

Welcome Thank you for choosing Alphabet Preschool for the most important years of your child's life. When we enrol a child, we enrol the whole family and we are so excited to begin this journey with you.

We are a boutique, family owned, early education centre welcoming all children from six weeks to six years. Our aim is to provide high quality early education programs that nurture each child's individual uniqueness. We are inspired by the best parts of Reggio Emilia, Maria Montessori & Rudolf Steiner's education philosophies.

We believe that high quality education programs along with small group sizes are essential in early education and care, that's why our learning spaces are set up to facilitate this. We believe in educating children holistically; nourishing little bodies from the inside out with fresh foods, packed with nutrition, teamed with physical activity, mindfulness and yoga programs. Our team of professional and dedicated educators strive to engross your child in outdoor learning, where they will feed the chickens, pet the rabbits, grow and harvest herbs and vegetables, along with participating in structured learning programs focused on preparing children for school and beyond.

Children learn best when their teachers and families work in partnership and we seek to establish positive and reciprocal relationships with each family member. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback please feel free to speak to me or directly to the team leader in your child's room. We are here for chats, advice, information and guidance on all areas of your child's learning and development.

Warm regards Sarah- centre director "The most important years of a child's life is not that of universoty, its that of the first six years of their life" – Maria Montessori

Service Information

We are a privately owned 90 place centre consisting of 6 rooms. We pride ourselves on having small groupings of children as we believe this gives the children the opportunity to receive higher quality education and care. All rooms have their own fully fenced play yard, sand pit and age-appropriate equipment. The outdoor spaces can be fenced off, to ensure the safety of younger children, or they can be opened to allow children of nearing age groups the opportunity to play and learn from each other. We believe that families are our primary partners and the children's first teachers. Therefore, we encourage parents to have as much involvement in our service as they wish. We'd love to hear feedback about any aspect of our service to ensure we deliver the highest quality education and care to your child.

Our Service is open from 6.30am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday and closed for one week over the Christmas period along with all Victorian public holidays.

The ratio used at our service is 1:4 for children under 3 and 1:11 for children over 3.

Children's room groupings

Nursery – 6 weeks to 12 months approximately Toddler 1 - 12 months – 2 years approximately Toddler 2– 2 years – 3 years approximately Pre-Kinder -2.5 years – 5 years approximately 3-year-old kinder – 3-year-old structured and funded Kindergarten program Kindergarten – 4-year-old fully structured and funded Kindergarten program

Management Structure

Approved Provider: Marek Morgan

Centre Director: Sarah Wydro

Assistant Director: Amanda Morris

Educational Leader: *Helen Cammaroto*

Service Policies and Procedures

You will find a copy of our Service policies and procedures on our website. We expect our staff and families to always adhere to our policies and procedures to ensure we maintain compliance and abide by the National Law and National Regulations.

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

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

Enrolment information

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

Please understand that it is essential we have up-to-date information in case of an emergency. You can update this information at any time in the office or via email.

It is important that you notify the centre director of any changes relating to your enrolment information including:

- Address
- Health of your child including immunisation details, allergies etc.
- Telephone/mobile numbers
- Contact details
- Family changes
- Emergency contact information details etc.

It is essential that we have copies of your child's birth certificate and immunisation status before you enrol. We are also required to have certified copies of any court orders and/or allergy plans relating to your child.

You will need the following documents in order to enrol:

- A completed Centrelink Child Care Subsidy Claim
- The completed enrolment form
- Completed information about your child's needs
- Payment information
- Immunisation certificate from Medicare please note a copy of 'the green book' is no longer acceptable.
- Birth certificate
- Court orders
- Medical management plans for asthma/anaphylaxis/allergies if required
- Payment of a booking fee PLUS 2 weeks payment of full fees

Enrolment & fees

Families are encouraged to take a tour of our preschool and ask as many questions as they like. Once the tour is completed you may wish to join our waitlist. Please note that joining our waitlist does not guarantee a place. Places will be offered for the following year in October. We offer places to current families first and then proceed to our waitlist. Siblings also get top priority. Children will need to start in January and fees will be due from 30th January or earlier.

If you are offered a place, you will need to provide the completed enrolment form, the other documents listed on page 1, and you are asked to pay a deposit of two weeks of full fees PLUS a booking fee. Please note these fees are **non-refundable**.

