We have current details of local parenting groups or training, as well as local playgroups. We also have a folder of local community contacts and referrals in the office. Please ask an educator if you require information about health services, family support and available community assistance.

9.4 Confidentiality

Staff will not divulge confidential or personal information regarding any child or family attending this Centre without authorisation from that family unless required by law. Staff will not use any confidential or personal information for their own curiosity or gain. Full names of children or families are never to be used in documentation which may leave the premises, with the exception of relevant government authorities or with parental permission. The Director and staff will not discuss any day to day matters of a confidential nature with the Management Committee. Details of staff and their families are also of a confidential nature and should be respected. The centre has a comprehensive Management of Information Policy should you require further information.

10 COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE AND FAMILY FEEDBACK

Our Centre values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the community to help create a service that meets regulation and the needs of children and their families. We encourage open communication through opportunities to respond and provide feedback on the program. A component of this is the ability to put forward a complaint, and have this managed appropriately, with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement.

We will:

- Provide opportunities for consultation
- evaluation and review of the Centre's operation and delivery of the education and care program
- develop a process for making and managing complaints
- communicate the option and process of making a complaint
- handle complaints professionally and confidentially

10.1 Feedback

Parent feedback is encouraged and appreciated by the staff and Management Committee. We encourage feedback about programs, menus, and equipment. Feedback boards are in each room, the foyer and on the kitchen door. Feedback can also be added directly to the programming book in each room. There is a suggestion box in the foyer for parents to submit and feedback or suggestions. We regularly review our policies and encourage parents to contribute to this process. Copies of policies and feedback forms are available in the foyer, as is a sign stating which policies are currently under review. A board is also located on the committee noticeboard for parents to contribute agenda items for the next committee meeting.

Our Centre's feedback policy:

- we aim at all times for communications to be open, honest and confidential
- we will offer a variety of ways to communicate and provide feedback, including day books, feedback boards, surveys, policy review centre, meetings and through interactions
- with permission educators may write comments on behalf of families to help with evaluations of the program and encourage further family input
- families will be encouraged to communicate with educators at drop off and pick up times, or by phone through the day
- feedback will be considered in ongoing planning and quality improvement
- families will be informed as to how their feedback has contributed to improvements in the centre through displays and newsletters.

10.2 Complaints

Families, educators, or staff can make a complaint about aspects of the service. No person will be disadvantaged in any way as a result of that complaint. Complainants will be treated respectfully, pleasantly and professionally.

Complaints of a less formal nature may be made to any member of staff or Management Committee. The person receiving the complaint should listen and respond respectfully and professionally. They may be able to explain the situation, discuss resolutions, offer alternatives or reserve the right to seek support or advice from others before responding.

Complaints of a more formal nature should be addressed to the Director; an official Complaint Form is available from the office, or in the foyer.

- Complaints will be handled with the strictest confidentiality, with information restricted to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint;
- Any complaint received will be forwarded to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint, generally the Director and/or Management Committee.
- Actions to address the complaint will be determined. Once the outcomes are agreed upon, all persons involved in the complaint will be notified and informed of any actions or improvement that will take place;
- If the complaint alleges that a serious incident has occurred or is occurring while a child is being educated and cared for by a service; or that the National Law and/or Regulations have been contravened, the Regulatory Authority will be notified through the *NQA IT System*.

Upon receiving a complaint, the Director will:

- Listen and document all information
- Document how the complainant would like it resolved;
- Explain the investigation procedure, including timeframes;
- Decide if they are the appropriate person to deal with the issue;
- Decide whether the complaint should be handled personally, or whether other staff and/or Management Committee should be involved;
- Decide whether the complaint meets reporting requirements to the Regulatory Authority and report if required;
- Interview any other involved persons if appropriate;
- Decide how the grievance should be resolved;
- Refer the grievance to another organisation if resolution is not possible;
- Implement and monitor the outcomes.

Details of informal and formal complaints will be recorded in the complaints log book, with copies of any relevant documentation. If appropriate, and maintaining confidentiality, complaints will be discussed at staff and committee meetings to monitor patterns and identify ways the centre can be improved.

