



## Introduction

Dear Parents

Welcome to Cockatoo Kindergarten. We hope your year with us is a most enjoyable and beneficial time for both you and your children. This booklet is a guide to the kindergarten routine and we hope that it is useful to you.

Sincerely,

Cockatoo Kindergarten Staff and Committee of Management.

## Kindergarten Groups for 2024

### 4/5 Year Old Group

Days: Monday, Wednesday and Friday  
Time: 9:00am to 2:00pm  
Teacher: Lauren Purdie  
Co-Educators: Justine Wardale, Kerry Saunders and Laura Clarke

### Pre kinder - 3 Year Old Group

Days: Tuesday and Thursday  
Time: 9:00am to 2:00pm  
Teacher: Laura Clarke  
Co-Educator: Kerry Saunders, Justine Wardale and Indi Flint

### Term Dates

Term 1: 29<sup>th</sup> January to 28<sup>th</sup> March  
Term 2: 15<sup>th</sup> April to 28<sup>th</sup> June  
Term 3: 15<sup>th</sup> July to 20<sup>th</sup> September  
Term 4: 7<sup>th</sup> October to 20<sup>th</sup> December

### Public Holidays (Kinder is closed)

**Labour Day** - Mon 11<sup>th</sup> March

**Good Friday** - 29<sup>th</sup> March, **Easter Monday** - 1<sup>st</sup> April

**Anzac Day** - Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> April

**King's Birthday** - Monday 10<sup>th</sup> June

**AFL Grand Final Eve** - Friday 27<sup>th</sup> September

**Melbourne Cup Day** - Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November - Curriculum Day

Public Holiday - Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> November

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## The Pre-School Program:

Is displayed in the front foyer for both 3 and 4 year old groups.

The program is based on the Early Years Learning and Framework. The program reflects the needs and interests of individual children and the group. Teachers draw on information supplied by families about their child, along with observations of each child.

Everything that we do at pre-school, activities at tables, outdoor equipment available, discussion topics, group times, staff interaction with children, routines, the format of the session and the way the room is set-up, is planned to meet the objectives that we set for individuals and the group. Strengths, interests and previous experiences are all considered with ongoing reflections of the program by staff and children informing the planning of experiences.

Our lovely foyer is where you will find all important information/displays reflecting what is happening at our centre.

**PLEASE REFER TO OUR 'STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY' ON DISPLAY FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT WHAT BELIEFS UNDERPIN OUR PROGRAM.**

### Settling In

As you have been notified, the children are introduced into full-time kindergarten hours over the first few weeks during Term 1. It is hoped that all children will have a happy and smooth start to kindergarten.

The "settling in time" allows children time to adjust to their new environment and for us to get to know your child. For some children, pre-school may be the first separation from their parents. All children will cope differently. Many parents are concerned that their child will not separate happily, and this can naturally be a cause of some anxiety. We are very experienced in helping manage this situation. Very emotional and sometimes angry reactions from the children are not new to us so please don't be embarrassed if this occurs.

If you think that your child might become upset, we have found that the following strategies have proved successful:

- Reassure your child, by maintaining a positive and calm approach to the separation.
- When you feel it is appropriate be confident about establishing when you will leave. If you stipulate staying for one activity, remain consistent. Similarly, if you promise to return early, help your child to trust you by doing so, thus helping future separation.
- Leave an item of yours with your child for security. Children do sometimes have a fear that you have left them forever!
- Please DO NOT leave without telling your child that you are doing so. This does nothing for your child's confidence that you will return.
- Please do not hesitate to call us to check on your child's progress.

If your child does not appear to be coping with separation from you or the long kindergarten day, then please do not hesitate to discuss other options with the teacher.

### Custody

It is extremely important that your child's teacher is fully aware of any arrangements that may affect your child. We need to know who has custody and what the conditions are. Otherwise we may infringe on conditions without knowing. This information will be kept strictly confidential.

### Parent Duty

Kindergarten is a precious year with your child and one which will give you many happy memories. Your child places great importance on your involvement in his/her kindergarten day, and delights in your acknowledgement of their achievements. Once children are settled after the beginning of Term 1 we will place out a calendar for parents to place their name for a timeslot to volunteer for kinder duty. Sometimes there are specific tasks we will ask you to do (e.g.; cleaning) but at other times we would just like you to enjoy spending time with your child. If you are rostered on for duty in the morning, please bring along some fruit or a snack for yourself and in the afternoon please bring along your own lunch so you can sit and eat with the children. We will consult with you so that we know which days and times are most suitable for you.