Children and families will participate in orientation sessions. These are free of charge and generally, three orientation session will be offered. Once children have started with us, we ask that children are dropped to the service before 11am. Children arriving after this time often miss out on vital parts of the day and can be unsettled.

To give our families the greatest benefit from the childcare subsidy, we have a session time fee structure in place. Please ask our centre director about our current fee structure. Families will receive a statement via email every week/fortnight showing the dates and fee charged for the two weeks ahead. Families must ensure their account is paid up in full, two weeks in advance. If a child is absent for three days without explanation the enrolment will cease and be filled with a waitlist family.

Fees will be direct debited from your account on your nominated day on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

Families must let us know what time they will collect their children in the mornings. Please let us know if you will be any later than 15 mins beyond what is written on this form.

Families must comply with the times of their session otherwise a late fee of \$2 per minute per child will be charged.

Fees are charged whether a child attends on their nominated day or not.

Withdrawal from care/reduction of days

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

Authorised Nominees

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

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

Please understand that it is essential we have up-to-date information on your child's enrolment record in case of an emergency. It is important that you notify the nominated supervisor (or responsible person) of any changes to enrolment information including:

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

Authorisations

The enrolment form will include additional authorisations for our Service to seek medical treatment and emergency transportation for your child if required. Authorisations will also be requested for application of sun cream, permission to administer emergency medication to your child in the case of an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency (Ventolin or EpiPen®), permission for an educator with current first aid to administer paracetamol in an emergency and permission to access medical treatment and transport in case of an emergency. Parents must also provide the name, address and contact details of any person authorised to authorise our Service to transport your child or arrange transportation for your child. This may be for authorisation for your child to go on an excursion and/or for your child to be transported by our service.

Inclusion of all children

If your child has a disability, please speak to our centre director prior to enrolment.

We provide a supportive and inclusive environment that allows each child to fully participate in quality education and care.

We aim to develop and sustain supportive relationships with families and encourage discussions about how we can support your child to have equitable access to resources and participation. If your child has a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package, we may need your consent to make contact with services and/or therapists who are working with your child to seek information regarding their learning plan to support continuity of learning.

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

Medical conditions

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

Our Service requires a medical management plan or ASCIA Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan to be completed by your general practitioner to assist in managing your child's needs. This must be provided prior to your child's commencement at the Service. In consultation with the nominated supervisor, you will be asked to develop a risk minimisation plan and communication plan to assist our educators and staff. Any prescribed medication that your child may require must be provided each day they attend our Service.

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

Excursions/Regular outings

Excursions are an important and valuable part of learning in early education. They expose a child to a range of different experiences and help them to observe and understand the world around them. For any excursion or regular outing in our community, we will complete comprehensive risk assessments to minimise any identified risks as part of our planning for excursions. We provide parents with information about the excursion in advance and require written authorisation for each child to participate on an excursion or regular outing. Authorisation for regular transportation and regular outings will be gained once every 12 months or whenever any of the circumstances of the transport may change. Please see our *Safe Transportation Policy* for further information.

Childcare subsidy (CCS)

Childcare Subsidy is a means-tested subsidy paid directly to the Service as a fee reduction. There are 3 factors that will determine a family's level of Childcare Subsidy, which include:

- 1. Combined Family Income
- 2. Activity Test for both parents
- 3. Service Type

We remind families that there are some compliance areas that the Service has no influence over such as Child Care Subsidy, and timing of payments to the Service and your account. When families enrol their child into our Service, it is the family's responsibility to provide us with the required information to receive Child Care Subsidy. This includes the correct Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth of the child and parent/guardian the child is linked with.

Child Care Subsidy requires families to provide information and confirm current details by using the Centrelink online account through <u>myGov</u>. Here you will be asked to provide your combined family

income estimate for the financial year, hours of recognised activity including work, training, study and volunteering and the type of childcare your family uses. Once approved, you will be allocated a percentage and the maximum number of fortnightly hours to use at the service.

Families are required to advise Centrelink of any changes to circumstances within 14 days to avoid a debt. Changes to circumstances may impact CCS payments.