NSW Ombudsman
Level 24, 580 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000
02 92861000
nswombo@ombo.nsw.gov.au

NSW Regulatory Authority
Early Childhood Education Directorate
NSW Department of Education
1800 619183
eceed@det.nsw.edu.au

11 HEALTH AND SAFETY

11.1 General safety

The staff have a duty of care to the children where we are to ensure that each child is safe and well-supervised. The following must be followed to ensure the Centre is a safe place:

- Ensure children are always accompanied by an adult
- Gates and latches must be shut
- No smoking on the premises or in the carpark
- Always sign the tablet on arrival and departure
- Ensure all children are secured in an approved child restraint in the car
- Other children not enrolled in the Centre **MUST** remain with an adult at all times. (They must not be left unsupervised in the Centre, or with staff engaged in working with the children).

If staff feel that a person picking up a child is affected by alcohol or drugs, they will encourage the parent to find alternative ways to get home. Staff will offer to call a taxi or another contact person who could pick them up.

11.2 Emergency procedures

We hold monthly evacuation or lock-down drills within the Centre. In the event of an emergency, we need to be able to remove the children and others present as quickly, safely, and calmly as possible. All staff members carry whistles, and when blown, the evacuation plan is to be followed. Plans are located in the hallway and in each room, so please make sure you take note of these in case you are ever here when we have a drill. We will inform you of a fire drill via a sign on the front door on the day and would appreciate if you could talk to your child about this at home.

11.3 Work Health and Safety

The Health and Safety of all persons employed within the centre, children in attendance at the centre and all visitors to the centre is considered to be of the utmost importance. A comprehensive WHS program is in place within the centre. We ask that when in the centre you follow all notices, warning signs and directions from staff. If you notice a hazard or potential hazard, please notify a staff member.

11.4 Sun protection policy

This centre recognizes the risks of sun exposure to children, staff and visitors; and the centre's role in minimizing exposure to UV radiation and teaching children good sun protection habits from an early age. The centre is committed to the following:

Scheduling outdoor activities and shade:

- Sun protection is required for times of the day when levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, will be implemented. In NSW this will occur for most months of the year. UV levels are particularly high during the summer months and highest in the middle of the day.
- UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements. The SunSmart app will be checked daily and UV rating for the day recorded and displayed.
- This policy will be referred to when planning children's excursions.
- The Centre will continue to maintain large areas of natural and constructed shaded areas. Activities will be planned for shaded areas. Educators will monitor sun patterns, both between seasons and throughout the day, and move activities to shaded areas.

Sun Protection Practices:

- Children and staff are required to apply SPF 30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before outdoor play and will be reapplied every 2 hours when UV is above 3.
- All children, staff and visitors must wear broad-brimmed, legionnaire style or bucket hats while outdoors. Caps and visors are not sun safe and cannot be worn. The brim size must be a minimum of 6cm child/ 7.5cm adult (5cm/6cm for bucket hats). The centre will reimburse permanent staff up to \$25 for an appropriate hat. Relief staff, volunteers and students will be asked to bring an appropriate hat. The centre will maintain a supply of hats for use of visitors.
- Adults are encouraged to wear sunglasses meeting Australian Standard 1067.
- The centre will supply hats and sunscreen. Spare hats are available for children and adults.
- Children, staff and visitors will wear sun safe clothing that protects as much skin as possible, particularly the shoulders, back and stomach, i.e.: loose fitting garments with collars and sleeves, longer style shorts in closely woven fabrics. Singlet and midriff tops are not to be worn. Spare clothing will be provided if a child's clothing is not sun safe.

Babies:

- Babies clothing, hat and shade positioning are checked regularly to ensure they continue to be well protected from UV. The use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months is not recommended due to their sensitive skin.

Role modelling and education:

- Staff and visitors are required to follow sun safe requirements, both for their own protection and safety, and to act as a role model for children.
- Sun protection education is to be an integral part of the daily program.
- Educators will have access to current information on sun protection.

- Resources on sun protection will be maintained. Information will be provided to parents via newsletters, pamphlets and displays encouraging sun protection for the whole family.

12 IMMUNISATION AND HEALTH POLICY FOR SICK CHILDREN

12.1 Immunisation

Children enrolling must have up-to-date immunisation status. Families must provide their child’s Immunisation History Statement (found on your myGov Medicare account) prior to commencement. The centre maintains an immunisation register, and updates this regularly. Parents will be reminded when their child is overdue for their next vaccination. If a child has an incomplete immunisation status, and an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease occurs, that child will be excluded as instructed by public health authorities. During the period of exclusion normal fees are still payable.