If you have a change of plans and your roster time is not suitable, then please organize to swap with someone else or let us know if you are unavailable to attend. Your attendance is highly valued as it provides staff with more time to work closely with the children. Enjoy your time with the children and get involved in whatever way you feel comfortable. You are most welcome to bring your babies/toddlers along, but please remember they are your responsibility; staff are kept very busy caring for the kindergarten children.

### Parent Involvement

Parents are always welcome at kindergarten. Your involvement is encouraged, since this is the best way of becoming familiar with the program and staff. Being involved means spending time with your child at kindergarten. This time together enables you to understand what your child is learning and to share his/her enjoyment of kindergarten.

Please feel free to bring along visitors who may be interested, e.g. Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles, etc. If you have any particular skills (play musical instrument/ cooking/ sewing etc.) that you would like to share with the children, then please speak to the teacher.

Your child has their own individual planning documentation for kindergarten that you can access and discuss with the teachers. Please feel free to talk to staff and organize a convenient time for you to discuss your child's records and progress.

### Incursions/Excursions

Each year in the 4/5 Year Old Group, the children have been treated to visits from entertainers. They have also been taken for excursions to the Fire Station, Museum, Plays, Police Stations and the local shopping centre. These excursions and entertainers provide a valuable learning experience as well as lots of fun, and this year will be no different. Your child will be involved in similar events which will be advertised throughout the year.

Mother's and Father's nights, Afternoon Teas, Grandparent's visits etc. are organized throughout the year, and notices in your child's file and at the kindergarten and Storypark will advertise these events. These events provide a great opportunity for parents who work during the day, or members of your child's extended family to participate in and become familiar with the activities enjoyed by your child. The children are very proud to be able to "show off" their kindergarten to the special people in their lives. These events are by no means limited to the family members nominated - so please organize another friend or relative to attend if you wish to do so.

## What does my child need to bring to Kindergarten?

**Fruit snack:** fruit to eat at fruit snack this can include dried fruit, carrots, cheese, etc.).

**Lunch:** Once we are into full sessions, children will need to bring a nutritious lunch (no lollies, chips, soft drinks, chocolates, chocolate muesli bars, etc.) and a drink bottle containing water.

**In 2022 Cockatoo Kindergarten introduced Rubbish FREE Lunchboxes.** We will discuss this in more detail at our information session.

**Drink bottle:** please bring a labelled reusable drink bottle

Some suggestions for your child's lunchbox include sandwiches, wraps, fruit, cheese, yoghurt, muffins and salad. To ensure safe storage of food we encourage you to provide a small ice pack in your child's lunch or use an insulated lunch bag. Please label lunch boxes/drink bottles.



We may advise that certain foods can not be brought into the kindergarten due to **ALLERGIES/ANAPHYLAXIS**. These can be very serious and contact for some individuals can be **FATAL**.

**Bag** All children will need to bring a large bag to put their work in each day. Please also always have a **change of clothes in your child's bag**.

## Clothing

As you are aware, the weather in Cockatoo varies from very hot to very cold and wet, so it is important that the children are dressed suitably.

**In summer, please provide sunscreen for your child if they are allergic to the one we have at Kindergarten and please NO singlet style tops or shoe string strap dresses, shoulders must always be covered. A sunhat will be provided by the kindergarten. (Please refer to Sun smart Policy for more details as well as information on display).**

Please ensure your child is wearing footwear that is safe and suitable for all types of play e.g.: climbing. Thongs/some sandals are not suitable. In the colder wet weather, please provide a coat and covered in shoes so we can go outside.

It is important that your child does not wear their best clothes to kindergarten, as many of our activities can be messy and you can often tell how much fun a child has had by the state of their clothes. It limits your child's enjoyment and experimentation of an activity if they are always concerned that their clothes are clean. We suggest that if you are going out after kindergarten, you may like to put a spare set of 'good' clothes in your child's bag.

## **Communication**

**It is essential that we are able to communicate with our families effectively and we endeavor to provide as many options as possible.**

### Confidentiality

Please feel free to speak with us at any time about problems you may have, being secure in the knowledge that what is said will remain confidential. The staff and committee cannot solve, or indeed even address issues unless we are made aware that they exist.

If at any time you are concerned about your child or something that has happened at kindergarten, we would much prefer that it was brought to our attention promptly and discussed. Please refer to the complaint's procedure on display at the kindergarten. After all, we not only care about the children's wellbeing, we care about their families as well

### Parent Notices

All notices will be posted on storypark for parents to view, please keep up to date with the app and check it regularly. When excursions are organized these will be handed out as a hard copy and will need to be fully filled in and returned to the kinder by due date.