Should you wish to raise concerns regarding the management of Child Care Subsidy, please speak to the nominated supervisor as soon as possible. Concerns can also be directed to the Department of Education on 1800 664 231 or email: tipoffline@education.gov.au

Complying written arrangement (CWA)

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

Allowable absences

You can be paid CCS for any absence from approved care your child attends for up to 42 days per child per financial year, however you will still be required to pay the 'gap' fee for any absence up to 42 days, and the entire daily fee will be payable for any absence beyond 42 days per year. Additional absences beyond 42 days for certain reasons may have CCS approved and paid. Please talk to us about the additional absences.

Public holidays and sick days will be counted as an absence if the child would normally have attended the service on that day. You can access your child's absence record on your myGov **'View Child Care Details and Payments'** on your Centrelink online account. You can also do this using the Express plus Families mobile app. Please ask your Centre director about swap days which are available subject to availability.

Session Times

At Alphabet preschools we offer 3 different sessions with these time frames. 9hr: Times within 8:00am- 5:00pm 10hr: Times within 7:30am-5:30pm All day session: Times within 6:30am-6.00pm Families can drop off and pick up in between their selected session times but never outside these times without previous communication with us. During enrolment families are to communicate what hours they will be dropping off and picking their child up. It is important families stick to these times and update us if their hours will change.

Our Commitment to Child Safety

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

Our staff carry out their responsibilities as mandatory reporters and maintain up to date with knowledge of child protection law and child protection training.

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

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

We aim to ensure our education and care service is a tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment at all times in accordance with Education and Care National Law and Regulations. Smoking or vaping is not permitted in or on surrounding areas of the Service by educators, staff, parents or visitors.

To assist in ensuring Child Safe Standards are maintained our Service follows the <u>National Model Code</u> <u>and Guidelines</u> for taking images or videos of children released by ACECQA 1 July 2024. [optional] We request families comply with the guidelines of the National Model Code and not take images or recording videos of children whilst at the education and care service.

Code of Conduct

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

Our educators and staff

Our Service is made up of a team of high-quality professional educators who are committed to and passionate about early childhood education and care. Our staff promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children. We create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.

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

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

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

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

Regulatory Authority

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

Department of Education and Training Website: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation Email: licensed.childrens.services@education.vic.gov.au Phone: 1300 307 415 OR Department of Education 75 High St, Belmont VIC 3216 Phone: 1300 333 232

National Quality Framework

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

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) guides early childhood educators, early childhood teachers and approved providers to inform educational programs and practices that emphasise play-based learning and extend and enrich children's learning and wellbeing from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school.

The EYLF was reviewed and updated and released in early 2023 to ensure the framework reflects contemporary developments in practice and knowledge while supporting educators to promote the learning, development and wellbeing of each child.

The vision of the EYLF is:

All children engage in learning that promotes confident and creative individuals and successful lifelong learners. All children are active and informed members of their communities with knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives. (EYLF, V2.0, p.6)

Fundamental to the EYLF is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming.* From before birth children are connected to family, community, culture and place. Their earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.

The EYLF is made up of 5 learning outcomes, principles and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning.

BELONGING

Experiencing *belonging* – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong to diverse families, neighbourhoods, local and global communities. Belonging acknowledges children's independence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, trusting relationships and affirming experiences are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

BEING

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

BECOMING

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, dispositions, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. *Becoming* reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises the collaboration of educators, families and children to support and enhance children's connections and capabilities, and for children to activity participate as citizens.

The diversity of family and community life in Australia means that children experience belonging, being and becoming in many ways. They bring their diverse experiences, home languages, perspectives expectations and cultural ways of knowing, being and doing to their learning. Educators understand, respect and work with each child's unique qualities and capabilities. Children's learning, development and wellbeing are communicated through 5 Learning Outcomes.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

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

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

- Children develop a sense of connectedness to groups and communities and an understanding of their reciprocal rights and responsibilities as active and informed citizens
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

- Children become strong in their social, emotional and mental wellbeing
- Children become strong in their physical learning and wellbeing
- Children are aware of and develop strategies to support their own mental and physical health and personal safety

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

- Children develop a growth mindset and learning dispositions such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of learning and thinking skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another

• Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

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

Educational Program

We are committed to providing a developmental and educational program which caters for each child's individual needs, abilities and interests. Our educational program is delivered through an intentional, play-based pedagogy aligned to the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0. Our program continues to develop as we use the relationships children have with their families and communities, working in partnership with parents, to ensure each child's knowledge, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of our programs.

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

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

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

to discuss any aspect of learning and development with parents and support discussions with allied health professionals.