The Centre will maintain current information regarding immunisation in the parent library and foyer displays. We are also able to organise information sessions with a health professional. For information regarding immunisation and infectious illnesses please consult the centre, your family doctor, or your local community health services.

12.2 Infectious diseases in pregnancy

Women who are pregnant need to be aware of a number of diseases that can affect their unborn child. Staff members who are pregnant, as well as pregnant women who have children attending the centre need to be aware of the following diseases: Cytomegalovirus (CMV); Hand, Foot and Mouth Disease; Human Parvovirus B19 (Erythema Infectiosum; Fifth Disease); Listeriosis; Rubella; Toxoplasmosis; Varicella (chickenpox).

If there is a confirmed case of any of these illnesses at the centre, a sign will be displayed on the Centre’s front door alerting people entering. Any pregnant woman who comes into contact with these diseases should consult her doctor for further information.

12.3 Health policy for sick children

The Centre aims to minimise the spread of infectious diseases by conforming to the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMR). We understand that it is often difficult for parents to keep sick children at home, collect them during the day or provide alternate care, but sick children cannot be cared for adequately in the Centre environment. Children attending child care will probably need some alternative care during the year because of illness, so we advise having a back-up carer for occasions of need.

The Centre is required to notify the Public Health Unit (Hunter Population Health) about outbreaks of certain infectious diseases. Reporting allows health authorities to identify the cause of illness, trace the source of infection, advise on control measures, and assess the effectiveness of immunisation programs. Diseases requiring notification are listed in “Staying Healthy in Child Care”, which can be viewed in the office for further information. If there is an occurrence of an infectious illness at the Centre, parents will be notified by a sign beside the sign in Tablet in each room. Employees of the Centre are required to follow this policy with regards to their own health.

12.3.1 Recommended Exclusion Times

Exclusion requirements are set by the NHMR. The need for exclusion depends on the ease with which the infections can be spread, the ability of the infected person to follow hygiene precautions and the severity of the disease. This table should be read in conjunction with the relevant fact sheet contained in “Staying Healthy in Child Care”. The following exclusion times are recommended minimum times. More time may be needed to fully recover from the illness. Please note that some of these illnesses will require a medical certificate before the child can return to the Centre.

Condition	Exclusion of Case	Exclusion of Contacts
Bronchiolitis, Bronchitis	Exclude until feeling well	Not excluded
Campylobacter infection	Exclude until no loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded

Candidiasis (thrush)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Chickenpox (Varicella)	Exclude until blisters have dried-min 5 days after rash appears-may be less in immunised ch'n	Any child with immune deficiency. Notify PHU
Cytomegalovirus (CMV)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Common cold	Exclude if feeling unwell	Not excluded
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge stops or doctor has diagnosed (in writing) non-infectious conjunctivitis.	Not excluded
Croup	Exclude until feeling well	Not excluded
Cryptosporidium	Exclude until no loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Diarrhoea	Exclude until no loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Diphtheria	Contact PHU	Contact PHU
Ear infections (otitis)	Exclude while feeling unwell. Exclude if discharge is coming from the ear	Not excluded
Gastroenteritis	Exclude until no diarrhoea or vomiting for 24 hours	Not excluded
Giardiasis	Exclude until no loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Glandular Fever	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hand, foot & mouth disease	Exclude until blisters have dried	Not excluded
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until medical certificate received (after 4 days of antibiotics received) Notify PHU	Not excluded
Head lice (Pediculosis)	Exclude until effective treatment has commenced	Not excluded
Hepatitis A	Exclude until medical certificate received (at least 7 days after start of jaundice) Notify PHU	Not excluded
Hepatitis B	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hepatitis C	Not excluded	Not excluded
Herpes simplex (cold sores)	Exclude if can't be covered; exclude young chn who can't comply with hygiene. (exclude till sore is dry)	Not excluded
HIV/AIDS	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hyatid disease	Not excluded	Not excluded
Impetigo (school sores)	Exclude until antibiotic treatment started. Sores must be covered with watertight dressing.	Not excluded
Influenza	Exclude until well	Not excluded
Listeriosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Measles	Exclude until medical certificate received (at least 4 days after onset of rash); Notify PHU	Not excluded if immunised. Exclude immuno-compromised ch'n for 14 days after 1 st day of rash in the last case. Check with PHU re non-immunised contacts
Meningitis (viral)	Exclude until well	Not excluded
Meningococcal infection	Exclude until medical certificate received (after antibiotic treatment completed)	Not excluded. Contact PHU.
Molluscum contagiosum	Not excluded	Not excluded
Mumps	Exclude until medical certificate received (9 days or until swelling down); Notify PHU	Not excluded
Norovirus	Exclude until no diarrhoea or vomiting for 48 hours	Not excluded

