# Parent Handbook 2027

**71 HOPE STREET SPOTSWOOD**
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The staff, children, families and communities of Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we play and learn. We pay our respects to the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation, and their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, families and communities.

## MISSION STATEMENT

- to provide the highest quality kindergarten and long day care programs that support our local community and their needs.

Emma McLean kindergarten and daycare a non-for-profit community early learning centre, that provides unique and flexible, funded sessional and integrated kindergarten programs.

We believe every child deserves a strong and positive foundation for lifelong learning.

We partner with children, families and our community to foster children's learning development and wellbeing through a holistic approach.

Through our play-based pedagogy we foster and nurture, connection, resilience, confidence, self-belief, inclusion, respect, love of learning, and imagination, empowering children to explore their world, build meaningful relationships and develop the skills and confidence to thrive.

## CENTRE BACKGROUND

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare has a long standing history in the Spotswood community. Our heritage is treasured and has been influenced by children and families for over 80 years.

The Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare was formally opened in 1944 as a sessional kindergarten. The children were housed in the Mechanics Institute, which originally occupied the site of the current playground.

The centre was named after a local resident, Mrs Emma McLean, who was a strong activist for the rights of all children to access a kindergarten program. Both staff and parents have worked tirelessly over the years to form a long-standing tradition within the Spotswood community to make it the centre it is today. The backbone of Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare has been its determination to continue to provide quality services to the children within the community, over the centre's long history.

In 1994 the centre was in danger of being closed so the committee at the time, decided to take on a brave new initiative. Taking into consideration the changing needs of the community they introduced integrated kindergarten/long daycare programs. With this change Emma McLean has been able to ensure its continued existence, as well as provide a unique service within the Hobson's Bay area. In 2022 we embraced another change and introduced a funded 3-year kindergarten, integrated with long daycare.

In 2023 construction began and the building where the kindergarten currently operates was completed and opened in 2024. We run a 4-year-old sessional kindergarten program, a 3-year-old sessional kindergarten and a 3- and 4-year-old long daycare program, accommodating up to 88 children per day.

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare is managed by a parent committee and as such relies heavily on families volunteering their time to ensure that the centre remains viable. Hobson's Bay City Council own and maintain the premises as a part of the licensing agreement.

## OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

At Emma McLean Kindergarten, the safety, wellbeing, rights and best interests of every child are paramount. We recognise that child safety is everyone's responsibility and is embedded in our everyday practices, relationships and decision-making.

We are committed to fulfilling our obligations under relevant child safety legislation, including the Victorian Child Safe Standards, mandatory reporting requirements, and our service policies, procedures and Codes of Conduct.

**We demonstrate our commitment by:**

**Providing safe environments:**

- We plan for our indoor and outdoor environments to ensure children's autonomy, agency and independence are respected and valued.
- We provide developmentally appropriate resources and experiences that promote safety while challenging and extending children's learning, confidence and capabilities.
- Employ additional staff to maintain ratios above minimum requirements.
- Active supervision is our priority and part of our everyday intentional teaching and practice.
- We carefully consider staffing arrangements, transitions, routines and the changing needs of children when planning for supervision.
- We ensure to reflect on our practice, identify risks and find another way of doing.

**Building safe relationships with children:**

- We ensure strong, respectful relationships are the foundation to our child safe practices.
- We take the time to know each child individually, building trust and connections that foster the feelings of safety, empowering children's confidence to seek help, express concerns and speak up.
- We model respectful behaviours and help children develop an understanding of body safety, consent, personal boundaries and healthy friendships with their peers. We use resources such as social stories about body safety, body boundaries, friendships and respectful relationships to support children's understanding.

**Empowering children's voices:**

- We encourage children to share their ideas, interests, opinions and concerns, and involve them in decisions about what they play and learn.
- We support children to develop self-advocacy skills, communicate their boundaries, identify potential risks and contribute together to creating safe environments.

**Individual wellbeing:**

- We recognise children need to feel a sense of belonging, security, predictability and emotional safety to build trusting relationships, develop confidence and participate fully in their learning. We ensure every child experiences this within our service through positive communication, co-regulation, clear and consistent boundaries, and responsive teaching.
- We use positive, inclusive language along with individual strategies to support children's engagement and wellbeing.
- We celebrate differences and adapt our program, teaching strategies, resources and environments to support each child's wellbeing, participation and development. We give children time, flexibility and alternative ways to participate when an approach or experience is not meeting their needs.
- We respond sensitively to children's emotions and support the development of self-regulation through co-regulation, secure relationships and calm, consistent guidance.

- We work in partnership with families to understand each child's individual needs.
- We understand that protecting children requires us to act whenever a concern arises.
- We take all children's concerns seriously, in ways that uphold their rights, dignity, safety and best interests.

**Respecting culture and identity:**

- We welcome all children and families, to ensure they feel respected and valued.
- We promote connection, celebrate diversity, challenge stereotypes and foster inclusive environments built on respect, kindness and understanding.
- We embed cultural experiences and perspectives, reflecting the diverse backgrounds families and community.
- We acknowledge the Bunurong people as the Traditional Custodians of the Country on which our kindergarten stands and support children to develop an understanding of and connection to Country.
- We proudly display flags at the front of our kindergarten to show respect for and pride for country and our shared history.

**Partnering with families and the community:**

- We recognise families as their children's first and most influential teachers. We listen to concerns, feedback and work collaboratively with families to understand each child's individual needs, abilities, interests for their child's learning journey.
- We build reciprocal relationships based on trust, respect and open communication, working in partnership with families towards our shared goal of supporting happy, healthy and safe children.
- Where needed, we also connect families with additional supports and community services to further support children and their families.

**Maintaining child-safe culture:**

- Child safety is at the heart of everything we do and is guided by our values: Be Safe. Be Kind. Work Hard.
- We engage in critical reflection to continually improve our practices and strengthen child safety.
- We continue to learn and work together to ensure child safety is everyone's responsibility and children are our priority.
- Regardless of any discomfort, uncertainty or challenges, we remain committed to taking the appropriate action to ensure every child's safety and wellbeing.
- We have dedicated Child Safety Officers to support a culture of continuous vigilance, reflection and improvement, ensuring paramount consideration is central to all our decisions

## CODE OF CONDUCT

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare to:

- establish the expected standards of behaviour for the approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, other staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians and visitors
- create and maintain a child safe environment that reflects the philosophy, beliefs, objectives, and values of Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare
- articulate desirable and appropriate behaviour
- promote interactions at the service and online which are respectful, honest, courteous, sensitive, tactful, and considerate.

The Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare is committed to the following values underpinning the interactions that committee, staff members, parents, students, volunteers and contractors have with one another and when they are representing the service.

The values that are most relevant to the Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare are: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness and courtesy.

All parties bound by this code will:

- respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- values the contribution of Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability
- has zero tolerance of discrimination
- maintains a duty of care towards all children at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of each child at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff and the members of our service's community
- is committed to supporting staff to act cohesively and ethically as a team and provide an environment that is conducive to children's learning and development
- provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- encourages relationships that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness.
- encourages both adults and children to identify and raise concerns through the appropriate channels to maintain a culture of reporting and pro-actively responding to concerns
- encourages volunteers, students, parents/guardians and visitors to support and participate in the program and activities of the service.

**CHILD SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT**

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare is committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We recognise the importance of, and are responsible for, ensuring our organisation provides a safe, supportive and enriching environment which respects the rights and wellbeing of and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of all children and young people, and enables them to thrive in their learning and development.

This Code of Conduct aims to protect children and reduce any opportunities for child abuse or harm to occur. It also assists in understanding how to avoid or better manage risky behaviours and situations. It is intended to complement child protection legislation, Department policy, service policies and procedures and professional standards, codes and ethics.

The Committee of Management and staff of Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare will support the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct, delivering inclusive, safe and orderly learning environments and provide information and support to enable the Code of Conduct to operate effectively.

The Code of Conduct applies in all situations, including excursions and in the use of digital technology and social media.