Goals for your child at our Service

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

Maria Montessori

Educators' practices and the relationships they form with children and families have a significant effect on children's involvement and success in learning. Children thrive when families and educators work together in partnership to support young children's learning. Children's early learning influences their life chances.

Wellbeing and a strong sense of connection, optimism, resilience and engagement enable children to develop a growth mindset, and a positive attitude to learning. (Early Years Learning Framework V.2.0. p.9).

Documentation of Learning/ Portfolios

Educators observe children and facilitate their learning to provide each child with a personal, confidential portfolio on an app called StoryPark.

The individual child's portfolio is maintained and used as a direct tool for evaluation and future planning within the Service's program, making our program reflect the value of individuality.

Our guiding philosophies

We believe in taking snippets from the leaders in early childhood learning and development and creating our own education program. We are inspired by three teaching philosophies:

Reggio Emilia

The Reggio Emilia Philosophy is an innovative and inspiring approach to early childhood education, which values the child as strong, capable and resilient; rich with wonder and knowledge. The Philosophy rides on the coattails of the innate curiosity of children and aims to assist them with

understanding their world and who they are in it. Children can explore and discover in a supportive and rich environment, where the curriculum is created around the children's interests.

Maria Montessori

The Montessori approach was developed by Maria Montessori. The approach is scientifically based and has been used for over 100 years. The fundamental principle of Maria Montessori's method is to value a child's naturally inquisitive and developing mind to foster learning in an intuitive and natural way. Montessori classrooms are prepared thoughtfully in a way that encourages learners to explore for themselves. Children in these classrooms are guided to make their own discoveries, as well as gain a sense of independence. The teacher is there to provide help along the way.

Rudolf Steiner

Waldorf education, also known as Steiner education, is based on the educational philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. Its pedagogy strives to develop pupils' intellectual, artistic, and practical skills in an integrated and holistic manner. The cultivation of pupils' imagination and creativity is a central focus.

Communication

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

We have many types of communication we use for families, including:

- o Newsletters
- o Phone calls
- o Emails
- o Face to face
- o Pictures
- Mid-year year interviews
- o Formal meetings

Preparing your child for pre-school

Orientation is an important start for your child and family to connect to our Service. Each child must complete three orientation sessions in the company of a family member before they start the day with us. This gives you and your child the opportunity to gain an understanding of our program, the layout of the room, where to find things, provide Educators with additional information about your child and how we can best support their transition and settling period.

If your child is reluctant to attend, please discuss this with their assigned Educator so that they can develop strategies with you to support the transition from home to the Service.

We suggest reading the following books to your child regularly in the lead up to their first day and beyond. 'Maisy goes to Preschool' by Lucy Cousins, 'What to expect at Preschool' by Heidi Murkoff, 'I love you all day long' by Francesca Rusackas and 'I'm ready for preschool' by Jedda Robaard. A copy of each of these books is available for you to read to your child at our centre.

Communication between home and the Service must be open and happen often to best support your child during this time. There may be tears and extra tight hugs when saying goodbye for the first few weeks but there are always cuddles, reassurance and genuine care from Educators for both the children and their families. Sometimes this experience is upsetting more so for the family, not the child. We understand this and offer support through phone calls during the day, photos and open communication.

Arrival and Departure

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

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

The first day/week

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

Saying goodbye

What works best is a set routine so try to establish the care routine from the orientation process. Being well organised and avoiding a rush usually results in a calm start to the day.

Most children will want to have a look around first to see who else has arrived and to look at what activities are available. Rest assured; we'll contact you if your child becomes distressed.

What to bring to the Service

Backpack

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

Drink bottle

We work towards all children being able to recognise their own drink bottle. Please bring a drink bottle that your child is comfortable with and easily drink from.

Sun smart hat



All children must have a sun-smart wide brim hat when they attend the centre. The best type of hat for children is a wide brim hat with a cord for securing on their head as they play. Please note that caps are not considered sun smart.

Comfort items

Please bring along any item that your child will use for comfort and sleep. Items such as: dummy, cuddly toy, special blanket, a family photograph, or sleeping bag are all items that might make your child feel more secure. Please label all items clearly.



A Wet bag

Your child will most likely have wet clothes to bring home at the end of the day. Please provide a waterproof bag attached to your child's backpack so that we can place any dirty items straight into this bag.