### Storypark

We use storypark as a means of communication to assist us in ensuring you have all the information you require throughout the year. It is a free APP that can be loaded onto 'smartphones' that enables us to send you notifications outside of kindergarten hours. You will be sent an email to join.

### Social Media

Just like you, we are very proud of your child's achievements at kindergarten and you are welcome to take photos of them "in action" but please ensure if you post any of these images on social media **no other children/adults** should appear in them unless you have their permission.

Our kindergarten has a **public Facebook page** that provides general information to the community. If you have any questions 'out of hours' please utilize the private group page and you will get an appropriate response.

### Email/Phone etc.

We are happy to talk to you at any time however please be aware that the staff are very busy at the start and end of sessions. You are welcome to make a time to talk if you need and you are very welcome to email or phone us. You can also message a staff member privately on the storypark app requesting a meeting time.

## Committee of Management

A voluntary Committee of Management is elected from the parent body at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in February/March each year.

The Committee manages the centre and is accountable to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development via Funding and the Service Agreement. The Committee is also accountable to the parents for the quality of service the centre provides. Joining the Committee is an ideal way to become involved in your child's kindergarten year.

The Committee employs staff and both work as a team to provide your child with an exciting and rewarding kindergarten year.

Committee meetings are held on the second Tuesday evening of every month at the kindergarten (except January). All parents are invited to attend and join in discussions at committee meetings, but only elected members are entitled to vote. Minutes of committee meetings are kept in a folder on the bookshelf near the front door for parents to read. All suggestions from parents are valued.

In accordance with the National Quality Framework and National Regulations relating to children's services we have a number of policies that outline every aspect of the operation of the Centre and it is important that you are aware of these. There will be copies available on request or you can view all on our website. These are updated as required and all parents are welcome to have input into this process.

## Money

During the year, you may be required to make payments for fundraising, uniforms and so on.

Our preferred method of payment is direct deposit.

'Cockatoo Kindergarten' Account

Bendigo Bank BSB: 633 000 Acct: 122814171

Use your child's name and what the money is for as the 'Reference' so the payment can be allocated correctly. *E.g.: D.Smith Fees*

## Session Times

### Bringing and Collecting Children

Upon arrival and departure from Pre-School, all children must be signed in the **sign in/out book**, recording **exact** times of arrival and departure. The book is situated in the foyer. This regulation is to ensure the safety of children, and to help to know who is present in the Centre at any given time, especially in case of an emergency (e.g. fire). This book is a legal document and needs to have accurate information so please sign with your full name, signing 'mum' or 'dad' is not considered legal. The time that you actually write in the book at drop off and pick up must be accurate (e.g. 9.05). Please do not write 2pm in at beginning of day as your predicted pick up time, whatever the time is can only be written when you collect your child.



No child is able to leave the centre with any adult, other than their parents, without parent/guardian consent. Yearly authorization for others to pick up your child can be given on your child's enrolment form. Daily authorization can be entered in the column labeled "Person picking up the Child" and filling out an authorization to collect child form (located at sign in book). The staff may refuse the right to allow a child to leave with an unregistered person. Proof of identification may be requested if the person collecting the child is not known by staff. If your plans change at the last minute, then please ring the kindergarten on **59689105** (it's a good idea to enter this number into your mobile phone now).

Please do not bring your child to kindergarten before the session begins, and we ask that you are punctual picking up your child. It can be very distressing for a child if they are the last to be collected, they quickly come to realize when all the other parents have been and theirs hasn't. We do have a 'late pick up policy' which has a fee involved if children are consistently collected late.

### Doors

The doors at the kindergarten are closed until 9:00am each morning, when sessions begin. We ask that you do not drop off your child early, as the staff are busy preparing activities.

During the day, doors remain closed to prevent children from leaving the playroom, but you are always welcome to come in, please use door bell. The kitchen door and the one leading to the adult toilets must be locked at all times to ensure there is no access to and from Neighbourhood House which is a public area. Please use the key provided to lock and open door as required.

## **Illness/Accident**

Please keep your child at home if he/she is unwell. It is impossible for a sick child to fully participate in the program and they may infect other children and staff. If your child is absent please notify the kindergarten via the Storypark app through the 'conversation' function.

If you discover that your child has an infectious disease, please notify the kindergarten immediately so that precautionary measures can be taken. Refer to the list of diseases that would exclude your child from kindergarten. **Please do not send your child to kindergarten if they have been ill during the night.** Even though they may seem okay and say they wish to attend, they lack concentration, may be tired, or may be carrying a contagious germ. Gastro for example is **contagious for 48 hrs after symptoms cease.** If German measles, Chickenpox, Lice, etc. are about, a notice will be put up at the kindergarten.