All staff, contractors, volunteers, students and any other person involved in child related work at the Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare are responsible for supporting and promoting the safety of children and complying with the Code of Conduct by;

**Acceptable Behaviours**

Appropriate behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Treating all children and young people with respect about the dignity and rights of each child regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status
- Listening to and valuing children and young people's ideas and opinions
- Creating a positive, non-confrontational communication environment where the child feels safe and comfortable to interact.
- Putting in place clear professional boundaries so interactions with children cannot be misinterpreted
- Welcoming all children and their families and carers by being inclusive
- Actively promoting cultural safety and inclusion
- Listening to children and responding to them appropriately
- Welcoming parents and carers to participate in decisions about their child's training schedule and any other matters about their safety
- Reporting any conflicts of interest (such as an outside relationship with a child)
- Adhering to all relevant Australian and Victorian legislation and our child safe policies and procedures
- Working within a team to ensure that the needs of the child (and their family) remain the paramount focus
- Participating in all compulsory training
- Raising concerns with management if risks to child safety are identified, including cultural, environmental and operational risks
- Reporting and acting on any concerns or observed breaches of this Code of Conduct
- Taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- Respecting the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential
- Informing parents and carers if there are situations that need to be safely managed but are outside the boundaries of this Code of Conduct
- Taking a child seriously if they disclose harm or abuse
- Ensuring breaches of this Code are reported immediately
- Upholding the rights of the child and always prioritise their needs.

**Concerning/inappropriate behaviours includes, but is not limited to:**

- disciplining or correcting a child or young person in an unreasonable manner
- making excessive and/or degrading demands of a child or young person
- taking photos of a child or young person who is in the care of the organisation outside of official duties
- creating situations to be alone with a child or young person
- repeatedly visiting a child/young person and/or their family at their home for no professional reason
- providing gifts or favours to a child/young person or their family
- wearing inappropriate clothing around children or young people (for example, clothing with sexually explicit images or messages or clothes that expose or accentuate the genitals or breasts)
- ignoring or disregarding concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse, harm and family violence
- ignoring or disregard an adult's overly familiar behaviour, that is not justified by an educational or professional context, towards a child or young person

- disregarding or failing to consider the views of children, especially about their physical and emotional safety, cultural safety, or issues or decisions that are important to them
- initiating unnecessary physical contact with a child or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do themselves.

**INFORMATION FOR PARENTS AND CARERS ABOUT THE CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

**Child safe organisations**

When your child is in the care of an organisation you want to know that they will be safe from abuse.

The Child Safe Standards are designed to prevent child abuse in organisations.

The Child Safe Standards apply to over 50,000 Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children.

These include:

- schools and outside school hours care
- kindergartens and early learning centres
- sporting clubs and recreational groups
- coaching or tuition services
- out of home care services
- local councils
- religious and faith-based organisations
- hospitals, health and disability services
- professional babysitting services
- overnight camps for children

**How do the Child Safe Standards protect my child?**

The Standards require organisations to take actions in a range of areas, including:

- background and suitability checks of staff and volunteers
- codes of conduct for staff and volunteers
- training and supervision of staff and volunteers
- documented risk assessments for activities
- clear procedures for reporting and acting on any concerns or allegations
- commitment to listening to children and
- encouraging them to speak up if they don't feel safe.

**How do I know if an organisation is meeting the Child Safe Standards?**

You can look on their website or talk to the staff.

The organisation should have documents like:

- Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Code of Conduct for workers and volunteers
- information about how to raise safety concerns

Some questions you could ask include:

- What are you doing to meet the Child Safe Standards?
- Do you have risk assessments for activities?
- Do your staff and volunteers have appropriate checks, training and supervision?

- What are you are doing to encourage children to speak up if they feel unsafe?
- Who can I to talk in the organisation if I have a concern or complaint?
- What is the process if I raise a concern or complaint about child safety

**What can I do if I am not sure my child is safe?**

- Take action if you are concerned that an organisation is not keeping your child or other children safe. Talk to someone senior at the organisation.
- Tell them what you are worried about and try to find a solution together.
- If the organisation does not address your concerns, contact their regulator. If you are unsure who the regulator is, you can contact the Commission.
- The Commission has information about regulators because we work with them to ensure compliance by all organisations with the Standards.

**How do I ask my child if they feel safe?**

Below are some examples of questions you can ask your child, changing the wording depending on

your child's age.

- Do you know that you should always feel safe, no matter where you are?
- What do you like about Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare?
- Is there anything you don't like?
- Have you ever felt uncomfortable, worried or not safe? Who would you talk to if you feel unsafe?
- Has anyone at EMK ever talked to you about what they can do to make you feel safe?
- Do the staff listen to you and the other children?
- What do you hope will happen if you tell someone you don't feel safe?

## OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Emma McLean we acknowledge the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation, as the traditional owners of the land on which we learn and play. We recognise, value, and include First Nations People, Culture, Traditions and Language in our Curriculum.

Our environment is inclusive, welcoming, safe, secure, and supportive. We provide a play-based curriculum to support children's learning and development with a combination of child-lead, teacher-lead, intentional teaching, and spontaneous experiences.

At Emma McLean Kindergarten, we believe in three core values.

Be Safe,

Be Kind,

Work Hard.

We believe that reciprocal relationships between educators, children, families, and the community are the foundation for life-long learning.

**In relation to children**:

We believe each child is unique, capable, and competent to achieve individual success at Emma McLean Kindergarten. We respect the voice of the child and believe they are active participants in their own learning.

**In relation to families**:

We believe families are the child's first teachers and value a collaborative approach to learning and development.

**In relation to community**:

Community involvement is valuated at Emma McLean as it allows children to feel a sense of belonging.

We acknowledge the important role the committee have in relation to our connection to local community.

## COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The centre is managed by a Committee of Management which consists of family members of current and future children attending the centre. Persons from the broader community, approved by the Committee of Management, may also be members. All members are elected at the Annual General Meeting.

The Committee of Management meets monthly. At the first meeting, being the handover meeting, all executive positions are required to be filled. Members of the Committee of Management are expected to sit for a period of 12 months until the following Annual General Meeting.

The Committee consists of up to four executive members and a minimum of ten other elected members and they manage all aspects of the centre in the very same way that a small business is run.

The Centre Director and/or the Director attends as the staff representatives.

All Committee meetings are open and therefore all families and/or staff are welcome to attend. Families are invited to join sub committees to help with fundraising, policy development, planning and other issues. Only the elected committee members are able to vote. Staff do not have voting rights.

## DECISION MAKING PROCESS

All decisions regarding the centre are discussed and voted on at Committee level. A majority vote is required for any decision to be passed. The Committee needs to focus on decisions made for the centre as a whole and no decision can be made without a quorum of five elected members present.

## HOBSONS BAY CITY COUNCIL

The building and grounds are owned by Hobson's Bay City Council who support the centre by providing some maintenance, regular painting, and ensuring that safety regulations regarding fencing, and the amenities of the building are up to the required safety and standard.

## LEGAL STRUCTURE

Emma McLean is registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria as an incorporated association and is therefore a legal body in its own right. The centre is obliged to follow a set of rules, contained in the Statement of Purpose and Rules. This document is held in the office and is available on our website and upon request.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

We provide the following services:

- 3- and 4-year-old sessional kindergarten programs; with After-Kinder-Care available. (After Kinder Program)
- Long Daycare programs for 3- to 6-year-olds available to children who are accessing one of the kinder programs. (CCS Funded Program)

**STAFF**

**Centre Director**

Andrea Laughlin (Andy)

**Educational Leader**

Jennifer Biadacz

**Office Administration**

Stephanie Bourke (Administration and Financial Officer)

Olivia Marchioni (Administration and Enrolment Officer)

| Early Childhood Teachers | Early Childhood Educators |
|---|---|
| Stephanie Bourke | Sonia Diluvio |
| Sarah Russell | Nelly Mollison |
| Nada Kowalski | Jay-D Johnson |
| Miranda Goncalves | Jayshree Khandel |
| Amy Scriven | Jo Bogic |
| Tillie Johnston | Kelly Pendleton |
| Stephanie Todaro | Leti Muljadi |
| Nicole Gunn | Sofia Idris |
| Grace Barrowcliffe | Summer Walker |
| | Tash Chelva |
| | Stacey Allen |
| | Kristy McMillan |
| | Simone Watsamon |
| | Jemima Strambini |
| | Amanda Fitzgerald |

All staff have a current Working with Children Check (WWCC) or Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT) Registration.