Spare clothes

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

For infants

This Service supports breastfeeding. Families that are breastfeeding should speak to the Educator or Director to be aware of our policies on storing and serving breast milk. Families that are formula feeding should also consult our Educators to be aware of how we need the formula prepared and stored.

Clothing

It is helpful to your child if they are dressed in non-restrictive, serviceable and easy to wash clothes so that they feel free to join in all the activities and to develop independence. Consider clothing that enables the child to move around easily and allows children to be independent in dressing. Clothing such as long dresses, overalls, braces, belts and stiff buttons can prove a problem for children who need to go to the toilet. We require all t-shirts to have sleeves (no mid-riff or strap tops).

Shoes need to allow children freedom to run, climb, hop & jump as well as being easy for the child to take off and put on by himself/herself.

Unsuitable shoes are thongs and open-toe sandals and we prefer that these be NOT worn to the Service. Lace up joggers or closed toe sandals are appropriate.

Sun Safety

We work in compliance with the *National SunSmart Early Childhood Program* to ensure children's health and safety is maintained at all times. We use a combination of sun protection measures whenever the UV Index Levels reach 3 or above. We monitor the UV index levels daily and schedule outdoor activities when levels are safe. Our outdoor environment provides shade for play experiences and we conduct regular risk assessments to ensure the play space and equipment is safe for children. Children and educators must wear hats and appropriate clothing, including suitable footwear when outside. Educators will encourage children, including by way of modelling behaviour, to avoid excessive exposure to the sun and to wear suitable sunscreen (at least SPF50 or higher broadspectrum water resistant), which is reapplied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. We ask that children come to the Service with sunscreen already applied so they are able to participate in outdoor play immediately and not have to wait the 20 minutes after application. Consent to apply sunscreen is included in our enrolment form.

Toys

The Service has an abundance of educational resources designed to enhance children's learning and development. We ask that children leave their personal toys at home. This eliminates toys getting lost, broken, disappointment for other children and responsibility on Educators to track numerous toys throughout the day. We will not be responsible for any lost or broken personal items that are brought in from home.

What we provide

- All meals including breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea & late snack.
- Disposable nappies
- Disposable wipes
- Cow's milk or alternative
- All sheets & linen
- Bibs
- Sunscreen
- Smocks

Meals

Our Service promotes healthy eating habits and provides delicious and nutritious food for your child each day. We provide a nutritionally balanced breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and supper. We follow the Australian Dietary Guidelines to ensure our meals are prepared to meet the dietary requirements for all children. Our menu is carefully planned and prepared by a qualified cook. We cater for the dietary requirements of all children enrolled at our Service. Please discuss your child's special requirements, allergies and any other medical conditions with the nominated supervisor.

Behaviour Guidance

We encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour. We give children the opportunity to self-regulate their behaviours during play to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Educators follow a *Behaviour Guidance Policy* that extends across the whole Service giving consistency of expectation in all rooms. We use a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour to help them develop a respect for others, for property and respect for self.

Physical Play

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

Physical play provides children with the opportunity to:

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

Rest and Sleep

Rest and sleep routines vary according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide cots and beds for children and play soft music in the background. Your child may wish to bring a security item to have at rest time. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest or sleep needs with educators. Each day we provide information about the times your child rested or slept. Quiet activities, such as puzzles and books are available for those children who do not sleep.

Sustainability

Our Service is passionate about sustainability. We believe in supporting children to appreciate and care for the environment by embedding sustainable practice into the daily operation of our Service, infrastructure and teaching. Further, we support children to appreciate that sustainability embraces social and economic sustainability as we engage in concepts of social justice, fairness, sharing, democracy and citizenship.

In order to empower our sustainability program, we emphasise children's ability to make a difference, enabling them to learn and appreciate their environment in an engaging, fun and exciting manner. We do this by engaging children in discussion about sustainable practice, developing an appreciation of the natural world, encouraging them to participate in a recycling program and reducing energy and conserving water. We aim to provide children with the skills and knowledge required to take an active role in caring for the environment and to think about ways they can contribute to a sustainable future.

Family Walls

We have a *Family Wall* in our hallway. This is a strong and valuable tool in our environment for your child to connect to, feel that they and their family are valued and that their family is as much a part of the Service, even if they are not always there. If you would like to bring in a photo, or a couple of photos that represent your family, we would love to add it to our wall.