Parvovirus (5 th disease, erythema infectiosum, slapped cheek syndrome)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Pneumococcal disease	Exclude until medical certificate received	Not excluded
Ringworm/tinea	Exclude until the day after appropriate antifungal treatment started	Not excluded
Roseola	Not excluded	Not excluded
Ross River virus	Not excluded	Not excluded
Rotavirus infection	Exclude until no diarrhoea vomiting for 24 hours	Not excluded
Rubella/ German measles	Exclude until medical certificate received (at least 4 days after rash onset)	Not excluded
Salmonellosis	Exclude until no loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Scabies	Exclude until the day after treatment started	Not excluded
Shigellosis	Exclude until no loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Streptococcal throat/ scarlet fever	Exclude until after 24 hours of antibiotics and until feels well.	Not excluded
Thrush/candidiasis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Toxoplasmosis	Not excluded	Not excluded. Contact PHU
Tuberculosis	Exclude until medical certificate received	Not excluded
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Exclude until medical certificate received (at least 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment or for 21 days after coughing onset); Notify PHU	Contact PHU
Worms	Exclude if loose bowel motions present	Not excluded

The Centre will also exclude children who:

- have a temperature of 38°C or higher until 12 hours after temperature returns to normal.
- have had vomiting or diarrhoea until 24 hours after the last symptom;
- are acutely ill and need to see a doctor;
- are too ill to participate in normal Centre activities;
- may require extra supervision to the detriment of the care and safety of the child or other children;
- have commenced antibiotic treatment until 24 hours after the first dose unless the child has previously taken the same medication with no adverse affects, and a letter from a medical practitioner confirming this is supplied.

We rely on the honesty of parents in advising staff about their child's health to enable this policy to be enforced and to minimise the spread of infectious diseases. We follow strict hygiene policies including handwashing, cleaning, nappy changing and toileting.

12.4 Medication

Medication, with the exception of Panadol, can only be given if prescribed by a doctor. Medication (including over-the-counter medication) must be in its original container, with the label showing the child's name, medication name, administration instructions and expiry date. You will need to fill out a Medication Form and hand this, with the medication to a staff member. This will need to be signed each day to confirm the child's last dose of medication.

If your child requires medication for asthma, an Asthma Management Plan must be completed by your child's doctor.

13 CHILDREN AT RISK

13.1 Parental access to children

Children will only be permitted to leave the centre with their parent, or a responsible person who is authorised in writing by the child's parent to collect the child. If a parent gives verbal authorisation by phone for a person to collect their child, this will be noted in the office diary. If staff are not familiar with a person who arrives to collect a child, they will request identification, and compare this to the information provided on the enrolment form. If staff are still unsure, they will contact the parent by telephone to confirm pick up arrangements. Please inform anyone picking your child up that they may be asked for identification. Parents may also be asked for identification if educators have not yet met them. As educators work different shifts you may be asked to provide identification on more than one occasion. We understand that this can be an inconvenience, but please understand that it is to ensure your child's safety.

Staff are unable to deny a parent's access to their child without first sighting a court order. Parenting plans and agreements must be registered through court or they are unable to be enforced. A parent who is not the subject of such a Court Order is able to collect their child, visit them at the centre, and exchange information with staff. If a parent who has been denied contact arrives to collect/visit their child, they will not be allowed contact with the child, or be given any information about the child. They will be asked to leave the premises and the custodial (holding a Residence Order) parent of the child will then be contacted. If the non-custodial parent refuses to leave, the police will be called.

13.2 Child protection policy

The Centre is committed to the care and protection of children, and ensuring every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children at the service from harm. Educators, staff, management, and volunteers have a responsibility to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children, and a responsibility to report children at risk of significant harm. The Centre is committed to the promotion of child protection information in the community. In this policy *child* refers to a *child or young person*.