All teaching staff have current first aid and CPR training.

All staff complete Protecting Children - Mandatory Reporting eLearning course via the Maram online portal.

All staff complete the National Child Safety Training provided by the Department of Education.

Management, Early Childhood Teachers and Lead Educators complete Information Sharing and Family Violence eLearning course.

All staff further their professional development by attending relevant courses, completing webinars and attending seminars each year. The centre is governed by the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010.

**ABSENCES**

We request that you inform Emma McLean Kindergarten as early as possible if your child will be absent from the centre, either by updating your child's attendance via XAP or contacting the service directly. Emma McLean Kindergarten has a legal obligation to record all absences of the children who receive Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments. Full fees will be charged if your child is absent from the service due to illness, holidays etc.

If families have separated and court orders support the fact that the child must spend time with either parent for a period of time, then please speak to the Centre Director about how this will be recorded as this can make a difference to your allowed absence days.

Each child is allowed to be absent from the centre for 42 days per financial year, before any impact occur on your CCS payments. If your child is sick, then please bring in a doctor's certificate to support these absences.

**ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS**

All accidents and incidents are recorded via the online portal XAP. These will be sent through to parents/guardians via the app or email, for review and signing.

Parents are asked to report to staff if there is a change in the condition of their child's health, or if there have been any recent accidents or incidents that may impact on the child's care e.g. any bruising or head injuries.

(Please refer to the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy for further details)

**ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES**

On arrival to the centre you must sign your child in using the iPad located in the foyer. Each individual listed on your child's enrolment as authorised to collect your child must be added by the primary carer via the XAP platform, and will then be able to sign the child in/out using the iPad.

EACH PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST USE THEIR OWN DETAILS WHEN SIGNING CHILDREN IN AND OUT OF THE SERVICE.

Any person that is not known to staff will be asked for identification, and their details checked against the details kept on the child's enrolment record, before being able to collect a child from the service.

If, for some reason, circumstances change throughout the day and your arrangements need to be altered, you must contact the centre to inform us of any new arrangements and give details of the person collecting the child. (name; relationship to the child; phone number)

Staff will contact families, if a person not listed on the enrolment form comes to collect the child.

No child will be authorised to leave the centre without permission from a parent/guardian. Please refer to the Delivery and Collection of Children Policy for further details.

No child will be permitted to leave with anyone under the age of 18 years of age. The Centre Director and Committee may be approached to approve an underage person in exceptional circumstances.

**ASTHMA/ANAPHYLAXIS/MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, we require a medical management plan completed by the family doctor prior to commencement. Children with asthma, anaphylaxis, allergies, eczema or a medical condition need specific action plans, and their own medications need to be kept at the centre at all times whilst in attendance. The

diagnosed child will not be able to attend without a medical action plan and/or required medication. A risk minimisation form and communication plan will be completed by the staff in consultation with the parent/guardian before the child attends the centre. Please refer to the relevant requirements and forms relating to the following policies; Asthma Management, Diabetes, Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions, and Dealing with Medical Conditions.

## BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

We love celebrating birthdays at Emma McLean and making each child feel special on their day.

We kindly ask that you please **don't** bring in any treats from home. To support the health, safety, and inclusion of all children, we will be celebrate birthdays at EMK through singing Happy Birthday with our wooden birthday cake, and each child will receive a special birthday medal to wear and keep.

## CEASING CARE

Two weeks' notice must be given if a child is ceasing attendance. Notice must be given to the Centre Director or Enrolment Officer in writing via email, clearly stating the final day the child will attend the centre. Any amounts owing will be processed prior to the child's last day at the centre.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the Centre Director to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of the service will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

## CHILDREN'S ART WORK

At the end of each day, please check the art boxes for your child's artwork to take home.

The centre uses recycled materials and would greatly appreciate any donations brought from home for use at the centre.

Items could include any of the following:

- Computer paper
- Cardboard boxes. (No larger than a shoe box)
- Small Jars/bottles
- Buttons
- Material
- Bottle tops
- Wood off cuts
- Wrapping paper
- Items from nature (pinecones, gum nuts etc)
- Paper/ Cardboard/ cards etc

We are unable to use the following:

- toilet rolls
- meat trays
- medication boxes or containers
- egg cartons

## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (CCS)

The Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare is an approved care provider, and parents and guardians can claim Childcare Subsidy (CCS) for the three- and four-year-old long daycare programs and the after kinder care programs. CCS is determined by the family's income, type of care used and hours of activity.

Centre Provider Number: 555 002 587X

It is the families' responsibility to ensure that they apply for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) at Centrelink to access eligibility for assistance with their childcare fees.

### Applying for CCS

MyGov website my.gov.au Centrelink 136150

### More Information

For more information on CCS, go to the Department of Human Services (DHS) website www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy

my.gov.au

All families must have a MyGov account to manage CCS Payments and Immunisation Statements. You will need to link Centrelink and Medicare to your MyGov account.

The centre requires both the parent and the child's customer reference number (CRN) and date of birth to be able to formalise a child's enrolment and have the reduction in fees completed electronically. Families shall pay the maximum fee if ineligible for CCS.

## CHILD FREE DAYS

There are four (4) childfree days during the year for the following purposes:

Two days at the beginning of the year to set up the centre

One day for staff development

One day at the end of the year to pack up and clean the centre

No fee will be charged for these days.

There are also no kinder sessions running on the first day of Term 3, as the Early Childhood Teachers have an additional non-contact day.

## CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

The first five years for a child are crucial for their brain development and lifelong learning. We believe play-based programs are vital to support children's continued growth, their learning and development to thrive.

We believe in the recognition of the uniqueness of each child and their family and the need for children to develop an understanding and respect for self and others. Our programs foster inclusive environments, built on supportive, strong, positive, reciprocal relationships with staff, peers and families. These relationships are the foundations to support children's social, emotional, intellectual and physical wellbeing.

We provide programs where **play** is the important foundation for lifelong learning, enjoyment, and for children to make sense of their world. Children will learn through hands on play experiences, actively using their senses, exploring concepts, developing relationships, taking on roles, testing theories, navigating challenges, making discoveries, developing identities, storing impressions, classifying, organising, assimilating and putting their thoughts into order and so much more. We foster environments where children are empowered to speak up if they are feeling unsafe, to make their own decisions, and to navigate and problem solve diverse situations.

Our programs are aligned with our centre philosophy, the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, the Early Years Learning and Development Framework, the National Quality Framework, and are shaped by our professional knowledge of child development and our observations of children in our programs. We have high expectations for every child and work in partnership with families to ensure they are responsive to the interests and needs of our families and community.

## CHILDREN'S LOCKERS

Each child will have a locker in their room. When your child arrives at the centre, they are asked to place their bag, coats etc. into a locker.

## CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The centre will be closed for approximately three weeks during the Christmas/New Year period. The Committee of Management will determine the days of the Christmas break period. No fee is charged when the centre is closed for this time. The centre will return in January on a date nominated by the Committee of Management.

Children who are enrolled in school are unable to access the long daycare program prior to them commencing school.

## CLOTHING

We encourage all children to wear clothes and footwear that provide them with safety, comfort, meet their cultural needs and support their full participation in our play-based programs.