Parent Participation and Feedback

Our Service has an Open-Door Policy and actively seeks and encourages families to be involved in the Service. This can range from evaluating and adding input to your child's program and observations,

volunteering within the Service and sharing skills and experiences that the children and the program will benefit from and providing feedback. We seek input from families on all aspects of the Service but in particular, your child's goals, observations and program.

We welcome and encourage the involvement of all parents/families at our Service. Your ideas, experiences and skills are greatly valued and will enable us to extend each child's interests, abilities and knowledge. There are many ways for your family to be involved. We understand that our busy lives can't always afford the time, however any contribution no matter how big or small is much appreciated. Here are just a few ideas.

Reading

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

Recyclable items

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

Special events

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

Suggestions

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

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

Community Information

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

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

Health and Hygiene

Our Service has effective and systematic risk management systems in place to identify any possible risk of hazards to our learning environment and practices.

All staff diligently practice and model personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette and disposal of tissues. We request that all children and visitors to our service wash their hands or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival.

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

When should I not send my child to the Service?

Please monitor your child's health and do not bring your child to the Service if they are suffering from any illness or infectious disease.

To minimise the spread of infections and diseases, and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators and staff, we implement recommendations developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)- *Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services, 6th Edition.* Our policies and procedures for *Dealing with Infectious Diseases* is available for all families to view.

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

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Service, we will contact you or an authorised nominee to collect your child within a 30-minute time frame where possible. If your child is unable to be collected, educators will contact the child's emergency contact for collection. When your child is collected, you will be provided with an *Illness Record* completed by the educator which includes information about your child's illness, their symptoms, general behaviour and any action taken. You will be requested to sign and acknowledge the details in this record.

Your child should not attend the Service if they have had paracetamol within 24 hours for a temperature. Children who are on antibiotics are to be kept away from the Service for the first 24

hours to allow the child to rest and the risk of spreading the infection to decrease. If your child has been had diarrhoea and/or vomiting, they will be excluded until there has not been any diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 24 hours. For certain illnesses, a medical clearance certificate may be required before your child returns.

Infectious Diseases

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

<u>Exclusion for common or concerning conditions</u> (Australian Government, National Health and Medical Research Council, Staying Healthy 6th Edition 2024)

CONDITION	EXCLUSION			
Chicken pox	Exclude until all blisters have dried – this is usually at least 5 days after the rash first appeared in non-immunised children, and less in vaccinated children. See the guidelines for contact exclusions			
Conjunctivitis or eye discharge	Exclude until discharge from the eyes has stopped (unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis)			
Ear infection	Not excluded unless they also have concerning symptoms (fever, rash, tiredness, pain, poor feeding)			
Fever	Exclude until the temperature remains normal, unless the fever has a known non-infectious cause. If the child has gone home from the Service with a fever but their temperature is normal the next morning, they can return to the service. If the child wakes in the morning with a fever, they should stay home until their temperature remains normal If a doctor later diagnoses the cause of the child's fever, follow the exclusion guidance for that disease.			
Gastroenteritis ('gastro') Campylobacter infection Cryptosporidiosis Giardia infection (giardiasis) Rotavirus infection Salmonella infection (salmonellosis)	Exclude until there has not been any diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 24 hours			

 Shigella infection (shigellosis) 				
Norovirus infection	Exclude until there has not been any diarrhoea or vomiting for at least 48 hours			
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried			
Head lice	Not excluded, as long as effective treatment begins before the next attendance at the service. The child does not need to be sent home immediately if head lice are detected			
Hib (Haemophilus influenza type b)	Exclude until the person has received treatment for at least 4 days			
Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after the rash appeared. See the guidelines for contact exclusions			
Meningitis (viral)	Exclude until person is well			
Meningococcal infection	Exclude until the person has completed antibiotic treatment			
Mumps	Exclude for at least 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)			
Pneumococcal disease	Exclude until person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well			
Rash	Not excluded unless combined with other concerning symptoms (fever, tiredness, pain, poor feeding)			
Respiratory conditions and infections Bronchitis and bronchiolitis Common cold COVID-19 (also refer to state or territory advice) Croup Flu (influenza) Human metapneumovirus Pneumonia RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) Shingles (zoster infection)	If a person has respiratory symptoms (cough, sneezing, runny or blocked nose, sore throat), exclude them only if: • the respiratory symptoms are severe, or • the respiratory symptoms are getting worse (more frequent or severe), or • they also have concerning symptoms (fever, rash, tiredness, pain, poor feeding) Otherwise, do not exclude. A person can often have an ongoing cough after they have recovered from a respiratory infection. If their other symptoms have gone and they are feeling well, they can return to the service Exclude children until blisters have dried and crusted. Adults who can cover the blisters are not excluded (they are excluded if blisters cannot be covered) See the guidelines for contact exclusions			
 Skin-related infections Cold sores (herpes simplex) 	Not excluded if the person can maintain hygiene practices to minimise the risk of transmission. If the person cannot maintain these practices (for example, because they are too young), exclude until the sores are dry. Cover sores with a dressing, if possible.			