13.2.1 Definitions

At risk of significant harm means that there are current concerns for the safety, welfare, or wellbeing of a child in any one or more of the following circumstances:

- The child's basic physical or psychological needs are not met or are at risk of not being met;
- The parents/caregivers have not arranged or are unwilling to arrange for a child to receive medical care;
- The parents/caregivers have not arranged or are unable to arrange for the child to receive an education (school-aged children);
- The child has been or is at risk of being physically or sexually abused or ill-treated;
- The child is residing in a home where incidents of domestic violence have occurred, causing risk of serious psychological harm;
- A parent/caregiver has behaved in such a way that a child has suffered or is at risk of suffering from serious psychological harm;
- The child was the subject of a pre-natal report and the birth mother did not engage with support services to eliminate or minimise risk factors.

Reasonable grounds means that a mandatory reporter suspects a child may be at risk of significant harm based on:

Observations of the child, young person, or family; or

Disclosure by the child, young person, or another person (confirmation of suspicions or clear proof is not required before making a report).

13.2.2 Strategies

- Staff and educators will develop trusting relationships with all children and awareness of physical appearance and disposition of children to enable them to note relevant changes;
- Injuries noted on arrival will be documented;
- Children will be supervised at all times; students/volunteers will not be left alone with children;
- The Director will be made aware of concerns regarding a child which will be documented in writing;

- Two educators will be present whenever children are in attendance;
- Staff are made aware of their child protection obligations and are provided with resources;
- The *Child Protection Policy* will be reviewed regularly;
- All new staff will be required to provide their *Working With Children Check* number, which will be verified online prior to commencement. Existing staff will be required to update their WWCC before the expiry date and provide documentation to the Centre.
- This policy will be included in all Centre handbooks.

13.3 Mandatory reporting

In the case of urgent concerns for a child's health or life, 000 will be called. Any suspicion is to be documented and reported to the Director, who will discuss concerns with other educators working with the child. The Director will then complete the *Online Mandatory Reporter Guide* on the *Keep Them Safe* website, which will give one of the following decision:

1. Report to Community Services (CS):

Immediate report to Community Services: call the *Child Protection Helpline* on 132111 as soon as possible. If required arrange medical care and/or inform police.

Report to Community Services: Call the *Child Protection Helpline* within 24 hours.

2. Consult with a professional: Discuss possible actions with a colleague or report to the *Child Protection Helpline*. Refer the family to a support service (see *Community Resource Folder*).

3. Referrals: This decision will be given where there is no risk of significant harm, but the family would benefit from support services.

4. Document and monitor: This decision does not require a report; document and continue professional relationship with the family.

If further information becomes available, the *Online Mandatory Reporter Guide* will be completed again with the new information. Print the *Final Decision Summary* and attach to the child's records. Record the report number after making a report and file the report record when received by email. Consider whether information should be shared with other agencies connected with the child e.g. schools. See *Information Exchange* on the *Keep Them Safe* website.

13.4 Disclosure of abuse

Educators and staff will:

- react calmly to the child making the disclosure.
- listen and later record the child's exact words
- provide comfort and care for the child.
- follow the steps of the *Mandatory Reporter Guide*
- reassure the child that it is not their fault and that it was right to tell
- explain what will happen now, and that it is part of our job to tell people who can protect the child
- not prompt the child or ask for further details as it is not the Centre's role to investigate.

13.5 Allegations of abuse against educators, staff, students or volunteers

The Centre is required to take additional action when an allegation of abuse or neglect is made against an employee:

- All allegations of abuse will be taken seriously;
- The Director will document the allegation, including the date and time the allegation is reported; who made the allegation; witnesses; when and where the alleged incident occurred and a description of the incident;
- The Director will undertake a risk assessment to determine whether any child is at immediate risk of harm and take interim action to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children;
- If the child or young person is at risk of significant harm a report will be made to the *Child Protection Helpline*;
- Investigations will be conducted by the Director, who will make recommendations to the President, who will make decisions based on the recommendations;
- *Child Protection in the Workplace* from the *NSW Ombudsman* will be checked to determine whether the behaviour is a reportable allegation, a reportable conviction or reportable conduct;
- Reportable allegations and convictions will be reported to the *NSW Ombudsman* within 30 days;

- If necessary, a report will be made to the police; if so a *SIO1 Notification of Serious Incident* form will be completed and submitted to the *NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate* within seven days;
- Confidentiality will be maintained at all times.