We are a SunSmart centre and members of the SunSmart community, ensuring we are following their policies and procedures. Wide brimmed hats, legionnaire hats (no caps), clothing with shoulder protection (no shoestring straps on dresses, shirts etc.) must be worn between the 1st of September through to May. Please also consider your child's clothing is loose-fitting, made from cool, densely woven fabric and covers as much skin as possible. Singlet tops and shoestring clothing are not supported in the policy as they do not provide adequate protection in the sun.

Please consider weather conditions (light clothes and a hat for warm weather, coats and sturdy shoes for cold weather). Clothes should be easy for the child to manage independently and support their sense of agency.

We encourage all children to have 2 full sets of spare clothes packed in their bag. If your child is toilet training, please ensure they have enough spare clothing to support their needs throughout their time at kinder.

Our play-based programs provide children with opportunities to engage in messy play and the natural environment, like paint, and mud, etc. Please ensure your child's clothing are washable play clothes, that are ok to be dirty. We acknowledge children love to come to kinder in a dress up, however costumes can take away children's autonomy when using the toilet and pose a safety risk when using climbing equipment and navigating the outdoor learning environment. We have a wide range of dress ups that can be a part of our programs to support your child's emerging identity and their engagement in play.

Please provide safe, secure and comfortable footwear for your child with a flat non-slip sole and toe protection. Thongs and Crocs do not provide the safety that children need in our play environments.

(Please refer to the Clothing and Footwear and Sun Protection Policy for further details).

## COMMUNICATION

We value strong partnerships with families and encourage open communication throughout the year.

Storypark is the online communication platform that is used by the staff in the education programs, to communicate the educational program, children's participation in the programs and assessments of your child's learning and development journey. Feedback about the educational program is always welcomed via story park or in person with the staff.

Management communicates all necessary information regarding the centre and what is happening through the Story Park platform also.

Each funded kindergarten program will organise two scheduled catch ups annually to discuss your child's learning and development including their progress and goals. However, at any time you feel you need to meet with the teaching team about your child's development, please don't hesitate to arrange a time with your child's teacher. We're always happy to connect and support your child's learning journey together.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

The centre respects each family's right to confidentiality regarding financial and personal matters, and in relation to particular issues concerning the care of an individual child. All written material is stored securely and will not be given out, unless advised by the consenting parent.

Please refer to the Privacy and Confidentiality Policy for further information, particularly for clarification where your details may be passed onto another agency.

## DEBT RECOVERY

The Committee of Management reserves the right to take action to recover any debts owing to the centre. This can include the engagement of debt collectors. Using a debt collector will be considered as a final option.

Families who have been passed onto debt collection will be ineligible for any future places in the centre until all outstanding amounts are paid.

## DISHONOURED PAYMENTS

It is your responsibility to ensure that there are sufficient cleared funds in your nominated account, and at all times on the due date of the payment **("Day to Debit") to enable the direct debit to be honoured.

**("Day to Debit") will be on a Tuesday once a week.

If a direct debit is returned by your nominated financial institution as unpaid you will be responsible for all fees and charges including and not limited to, charges and/or collection fees from your nominated Financial Institution, any Quickpay fees and charges, any fees of solicitors and collection agents appointed by Quickpay.

## EXCURSIONS AND INCURSIONS

During the year the children will engage in incursions/excursions and regular community outings. These events are planned in accordance with the program and are seen as an integral part of your child's learning at Emma McLean Kindergarten. All outings are planned and prepared in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. No child will be taken out of the centre without written authorisation from the family, and a Risk Assessment for each outing is completed.

All excursions and community outings require an authorisation form from a parent/guardian that contains the following details: proposed destination, method of transport, activities, the purpose of the event, the times and dates of when children will be out of kinder and the number of staff and other adults who are attending. A fee will only be charged for excursions/incursions if necessary to assist with the cost of the experience. This may include a transportation/bus fee.

Affordability and relevance to the children's interests and the centre program will be taken into consideration before a decision is made that will require families to pay any additional charges. (Refer to Excursions and centre events policy.) Please speak to the Centre Director if you require any support in meeting these fees.

Regular community outings are usually planned weekly, in our local community to destinations like Donald McLean Oval and Playground. They are a part of our educational programs to promote physical activity, safe active travel and community connectedness.

Incursions are planned and organised for children to engage in extended learning experiences at the kindergarten.

Excursions are planned to extend the educational program, further develop the children's interests, and extend the children's learning and development.

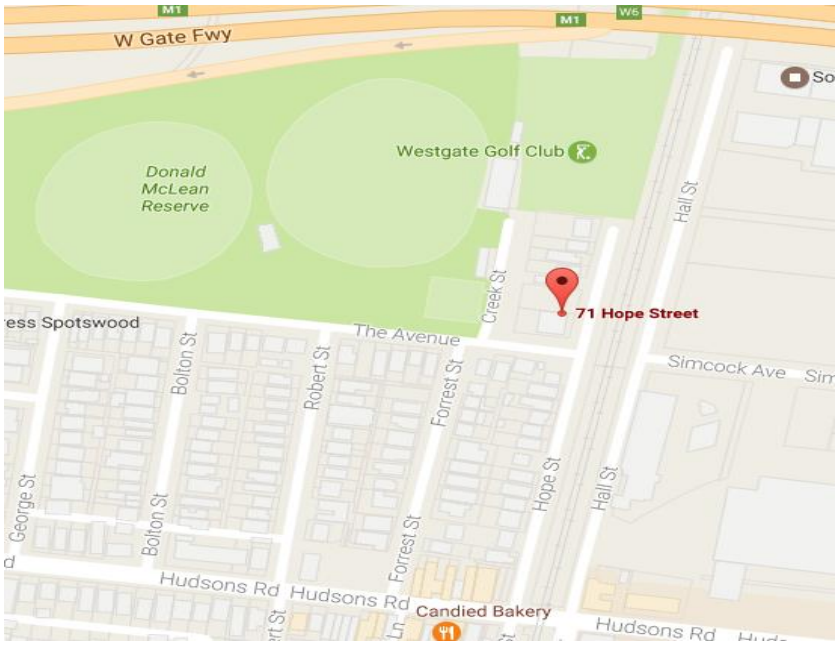
**EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION**