 Fungal infections of the skin or scalp (ringworm, tinea, athlete's foot) Impetigo (school sores) Scabies and other mites causing skin disease 	Exclude until the day after starting treatment For impetigo, cover any sores on exposed skin with a watertight dressing		
Warts	Not excluded		
Strep throat	Exclude until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well		
Whooping cough (pertussis)	Exclude until at least 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment, or for at least 21 days from the onset of coughing if the person does not receive antibiotics. See the guidelines for contact exclusions		
Worms	Not excluded		

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

Immunisation

The Public Health Act 2010 requires all families to provide an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for their child prior to enrolment in an early childhood education and care service. The immunisation history statement must show that each enrolled child is up to date with immunisations for their age. The relevant vaccinations are those under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

In the case of an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease, management will contact families as soon as possible. We ask that families immediately inform our Service if someone in their family is diagnosed with an infectious disease to help minimise the risk to other children, families and educators.

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

Medication

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

Educators can only administer medication that is:

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

Any child's prescribed medication such as asthma inhalers, adrenaline auto injectors (EpiPen) or Insulin (for diabetes), must accompany the child each day to our Service or parents ensure our Service has adequate supplies of the required medication at all times.

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

Incidents, injury or trauma

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

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

If an injury or incident is serious and we believe urgent medical attention is required, the Nominated Supervisor will contact an ambulance immediately. We will attempt to contact a parent or guardian or an authorised nominee to advise of the situation. If you are unable to meet the ambulance at the Service, we will send one of our educators/staff members to accompany your child in the ambulance. Please note that Ambulance cover is the responsibility of each family. An *Incident, Injury and Trauma Record* will be completed, and a parent will be required to acknowledge and sign this record. A copy of any documentation from the hospital or treating doctor will also be requested. Our Service will also be required to notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any serious incident or injury. In these circumstances, you may be contacted by our Approved Provider and the Regulatory Authority to follow up the incident and actions taken by our Service.

Safety in our Service

Emergency and evacuation procedures

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

Drop off and pick up time

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

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

Workplace Health and Safety

We are committed in providing an environment that is safe and healthy for every employee, volunteer, child, family and visitor. We have made every reasonable effort to minimise the risk of

serious injury and request all persons to our Service to adhere to our policies regarding Workplace Health and Safety.

Each morning, our educators conduct daily safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment and will alert management of any potential risk or hazard to children to ensure this is rectified before children use the equipment or area. We welcome all feedback regarding the safety of our Service. If you see something that concerns you regarding safe work practices, the safety of building and equipment or general work health and safety issues, please contact the Nominated Supervisor immediately.

Social Media

We use social media to communicate, share information and celebrate what is happening in our Service with enrolled families and our local community.

We promote safety and wellbeing of all children and are committed to ensure safe online environments when engaging in digital technology including social media.

Photographs of your child will only be added if written authorisation has been provided on the enrolment form.

We maintain appropriate privacy of families, children and educators by not publishing any personal information online.

Privacy and Confidentiality

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

To plan programs for your child/ren, we need to collect information from you. This information helps us to assess and plan programs in partnership with you. We do not disclose personal information about you or your child to other people or organisations without your consent, unless we are required to do so by law.

We do not ask for personal information about you or your child from other professionals or organisations without your consent. You can look at the information in your child's file at any time or request a copy of information in the file.

Our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* is available to view at any time. This policy sets out how we ensure our Service acts in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles and

the Privacy Act 1988. We ensure all personal information is protected, records and documents are maintained and stored in accordance with Education and Care Services National Regulations and that all staff understand the requirements of the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme. Any Privacy complaints will be managed promptly and in a consistent manner as outlined in our *Dealing with Complaints Policy*.

