



Parent Handbook

Preparing families to join us at Village Early Education

This handbook is subject to change and is guided by Village Education policy and procedures.

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Welcome to the Village Early Education community.

Our Centres strive to provide a nurturing, safe and respectful environments where your child can develop intellectual, social, emotional, physical and creative skills, allowing them to become confident young individuals. We acknowledge families as 'first educators' and value your partnership with the Centre.

Village Education Philosophy

We believe in play-based learning

We believe that children learn best in environments that replicate home

We believe that children need outdoor time – regardless of the weather.

We believe that each Centre is a reflection of its community.

At Village Early Education your child will be well known and cared for by our educators. As a parent or guardian, you will be welcomed, recognised, respected and well informed by our staff.

We operate within the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Our Centres are regulated by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), as well as the state licensing authority.

Services Offered

The Centre offers long day care, 6.30am to 6.30pm, for children from 6 months to 6 years old, Monday to Friday, with the exception of Public Holidays. The Centre operates rooms for all ages, with a comprehensive Preschool (Kindergarten) program, preparing children for formal schooling.

Enrolment and Village Early Education Fees

An enrolment fee of \$50 is required on confirmation of enrolment. This fee is non-refundable.

Late fees will be charged if your child is not collected by 6.30pm.

Fees are applicable for public holidays if these fall on your child's scheduled day.

Direct debit is the primary payment method and no change is kept at the Centre. If this will create difficulties, please speak to the Director to come to another arrangement.

Two weeks' notice needs to be given if you plan to withdraw your child from Village Early Education or there is a change of days required, to allow for correct staffing.

Priority of access will be given according to our Enrolment and Orientation Policy, which adheres to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) requirements.

There is some flexibility in enrolment days dependent on places being available.

If Court Orders are in place for your child, the Centre needs to be informed on enrolment and the orders presented. Copies will be stored securely for our records.

A birth certificate is also required on enrolment and will be copied for our records.

Your child's current immunisation record is also required on enrolment. In the case of a vaccine preventable infectious disease it is mandatory that we notify the Department of Health in regard to non-immunised children in accordance with our policy manual. Children with medical conditions will require a health care plan advised by the family doctor.

Waiting List

When our rooms have a full enrolment, children's names will be placed on a waiting list. This also applies to a change of attendance days. Our waiting list gives priority as per the DEEWR requirements. Once a position is available, parents will be contacted regarding placement.

Beginning Childcare

The introduction to childcare can be challenging for children and parents.

To facilitate settling your child into the Centre we suggest you:

- Familiarise yourself and your child with the Centre environment and staff by attending orientation visits prior to commencing care

- Create a sense of excitement in beginning a new adventure with your child by regularly discussing the Centre, staff and other children. Assure your child you will be back to collect them. Always say goodbye!

- Provide a favourite comforter (soft toy or blanket) to help settle your child when you leave or at rest times if you think it necessary.

- Communicate with educators to help them get to know your child quickly e.g. ways they best settle, activities they particularly like, significant people in their lives, meal/feeding patterns

- Establish a routine when leaving your child e.g. greeting the educator together, look at a book or activity together, give a cuddle, say good-bye, tell them you will return later and leave.

Some children may protest strongly, either initially or after a few visits. This generally lasts a very short time (probably longer with you than your child!). Our staff are very experienced at responding to this common reaction and can plan for such behaviour should it occur. A leaving routine is very important and assists in this transition. We will call and let you know if there is any major issue.

What to bring each day

A complete change of clothing clearly labelled (younger children may need extra changes if toilet training)

- Appropriate footwear
- A broad brimmed hat without a chord clearly labelled
- A security item (if required) clearly labelled
- All items should be contained in a small backpack with the child's name clearly visible
- Formula/ breast milk clearly labelled
- Nappies are supplied
- Food is provided. No outside food/snacks are permitted for food safety reasons

Clothing

At the Centre, we encourage children to wear weather appropriate, comfortable, inexpensive clothing. T-shirts should have sleeves for sun protection. As children enjoy 'messy' play with paint, clay, sand and water they don't need to be inhibited by their clothing or worried about getting them dirty. Please endeavour to provide clothing that older children can learn to independently remove and put on.

Shoes should be comfortable and easily removed and put on. Please ensure all clothing is clearly named. Shoes should be covering the toes and suitable for climbing and running (not Crocs)

Sunscreen is provided for children for outdoor play and should also be applied prior to arrival at the Centre. (Children with special requirements for sunscreen need to discuss this with Educators. Parents may need to provide their own sunscreen if required and please label from the chemist)

Arrival process

On arrival at the Village:

- We ask that you hold your child's hand while in the car park and discourage running in the car park.
- Sign your child in to his/her room with time of arrival and your signature on the KidsXap kiosks located in both hallways.
- Stow your child's belongings in his/her locker or on a hook.
- Introduce your child to their educator before saying goodbye and leaving.

Departure process

On collection from the Village:

- Children will only be released to a parent or an authorised person as advised on their enrolment form or in writing by the parent. We will also require photo ID of the person to release the child into their care if it is not the regular person collecting. There will be no exceptions.
- Ensure your child is signed out and the time recorded on the KidsXap portal
- Never leave a child unattended in a vehicle and never leave a door or gate open.

Attendance and Absence

Once the child is enrolled at the Centre, payment of fees must continue during the child's absence for illness, public holidays, holidays etc. When a child is absent for any reason the Centre must be notified between 7.00am and 9.00am on the morning of absence.