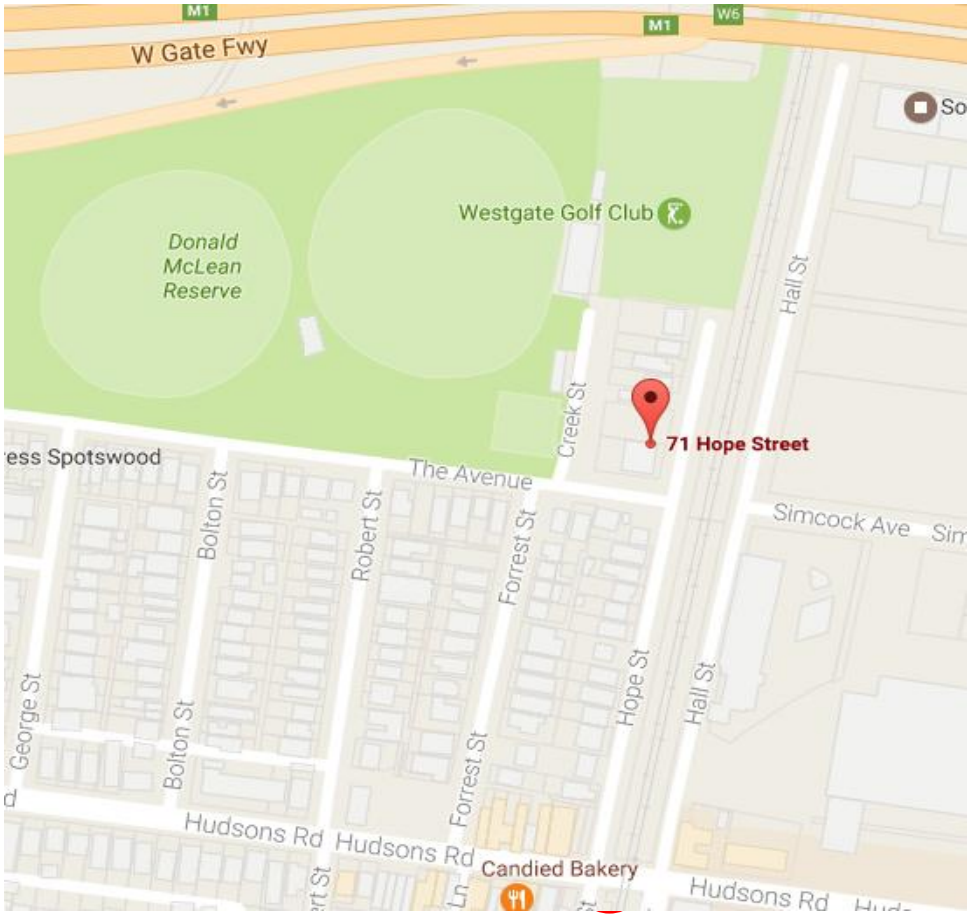
Area Map

Evacuation Assembly Area 1 – Spotswood Football Oval, 200m, 2 minutes

Evacuation Assembly Area 2 – Cnr Hope Street and Hudson Rd, 200m, 2 minutes

Evacuation Assembly Area 3 – Golf Course, 200m, 2 minutes

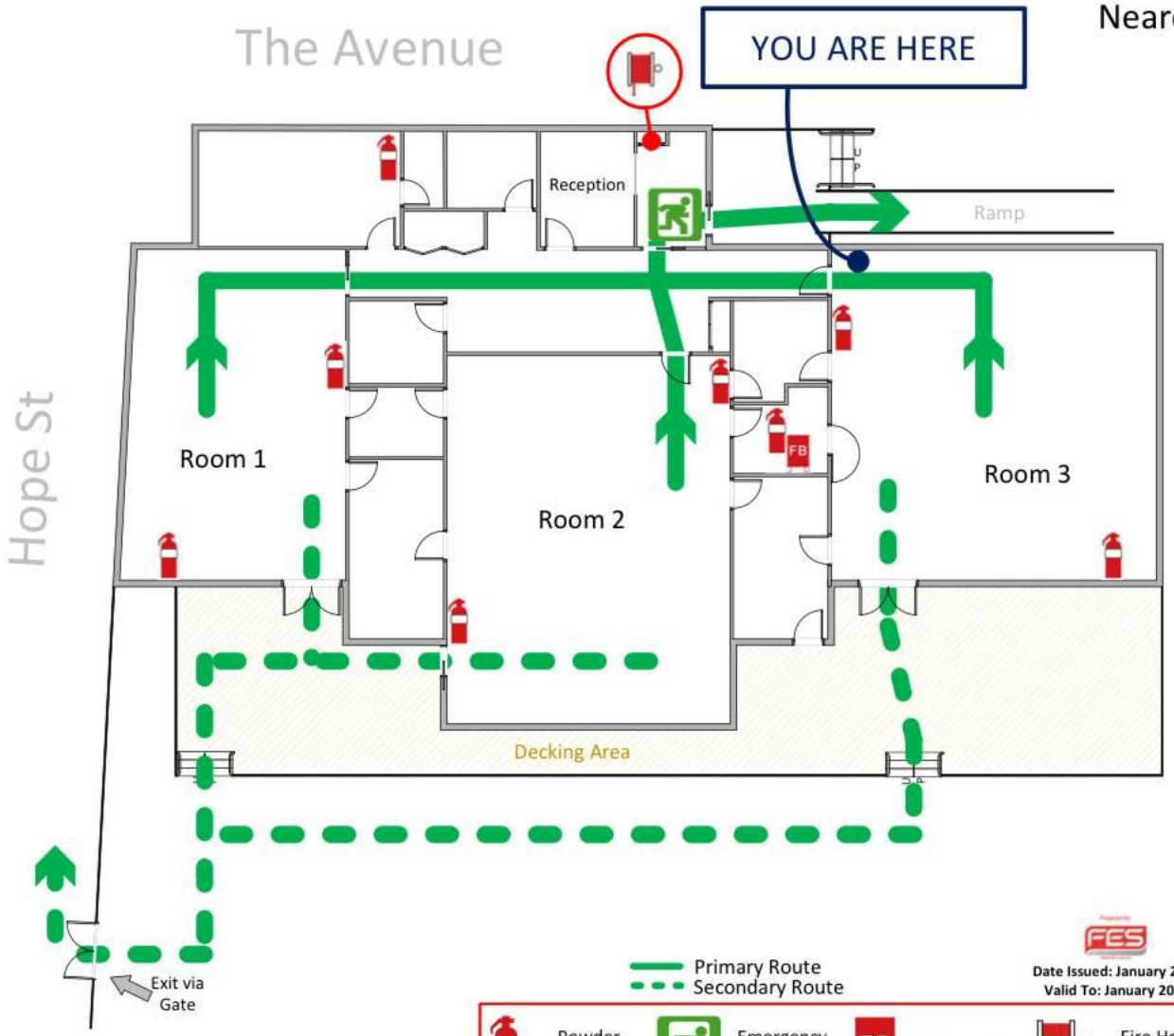



M1
W Gate Fwy
M1
W6
Donald
McLean
Reserve
Westgate Golf Club
Hall St
Creek St
71 Hope Street
ess Spotswood
The Avenue
Simcock Ave
Bolton St
Robert St
Forrest St
Hope St
Hall St
George St
Bolton St
Forrest St
Hudsons Rd
Hudsons Rd
Candied Bakery
Hudsons Rd

# Evacuation Diagram

## 71 Hope St, Spotswood VIC 3015

Nearest cross road – The Avenue







Assembly Point:
Creek Street Carpark




Date Issued: January 2024
Valid To: January 2029

## FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS

We believe families are the child's first and most important teachers, and strong, respectful partnerships between families and kinder support children's learning, development wellbeing and their sense of belonging.

We value a collaborative approach and recognise that families have valuable knowledge, experiences and insights about their child. Family involvement plays an important role in creating a strong connection between home and Kinder.

We recognise and respect that every family is unique. We welcome and respect these differences and strive to create an inclusive environment where every family feels valued, heard and supported.

Emma McLean Kindergarten holds an information evening and orientation days for new families, at the end of the year, to support positive transitions.

Families are always invited to telephone, visit or stay with their child at any time. Meetings with staff and parents can be arranged to discuss the development of their child or any aspects of the program. We strongly encourage families to work with our educators to establish goals for their child in these important early childhood years.

Families are encouraged to join in the programs, sharing skills with the children in a variety of ways such as playing musical instruments, cooking experiences, sharing different cultures etc.

Families are encouraged to share their ideas or suggestions regarding any aspects of the program, or any feature, families would like included in the program.

Social and Fundraising events are organised throughout the year to support connections, including family picnics, movie nights, sausage sizzles, children's discos and working bees.

## FAMILY COURT ORDERS

Families are reminded that the centre needs to be informed if there are any court orders that relate to children whilst at the centre.

The centre undertakes to support these orders to the best of our ability keeping in mind the safety of everyone at the centre is our responsibility.

Please ensure that you have read and signed the Communicating With Separated Parents policy to ensure that all communication is open and transparent between all parties.

Parents will be encouraged to resolve issues relating to separation, communication, or parenting arrangements privately, without involving the centre wherever possible.

Family law matters are civil matters. The centre **cannot**:

- provide mediation
- facilitate contact between an estranged parent and a child
- provide the centre premises as a location for contact visits

The child's wellbeing will always be the **paramount consideration** when responding to requests from separated parents. Where a court order restricts access or communication, the centre is legally required to comply. In such circumstances, the centre may seek advice from the relevant regulatory or safeguarding authority.

If a child's health, safety, or emotional wellbeing appears to be affected by family conflict or estrangement, the centre must follow child safeguarding procedures and may consult with the appropriate authority.

At all times, the centre's primary responsibility is its **duty of care** to the child.

## FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

### FREE KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten programs for four-year-old and eligible three-year-old children in Victorian Government funded services will be free as part of the Best Start, Best Life reform.

This investment will save families up to $2,500 for each child enrolled in a participating funded kindergarten program.

DE also provides funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

Families do not need to have a Health Care Card or Pension Card, Australian citizenship, or proof of address to be eligible to access. You also do not need to be eligible for Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS) to receive Free Kinder.

You can only receive Free Kinder at one kinder service at a time. Emma McLean Kindergarten will ask you to sign a letter, stating our centre is the nominated Free Kinder for your child.

#### Kindergarten for Koorie Kids

Aboriginal families can access 15 hours per week of free or low-cost Three-Year-Old Kindergarten.

From 2025, Four-Year-Old Kinder is transitioning to Pre-Prep, with kinder programs across Victoria increasing from 15 to 30 hours each week.

From 2026, up to 25 hours of Pre-Prep will be available statewide for Victorian children who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander. This means more hours of learning through play in a safe, inclusive and caring environment.

To check when your child will be eligible to start kindergarten, you can use the starting age calculator. Use the Pre-Prep calculator to find out if your child is eligible to attend Pre-Prep (Four-Year-Old Kindergarten) and when they can start.

#### What Free Kindergarten Means at Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare:

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare has opted into the Free Kinder initiative.

- Funded sessional kindergarten for 3-year-old children (15 hours per week) –

  NO PARENT FEE REQUIRED
- Funded sessional kindergarten for 4-year-old children (15 hours per week) –

  NO PARENT FEE REQUIRED

### CCS FUNDED PROGRAM AND AFTER KINDER PROGRAM

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare abides by the Family Assistance Legislation Amendment (Jobs for Families Child Care Package) Act 2017 (refer to Legislation and standards). The Child Care Subsidy helps by assisting families with their childcare fees and provides greater assistance to low and middle-income families. The Child Care Safety Net provides families and services extra support if they are vulnerable and disadvantaged or located in a regional or remote community.

**HOW FEES ARE SET**

As part of the budget development process, Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare set fees each year taking into consideration:

- the financial viability of the service
- the level of government funding provided.
- the availability of other income sources, such as grants
- the fees charged by similar services in the area
- the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
- reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards
- requirements of Child Care Package: www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package

Once fees are set for the year, they will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if enrolments drop and the service is at risk of not being able to meet its expenses.

**OTHER CHARGES**

Other charges levied by Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges, displayed at the service.

These include:

- Excursion/service event charge: At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy).
- Late Collection Charge: The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management

**AFTER-KINDER-PROGRAM FEES**

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare offers an After-Kinder-Program outside of the 15 hours per week (600 hours per year) in the 3 and 4-year-old sessional kindergarten programs at the conclusion of the kindergarten session.

This fee is applicable to all families that require care after the kindergarten session and must be pre-booked on a permanent basis, and fees will be applied even when the child is absent for any reason.

**DAILY FEES**

Children enrolled in the sessional kindergarten programs have access to additional days in the long daycare program (space permitting) outside of their 15 hours per week (600 hour per year) of funded kindergarten. The additional days will be charged according to the daily fee rate as outlined in the statement of fees and charges and fees will be applied even when the child is absent for any reason.

**PAYMENT OF FEES FOR THE CCS FUNDED AND AFTER KINDER PROGRAMS**

- A Direct Debit Authorisation Request must be completed when completing the online enrolment on the Xap portal.
- All fees will be processed via your chosen method i.e., direct debit from your nominated bank account or credit card on a weekly basis.
- Please note: An administration fee applies for each direct debit transaction, and a surcharge applies if you choose to have your payments processed using your credit card.

For children who commence later than the scheduled start date.

- ***Children are NOT able to commence before their 3rd birthday.***
- To hold a place at the service in the CCS Funded Program, full daily fees are required for all days booked prior to the child's 3rd birthday/start date. Note: CCS cannot be applied for the days prior to the child' physical start date.
- If the child is already 3 years of age, they are able to commence the program immediately

Payment is required for all permanent bookings even if the child is absent from the centre for illness, holiday, or for any other reason.

- Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the Centre Coordinator.
- The Privacy and Confidentiality Policy of the service will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

**DISHONOURED PAYMENTS**

It is the responsibility of the family to ensure that there are sufficient cleared funds in their nominated account to enable the direct debit to be honoured. **("Day to Debit") will be on a Tuesday once a week.

If a direct debit is returned by your nominated financial institution as unpaid you will be responsible for all fees and charges including and not limited to, charges and/or collection fees from your nominated Financial Institution, any QuickPay fees and charges, any fees of solicitors and collection agents appointed by QuickPay.

**NOTIFICATION OF FEE CHANGES DURING THE YEAR**

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase.

**REFUND OF FEES**

All fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply and are at the discretion of the Committee of Management.

There will be **NO** refund of fees in the following circumstances:

- a child's short-term illness
- family holiday during operational times
- closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from the kindergarten service provider or alternatively families may contact the local council.

## UNPAID FEES/DEBT RECOVERY

The Committee of Management reserves the right to take action to recover any debts owing to the centre. This can include the engagement of a Debt Collector. Using a Debt Collector will be considered as a final option.

If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.

Families who have been passed onto debt collection will be ineligible for any future places at the centre until all debts have been cleared.

## STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES 2026

**Fees**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| CCS Funded Program | 8.00am-6.00pm | (Mon – Fri) | $140.00 |
| 4-year-old - After Kinder Program | 3:30pm-6.00pm | (Mon – Fri) | $45.00 |
| 3-year-old - After Kinder Program | 3:30PM-6.00pm | (Mon - Fri) | $45.00 |

## HOURS OF OPERATION

## SESSIONAL KINDERGARTEN

*Term dates:*

Term 1: Friday 29th January 2027 – Thursday 25th March 2027

Term 2: Monday 12th April 2027 – Friday 25th June 2027

Term 3: Tuesday 13th June 2027 – Friday 17th September 2027

Term 4: Monday 4th October 2027 – Thursday 16th December 2027

| **Green**<br>3-year-old | **Orange**<br>3-year-old | **Yellow**<br>3-year-old | **Red**<br>4-year-old | **Blue**<br>4-year-old | **Pink Kinder Funded**<br>4-year-old |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tues & Thurs<br>8am – 3:30pm | Mon & Fri<br>8am – 3:30pm | Wed & Fr<br>8am – 3:30pm | Tues & Thurs<br>8am – 3:30pm | Mon & Wed<br>8am – 3:30pm | Tues & Thurs<br>8am – 3:30pm |

## AFTER KINDER PROGRAM

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4-year-old - After Kinder Program | 3:30pm-6.00pm | (Monday – Thursday) |
| 3-year-old - After Kinder Program | 3:30pm-6.00pm | (Monday – Friday) |

**SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM**

Kindergarten sessions do not run during school holidays. We do have limited availability for CCS Funded Program/Holiday Program during the school holidays for families who still require their children to attend. These are charged at the same rate as long daycare.

**CCS Funded Program**

Full Days 8.00am - 6.00pm Monday to Friday

The CCS Funded Program runs through the school holidays

**GRIEVANCES**

At Emma McLean Kindergarten, we value open, respectful and positive communication with you, our families.

We encourage families to share any concerns, questions, compliments or feedback about their child's experience at kindergarten. Your feedback helps us reflect on our practices and continually improve our service.

How can you share your compliments or complaints?

You can share your compliments and complaints with us through any of the following methods:

**In person:** Speak with a member of our team

**Phone:** (03) 9391 1415

**Email:** emma.McLean.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au

**Online:** Scan the QR code below to complete our feedback form.

Feedback may relate to a child's health, safety or wellbeing, staff behaviour or practices, or any other aspect of our service.

Our Compliments and Complaints Policy is available on our website for families to read and refer to whenever needed.

You can also contact the Approved Provider, **The Committee of Management**, via email: emk.committee@gmail.com

**What if I am not satisfied with the response?**

If you feel your concern has not been adequately addressed by Emma McLean Kindergarten, or you are uncomfortable raising it directly with us, you can contact the Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority (VECRA).