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

Grievances

We understand that from time to time a parent may become displeased with a particular aspect of our service. We believe in working with the families and that grievances should be dealt with promptly and as soon as possible. We feel that it is essential that this procedure is pro-active with positive outcomes for all concerned.

We have in place a procedure which allows the service the opportunity to support families who may need to solve a grievance and also helps to develop positive growth and development of our service within the community.

Should anyone have a concern in relation to their experiences at our preschool, opportunities exist for them to have their concerns addressed by the Director or a senior member of staff.

Grievance procedure

The centre fosters positive relations between all parents and staff. Every parent has the right to a positive and sympathetic response to their concerns. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues or concerns that impact or affect the day to day wellbeing of the centre in a fair, prompt and positive manner. We ensure that:

• Every parent is provided with clear written guidelines detailing grievance procedures, included in this handbook.

- All confidential conversations/discussions with parents will take place in a quiet area away from children, other parents and staff who are not involved.
- The Complainants' names will remain confidential between involved parties where necessary.
- The name and phone number of Department of Human Services & Children's Regulation Services is included in the centre foyer. All complaints dealing with children's health and welfare will be reported to the Department of Children's Services within 24 hours
- A current copy of the Child Care Regulations is available in the centre for parents to read at any time or can be accessed online at

http://www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/earlychildhood/NQFRegs2011.pd

Grievance procedure is the process by which solutions are sought to resolve disputes in a fair, equitable and prompt manner. Grievances should be resolved as informally and quickly as possible by the parties involved. When grievances cannot be resolved informally by the persons directly involved, a formal grievance process should be provided. We deal with grievances in the following manner:

- The parent should discuss the problem with the relevant staff member concerned.
- If the parent still feels action is necessary after discussion with the relevant staff member they should take the matter up with the Director, or the authorised member of staff on duty.
- If the parent is still unhappy with the situation the Director can offer to take the matter to the owner of the service.
- If the parent is still unhappy, Management and /or the parent can seek guidance from the Department of Human Services.

We believe that it is important that concerns are dealt with as soon as possible and in an objective manner. If the person is still not satisfied with the outcome, they can put their complaint in writing to the proprietor's address. Parents, students, staff or members of the public wishing to raise a concern or make a complaint against a childcare centre, can contact:

Nominated supervisor: Sarah Wydro

1 Regent Street Whittington VIC 3219 Telephone: 03 5248 2522

Approved Provider: Marek Morgan

1 Regent Street

Whittington VIC 3219

Telephone: 03 5248 2522

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Quality Assessment and Regulation Division GPO Box 4367 Melbourne VIC 3001 Phone: 1300 307 415 Email: licensed.childrens.services@edumail.vic.gov.au

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Contact Person: Pre-School Adviser Address: Level 2, 237 Ryrie Street, Geelong VIC 3220 Telephone: 5225 1000 Fax: 5225 1099 Postal Address: PO Box 2086 Geelong VIC 3220

Parent Acknowledgement

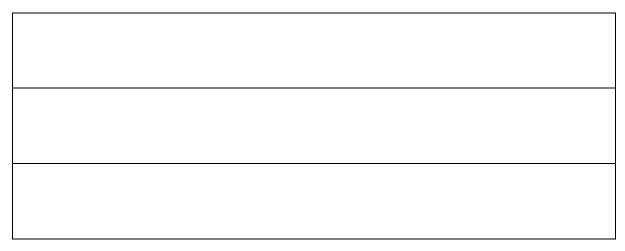
I/We have read this handbook carefully. I/We understand the commitment that you are undertaking providing education and care for our child, and our responsibilities to the Service.

I/we have completed the enrolment form at the Service and provided the required documentation for our child. I/We have read and agree to comply with the requirements set out in this handbook and in the Service's policies.

I/we agree to notify Alphabet Preschool of any changes that may affect the education and care of our child (changes to court order, parenting orders, authorised nominees, Medical Management Plans, medication etc).

Family Name	Date	
Parent Name		
Child/ren's Name		
Parent/Guardian Signature		
Parent/Guardian Signature		

Please list what skills talents, interest and culture that you and your family (not forgetting grandparents) are able to share with the Service.



Have you completed the orientation evaluation? Please circle