13.5.1 Investigating an Allegation

On receipt of an allegation the Director will:

- Notify the employee of the allegation and provide an outline of the processes to be followed;
- Advise and support the parents of the child;
- Support the staff member with the Centre remaining neutral until the investigation is completed;
- Decide on the information to be given to staff and parents who may be aware of the allegation;
- Gather information sensitively, impartially and with confidentiality. Interviews should be documented, and a signed copy retained. If children need to be interviewed, parental permission will be sought and a parent present;
- Interview the employee with a member of the Committee to take notes. The employee is able to have a support person as an observer who may give advice, but not participate in the interview;
- Provide a copy of the record of interview for the employee to sign. In signing the employee is not necessarily agreeing with the allegation, but that the record of interview is true and correct;
- Re-interview the person making the allegation, witnesses, or employees if new information is revealed;
- Draw together information and liaise with the Committee representative; draw conclusions and make recommendations. The finding must conclude the allegation is:
 - Sustained;
 - Not sustained (insufficient evidence to establish that the alleged conduct did/did not occur);
 - False (Inquiries find that the reportable conduct did not occur);
 - Vexatious (The allegation was made without substance or maliciously);
 - Misconceived (inquiries find the allegation was made in good faith but based on misunderstanding); or
 - Not reportable conduct.
- Forward findings to the President to make a decision to either accept or reject recommendations;
 - Decide on action to be taken:
 - No further action needed;
 - Disciplinary action or dismissal;
 - Amendments to policies to minimise risks;
 - Taking action against the person making the allegation if found to be vexatious or false.
- Advise the employee and then other relevant parties of the outcomes and action to be taken;

Ensure documentation required is forwarded to the *NSW Ombudsman*.

14 FAMILY PARTICIPATION

Charlestown Child Care and Early Learning Centre values the contributions of parents to the centre and respects how and when you would like to participate. Following are some ways you might like to participate in the Centre.

14.1.1 Join the Management Committee

All parents are welcome to join the Management Committee (See Section 3.1). We are always looking for new members each year.

14.1.2 Special skills or interest

Do you have any skills/interests/experiences/resources that you would like to contribute to the centre's program, for example computing, sewing, cooking, language, musical skills, reading, show and tell?

14.1.3 Donating craft materials

We are always looking for donations of craft materials. Such items may include: cardboard tubes, boxes, plastic lids and containers...just about anything that is safe for children to reuse, repurpose or create with.

14.1.4 Annual working bee

As we are a not-for-profit centre we rely on volunteers to assist us in the maintenance of our property to provide a safe and inviting environment for the children and educators to learn and play. One weekend a year (generally in October) we ask parents to volunteer 3 hours to assist in yearly maintenance and cleaning of the Centre, tasks which our regular cleaner is not able to do on a daily/weekly basis. Morning tea is provided, and no professional skills are required. In the past tasks have included: gardening, weeding, painting, cleaning windows, minor repairs.

The working bee is a great opportunity to meet other parents and help out your local community. We understand weekends can be busy, however we truly appreciate any time you are able to offer to assist us in this spring-cleaning event!

14.1.5 Extra Activities

The Centre holds fun activities throughout the year for families to participate in for minimal or no fee. Past activities have included:

- Family disco
- End of year Christmas party/picnic
- Edgeworth trains
- Beanies for brain cancer
- Pyjama day
- Grandparent's day
- Footy day
- Pink Ribbon day

14.1.6 School photo day

Each year we have a professional photographer take individual and group photos for purchase. It is entirely up to each family whether you wish to purchase the photographs or not. If your child does not attend on the day the photos are being taken you are welcome to come along and have a photo on an alternate day that week.

14.1.7 Book club

Each term we provide the opportunity to purchase books through the Scholastic Book Club. A small percentage of the purchase price is donated back to our Centre.

14.1.8 Christmas party

At the end of each year we hold a Christmas disco. Towards the end of the year we ask for prize donations for our raffle which raises money for the Centre. This is a great opportunity for children, families and staff to spend time together.

15 IN CONCLUSION

We welcome you, your child and family to our centre, and hope that you feel a part of our centre community. It is our aim that you will feel welcome to visit and participate in our program at any time. If you have any further questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact Catherine (Centre Director), or the educators in your child's room.

ORIENTATION SURVEY

We would appreciate your feedback on your enrolment and orientation process. This will help us to ensure that we're providing the information and services that you need.

1. Did you find the content of this handbook useful?
2. Are there any topics that you think we should include?
3. Do you feel that any topics need to be covered in more detail?
4. Do you have any suggestions about the content/format of the handbook?
5. Do you have any comments about the enrolment & orientation process?
6. We encourage family involvement & participation in our service. Is there any particular way that you would like to be involved?