VECRA is Victoria's independent regulator for Early Childhood Education and Care. Its role is to help ensure early childhood services provide safe, high-quality education and care that supports children's safety and wellbeing.

Complaints can be submitted to VECRA online, by phone or by email.

**VECRA – Western Metropolitan Office**

**Online:** https://www.vecra.vic.gov.au/submit-complaint-about-early-childhood-service

**Phone:** (03) 7005 1801

**Email:** vecra.western.metro@education.vic.gov.au

Thank you for sharing your feedback and helping us make Emma McLean Kindergarten a positive, safe and welcoming place for all children and families.

For more information, please visit:
https://www.vecra.vic.gov.au/make-complaint-about-early-childhood-service

We want all families to feel comfortable sharing their concerns and feedback with us. We are committed to listening, working together with families and responding to concerns in a respectful and timely manner.

## HAND WASHING

Please Remind Your Child to **WASH THEIR HANDS ON ARRIVAL TO THE CENTRE**

In line with our Hygiene Policy, we would like to remind all Parents/Guardians that it is important that children are encouraged (or assisted if necessary) to wash their hands on arrival at the centre.

This will help us primarily to minimise the spread of germs and also assist in reducing the risk of anaphylactic incidences for those with medical needs.

## ILLNESS

The centre is only able to care for well children. Any child who is not able to join in the day's activities should not attend the centre. If a child appears unwell or develops a temperature or signs and symptoms of illness during the day, the family will be notified by telephone. In the event that staff cannot get in touch with the parents, emergency contacts will be called. The child can only be collected by a parent or an emergency contact person recorded on the child's enrolment form. Arrangements must be made to take the child home immediately. Families need to inform staff of any illness that their child may have had overnight at the weekend or whilst they have been absent from the centre.

Our service is committed to providing a safe, and healthy environment for all children. To support the wellbeing of children, families and educators, children should only attend the service when they are well enough to participate in the daily program. If a child is unwell or requires a level of care that cannot reasonably be provided by educators, the child should remain at home until they have recovered to engage fully in the program.

If a child appears unwell while attending the centre, including developing a temperature, or displaying other signs and symptoms of illness, parents or guardians will be contacted by telephone and arrangements must be made for the child to be collected as soon as possible.

If we are unable to contact a parent or guardian, the emergency contacts listed on the child's enrolment record will be contacted.

Families are asked to inform the centre of any illness their child has experienced recently, or while they have been absent from the service, including any infectious disease that could impact the health and wellbeing of other children at the centre. This information supports educators to ensure each child's health and wellbeing is the priority and if necessary, respond appropriately to any symptoms that may arise.

Families are encouraged to discuss any concerns about their child's health with educators and, where appropriate, seek advice from a qualified health professional before returning their child to the service. Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness

## EXCLUSION OF CHILDREN WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Kindergartens have a responsibility under the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 to help manage infectious diseases in their facilities.

Minimum exclusion periods for children with particular infections (known as cases) is the most important way to reduce transmission of infectious disease.

Different exclusion periods apply to different infectious diseases for cases and contacts. Please see exclusion table. https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/exclusion-periods-for-primary-schools-and-childrens-services

Please inform the centre as soon as practicable if your child has an infectious disease or has been in contact with a person who has an infectious disease.

Please keep your child/ren at home if they are unwell or have an excludable infectious disease. Dealing with Infectious Diseases

## INFORMATION SHARING SCHEME

The Child Information Sharing Scheme (CISS) and the Family Violence Sharing Scheme (FISS) enables specified government agencies and service providers, such as education and care services, Child Protection, Youth Justice, Maternal and Child Health and Victoria Police to help develop a complete view of at-risk children. Providers are supported to share that information with other approved agencies, making it easier to identify at-risk children's needs earlier, act on them sooner and prevent escalation.

## IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

Before an enrolment can be confirmed we are required to see proof that a child's immunisations are up to date for their age. Immunisation records must be kept up to date and uploaded via the XAP portal.

An Immunisation History Statement must be provided, directly downloaded from MyGov's Medicare portal.

Immunisation History Statements are available on request at any time by contacting Medicare

Exemption: If a child has a medical reason they cannot be immunised, they will need to provide an Immunisation History Statement that lists the vaccines that the child cannot have due to the medical contraindication before the enrolment can be finalised. This information needs to be updated via a GP and listed on your Immunisation record on Medicare/MyGov.

Please see https://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/no-jab-no-play for more information.

## INSECT MANAGEMENT

At Emma McLean the mosquitos are a constant problem in Spring/Summer. Whilst we try to minimise their impact, we are unable to eliminate their presence totally.

Some families, whose children are particularly susceptible, may choose to apply insect repellent prior to attending their session.

If you wish for insect repellent to be reapplied to their child whilst at the centre, please provide a clearly labelled individual repellent, roll on or liquid/cream repellents are preferred and inform the staff.

## LATE COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Kindergarten sessions end at 3:30pm **sharp**, and the CCS Funded Program and After Kinder Programs end when the centre closes at 6.00pm **sharp**.

Families should be aware that late collection of your child places significant stress on the child and the staff. Arrangements must be made to have children collected from the centre no later than 3:30pm (unless enrolled in the After Kinder Program) or by 6.00pm. A fee will apply if children are not collected on time. Please see the Fees policy for further information.

## LOST PROPERTY

Every effort will be made to ensure your child's belongings are returned to their bag or locker. Occasionally though, items may be misplaced. To prevent this happening please name all items of clothing and equipment the child may bring from home.

Anything that has been found will be placed in the lost property area in the foyer. Take your time to look in the lost property area if your child has lost/misplaced their belongings.

## MEALS AND NUTRITION

Each child is required to bring their own morning tea (1), lunch (2), and afternoon tea (3) for during their kindergarten sessions, and a late snack (4)if they are attending CCS Funded Program or After Kinder Program. Please pack snacks into separate, individual containers and if necessary, in an insulated box to keep fresh and cool.

Families need to consider the safety of providing perishable items for their children. Items such as dairy and meat products need to be in an insulated container with a fridge brick or ice block, or in a thermos container for keeping hot food warm. (Unfortunately, we do not have the facilities to store food in the fridge or heat food at the centre)

Families are asked to also provide their child with a drink bottle filled with water. (No other drink is acceptable) Drink bottles must be taken home each day.

We encourage water bottles so that children can have access to water at all times during the day.

All food and drink bottles must be clearly labelled with your child's name.

**Allergy Aware Kindergarten**

Some children at the centre have severe food allergies, including anaphylaxis that may cause serious and severe allergic reactions that can be life threatening. To help protect the health and safety of all children, the following foods and food products are not permitted at the centre:

**EGGS AND EGG PRODUCTS,**

**NUTS AND NUT PRODUCTS** including peanut butter, Nutella and muesli bars that contain nuts.

To encourage healthy eating habits and to follow the 'Healthy Places, Healthy Futures Program,' formerly known as the Achievements program, which supports healthy eating. We ask that families to consider nutritional and healthy foods, when providing meals and snacks in their child's lunch boxes. Health & Wellbeing for Schools & Early Childhood | Healthy Places

**Examples of healthy lunch/snacks**

Include items like sandwiches, wraps, sushi, fruit, vegetables, low sugar yoghurt, cheese, wholegrain crackers, dips, healthy homemade muffins, biscuits or baked goods, protein sources such as meat, fish, tofu, or legumes, healthy leftovers from the night before like pasta, rice dishes, meatballs, etc. It is recommended to exclude high fat, salt and sugar foods such as chips, chocolates, lollies, muesli and fruit bars.

We Encourage Nude Food to help children learn awareness of environmental impacts on our world. We encourage nude food to help reduce the amount of waste the centre puts into landfill.

NUDE FOOD AND TIPS FOR PACKING HEALTHY LUNCH BOXES

What is Nude Food?