The Centre will be open for 50 weeks of the year, excluding public holidays.

Lost Property

Lost property will be displayed for collection in your child's room. The Centre discourages additional toys from home and cannot take responsibility for additional personal items or breakages.

Lockers/Hooks

Each child will be allocated a locker or a hook in his/ her room. Please place labelled bags in your child's locker, encouraging them to recognise where it has been placed. Labels (with a symbol) and names will be placed on hooks to assist children to recognise where their belongings are.

Rest Times

Rest times vary according to the individual needs of children. This is a time your child may require a comforter from home.

For very young children, the Centre will endeavour to maintain sleeping habits from home.

Older children will have a relaxation period each day when they may choose to sleep.

Pre school children will have quiet time when they may sleep or play quietly in a peaceful and relaxing environment.

Education and Learning Policy

Our Centre's follow the Early Years Learning Framework.

Educators will develop programs based on observation of needs, interests and developmental stages of children in their care.

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of dignity
- Outcome 2: Children are connected with 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

Village Develop – our name for how we apply our educational philosophy to daily interactions and learning experiences.

Village Language and Arts – exposure to a range of experiences to enhance and extend play based learning

Village Tastes – food education and experiences

Village Fitness – play based movement program

Village Develop

Educators have a great deal of experience with children and will observe your child, collect observation and plan for individual learning based on their interests and within a group and individual play context. Observations and evaluations are done on these plans and short and long terms goals are put into place and reflected on and plans for further learning done. Your child's plans, observations and programs are available for you to see at any time and may at times and we welcome family input to develop a holistic profile of your child.

Village Tastes

A food and nutrition program consistent with National Dietary Guidelines for children, Food Safety Principles and Statutory Regulations that are appropriate for their age, culture, religion and medical needs.

Behaviour Guidance

Educators at Village Early Education follow a Behaviour Guidance Policy across the whole Centre, giving consistency of expectations in all rooms. The policy encourages children to develop self-regulation and a respect for self, for others, for property and for the environment. Staff, in collaboration with parents, will guide the children as per appropriate developmental practice.

The policy aims:

To give children the opportunity to extend their experiences in a productive, safe environment allowing for self expression, tolerance, cultural identity, dignity and honesty

To teach them to respect the rights of others by predicting the consequences of their behaviour on themselves and others, and

To encourage the individual social and emotional development of each child.

Family Communication

At Village Early Education we believe open, honest and frequent communication is the platform of a strong partnership of care.

- Communication relating to your child's day at the Centre will be made by educators and made available to families in a casual and formal manner.
- Programs for the day and longer term for the room and your child will be available.
- All families will receive a Centre newsletter
- Rosters and routines will be displayed in your child's room.
- A notice board in the entrance will display messages and notices.

Our staff will be available to answer your questions or concerns and encourage the sharing of information from your child's home and extended family and community.

We welcome to request a private discussion or meeting with your child's educators, either face to face or on the phone.

Formal appointments can be made by phoning or emailing the service for a convenient time. We encourage casual correspondence daily. Please be assured that communication is treated with absolute discretion and confidentiality.

Information received through written and spoken communication will be treated with discretion.

Dietary needs

We recognise that children are not necessarily hungry according to set meal times. On enrolment, and throughout your child's attendance, our staff will discuss your child's individual dietary needs.

For very young children, the regular feeding routine established at home will be adhered to as closely as possible. Bottles of formula, cow's milk or breast milk need to be clearly labelled and stored in the fridge.

Nursing mothers are welcome at the Centre and private space can be arranged if required.

Health and Safety

Village Early Education provides a healthy and safe environment. Children with contagious illnesses are required to be kept at home and a doctor's certificate must be presented to show the infection cannot be passed on when the child returns to the Centre.

Educators can administer medication when the parent has signed a completed medication form. Prescription medication must be in the child's name, in date and in its original packaging.

Medication **MUST** be handed to an educator for appropriate and safe storage.

In the best interest of all who attend our Centre, **NO CHILD** will be admitted with obvious signs of contagious infection or illness. Our policy, which is informed by health regulations, states the incubation period and exclusion periods of such diseases.

If your child has a severe allergy, please ensure it is detailed on your child's enrolment form and your child's educator is notified on your child's first day.

Should your child be at risk of an anaphylactic reaction, a Health Plan, signed by your family doctor and given to the educator needs to be produced on enrolment. Our staff has been trained to respond to Anaphylaxis.

Asthma

Our Centre aims to provide a safe environment for children who have asthma. An Asthma Plan needs to be completed by parents in consultation with the family doctor. This needs to be reviewed annually and needs to be completed prior to commencement at the Centre.

Accidents

In the case of an accident or illness, the Director will contact parents if necessary. It is extremely important to ensure emergency contact numbers are up to date.

An incident report will be filled out and signed by educators who observed the incident and/ or administered first aid. These forms will require parent signature and a copy will be given to you and one kept on the services file.

Your involvement

Village Early Education welcomes family involvement. Your skills, interests and talents are valuable to us. We understand you are busy but whatever contribution you can make will be appreciated and children love to see their parents and family involved.

Some ideas include:

- Talks to children about your occupation or hobby Talks and pictures about your culture or travels Traditions and stories from your culture
- Reading to the class or a small group (grandparents may be interested too) Helping with recyclables for the room activities
- Attending special events at the Centre

Welcome to the Village Early Education family. We look forward to a happy and productive partnership! Please do not hesitate to contact the Centre should you require further information.