If your child requires medication while at kindergarten, all details must be recorded in the Medication Book held at the kindergarten. Any medication left at the kindergarten needs to be in its original packaging with child's name and handed to the teacher or assistant.

If your child is involved in an accident at kindergarten, this incident and the care provided by the staff will be recorded in the Accident Book held at the kindergarten. When returning to collect your child, you will be notified about the accident and asked to sign the book to ensure you are aware of what has happened. The kindergarten has a fully stocked first aid kit and this can be inspected upon request.



## Child Safety

We are committed to keeping your child safe from any harm. (Please read our full Child Safe Commitment on the noticeboard)

### Action Management Plans

If your child has a diagnosed medical condition such as asthma, anaphylaxis etc you **MUST** provide an Action Management Plan signed by your doctor.

**REGULATIONS STATE THAT WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LET YOUR CHILD COMMENCE KINDERGARTEN TILL THIS DOCUMENT IS PROVIDED.**

### Car Park

It is very important that when in the car park area, you always hold onto your child's hand or keep them close, as they are almost impossible to see behind a reversing car.

### Sun smart

Cockatoo Kindergarten is a registered Sun smart Kinder and we encourage all families to be sun smart, this includes wearing sunhats to and from Kindergarten.

### Bushfire (Refer to policy)

Our kindergarten is listed on the Bushfire At-Risk (BAR) Register. The decision to **close on Catastrophic and Total Fire Ban Days (TFB)** is based on scientific research around the Fire Danger Index which has many elements: forecast temperature, relative humidity, wind speed/direction, vegetation type and available fuel. If the FDI is 45 or more science shows that it would be nearly impossible to control a bushfire. TFBs are publicized on the 6pm news or the Vic Emergency APP (please have this on your phone). Our close proximity to Wright's Forest means we have to be extra vigilant in ensuring we all "Leave and Live".

## How Can I Help?

### Fundraising

This will be kept to a manageable amount, as we know that most families also support school, sport, playgroup, church and other organizations in their fundraising efforts. Please endeavor to support our fundraising sub-committee in their efforts if only in a small way. All proceeds go directly to purchasing new toys and equipment for the children.

### Working Bees

These will be held occasionally during the year to carry out maintenance, gardening, etc. We like to keep the kindergarten looking nice and the equipment functioning safely for your children, so we really need your assistance at these times, it is financially essential that we look after what we have with voluntary labor. Your child will also benefit from your interest in their kindergarten



## Reduce, Reuse & Recycle.

Our centre is committed to being environmentally sustainable and we hope that our families will support us in this area. We will keep you informed of what we are doing to **reduce** consumption (eg using other forms of communication rather than notes home), utilizing **recycled** products (eg we purchase toilet paper and tissues made from recycled products) and the **reuse** of materials in our art activities that would otherwise be discarded (eg cardboard boxes etc).

Remember to take home your child's creative works - these are an invaluable record of their development and an "abundance" of paintings can become very "individual" wrapping paper!

The "needs" of the kindergarten are as follows:

- Items for our pasting trolley - small boxes, greeting cards, wrapping paper, fabric etc.
- Ice-cream containers and one litre milk cartons
- Dress-up clothes/shoes - particularly for boys

If you can assist with any of these "needs", please do so, your contributions are greatly valued.



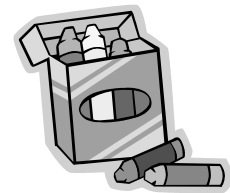
## Birthdays/Celebrations

We enjoy celebrating the children's birthdays with them at Kindergarten. If you would like us to celebrate your child's birthday, please bring along something wrapped individually for the children to hand out at the end of the session or something similar like a sticker, a stamp, or bubbles to share with all the children on a day close to their birthday, all treats must be individual treats. If your child's birthday falls in the holidays, please feel free to choose another day to bring their treats along.

If your family has any other culturally significant days that you celebrate, please let us know as we would love to incorporate these into our program.

## Parent Library

There are some interesting books available for you to borrow - feel free to have a look at any time. Just ask the staff for details. Please let us know if there are any topics we haven't covered in our selection.



## COVID 19

Cockatoo Kindergarten has very thorough COVID 19 Policy and Procedures, please take the time to read these and note they can change regularly through the year.

**NB:** This booklet provides an overview of how our kindergarten operates, there will be more information provided as the year proceeds and of course the policies are a very detailed source of information for you to read. If you feel there is something we have forgotten please let us know and more importantly, please feel free to ask as many questions as you like!