For NUDE FOOD lunchboxes, try to pack:

- Avoid Snacks in reusable containers
- Drinks in a reusable container
- Reusable utensils when needed
- A reusable lunchbox or backpack
- Reusable sandwich wraps

- Lunches packed in plastic bags or wrap
- Lunches packed in foil or wax paper
- Single use drink boxes, pouches, cans, cartons and bottles
- Single use plastic forks and spoons
- Pre-packaged single-serve snack item

Australian Government
National Health and Medical Research Council
Department of Health and Ageing

www.eatforhealth.gov.au

# Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

**Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.**

**Drink plenty of water.**






**Use small amounts**




**Only sometimes and in small amounts**



# FOR A HEALTHY LUNCHBOX PICK & MIX SOMETHING FROM EACH GROUP 1-6!

## FRUIT 1

**FRESH FRUIT**
- Apple
- Banana
- Mandarin
- Orange quarters
- Passionfruit halves (with spoon)
- Watermelon, honeydew, rockmelon chunks
- Pineapple chunks
- Grapes
- Plums
- Nectarines, peaches, Apricots
- Strawberries
- Cherries
- Kiwifruit halves (with spoon)
- Pear

**MIXED FRUIT**
- Fruit salad
- Fruit kebabs

**DRIED FRUIT**
- Dried fruit, nut, popcorn mixes*

**TINNED FRUIT/SNACK PACKS/CUPS**
- In natural juice (not syrup)



## VEGETABLES 2

**FRESH CRUNCHY VEGIES**
- Corn cobs
- Carrot sticks
- Capsicum sticks
- Green beans
- Cucumber sticks
- Celery sticks
- Snow peas
- Tomatoes (e.g. cherry and Roma tomatoes)
- Mushroom pieces

***Can serve with either:***
- Hommus
- Tomato salsa
- Tatziki
- Beetroot dip
- Natural yoghurt

**SALADS**
- Coleslaw and potato salad (reduced fat dressing)
- Mexican bean, tomato, lettuce and cheese salad
- Pesto pasta salad*

**BAKED ITEMS**
- Grilled or roasted vegetables
- Wholemeal vegetable muffins or scones
- Vegetable slice (with grated zucchini and carrot)
- Popcorn

**SOUP** (In small thermos)
- Pumpkin soup
- Potato and leak soup
- Chicken and corn soup

## MILK, YOGHURT AND CHEESE 3

- Milk
- Calcium-enriched soy and other plant-based milks
- Yoghurt (frozen overnight)
- Custard

***Tip:***
- Freeze the night before to keep cool during the day

- Cheese cubes, sticks or slices
- Cottage or ricotta cheese
- Cream cheese
- Tatziki dip

***Can serve with either:***
- Fruit
- Wholegrain cereal, low in sugar
- Vegetable sticks
- Rice and corn cakes
- Wholegrain wheat crackers

## MEAT OR MEAT ALTERNATIVE 4

- Tinned tuna or salmon in springwater
- Lean roast or grilled meats (e.g. beef, chicken, kangaroo)
- Falafel balls
- Lean meat or chicken patties
- Tinned tuna or salmon patties
- Lentil patties
- Lean deli meats (e.g. ham, silverside, chicken)
- Boiled eggs
- Baked beans (canned)
- Tofu cubes
- Hommus dip
- Lean meat or chicken kebab sticks
- Peanut butter*

***Can serve with:***
- Wholegrain sandwich, roll, pita or wrap bread with salad
- Rice and corn cakes
- Wholegrain wheat crackers
- Side salad

- Vegetable frittata
- Skinless chicken drumsticks
- Savoury muffins or scones (e.g. lean ham, cheese and shallots)
- Homemade pizzas with lean roast or deli meats and vegetables

***Can serve with:***
- Side salad
- Steamed or roasted vegetables

## GRAIN AND CEREAL FOOD 5

**MAINS**
- Wraps
- Sandwiches
- Rolls
- Toasted sandwiches

***Tip:*** Use breads such as wholemeal, multigrain, rye, sourdough, pita, flat, corn, mountain, lavash, white fibre-enriched, soy and linseed, herb, naan, bagels, foccacias, fruit bread and English muffins.

- Pasta dishes
- Rice, quinoa or cous cous dishes
- Noodle dishes
- Sushi

**SAVORY BAKED ITEMS**
- Homemade pizzas
- Wholemeal savoury muffins or scones (e.g. ham, cheese and corn muffins)
- Vegetable based muffins
- Pasta or noodle bake

**SWEET BAKED ITEMS**
- Fruit loaf
- Wholemeal fruit based muffins

**SNACKS**
- High fibre, low sugar cereal (e.g. muesli)
- English muffins
- Crackers
- Crispreads
- Rice cakes
- Corn thins
- Wholemeal scones
- Pikelets
- Crumpets
- Hot cross buns (no icing)

## WATER 6

- Take a water bottle (for refilling throughout the day)

***Tip:***
- Freeze overnight to keep foods cool in lunchboxes

**Sweet and savoury snack foods (e.g. muesli/fruit/nut bars, biscuits, crisps, cakes, muffins, slices) should be limited in lunchboxes. They can lead to excess energy intake if consumed in large amounts.**

**Sugar sweetened drinks and confectionery should not be provided in lunchboxes. They can lead to excess energy intake and tooth decay.**



**Check your school's policy regarding the use of nuts and products containing nuts.*

For more information about healthy eating and for many tasty recipes, visit the the Healthy Eating Advisory Service: **www.heas.healthytogether.vic.gov.au.**

## MEDICATION

The administration of medications will be recorded through Xap. The parent/guardian must inform a staff member when medication is required, and will need to input the medication details on Xap, detailing the name of the medication and the times it is required to be administered.

When the medication is administered a second staff member will witness that the correct medication and dose has been given. All medication must be clearly labelled with the child's name and the dosage to be administered. Over-the-counter medication must be clearly named.

All medication must be given to staff for safe storage in either the First Aid cupboard or fridge and under no circumstances is it to be left in the child's bag.

Medication of any type will not be administered if the expiry date has lapsed. Refer to the Administration of Medication Policy for further details.

## PERMISSION FOR PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Photographs and videos are classified as 'personal information' under the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

Emma McLean Kindergarten has several policies in place to protect the privacy and confidentiality of your child, including:

- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments
- Information and Communication Technology
- Code of Conduct

Taking these policies into account, Emma McLean Kindergarten will:

- notify parents/guardians as to who will be permitted to take photographs/videos, where these will be taken and how they will be used.
- comply with the privacy legislation in relation to all photographs/videos taken at the service, whether by the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, Persons in Day-to-Day Charge, educators, staff, parent/guardian, volunteers or students on placement
- enable photographs/videos of children to be taken as part of the program delivered by the service, whether group photos, videos or photos at special events and excursions etc.
- In accordance with the Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy, only service-issued electronic devices to used when taking images or videos of children while providing education and care.
- Photographs/videos taken by staff at the service may take photographs/videos of children as part of the program. These may be displayed at the service or placed in the service's publications or promotional material to promote the service, or for any other purpose aligned to the service's business operations.
- When the photographs/videos are no longer being used, the service will destroy them if they are no longer required or otherwise store them securely at the service as per Regulation 177.
- As part of our Child Safety procedures, **parents and families are not permitted to take photos or videos of their child or other children while they are at our centre or participating in our programs, including offsite in excursions or regular outings.** Only staff are permitted to take photos of children on a centre issued device only. These photos are used for programming purposes and will be posted on the Story Park platform for authorised viewers only. We ask you to continue our child safety practices, and ensure the safety, rights and best interests of all children are upheld by not posting or forwarding any centre/story park photos on to any secondary online platform.

**Photographs taken by a photographer engaged by the service**

A photographer may be engaged by the service to take individual and/or group photographs of children. Information will be provided in written form to parent/guardian prior to the event and will include the date and the photographer's details.

Photographs/videos for use in newspapers, Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare website and other external publications

- The permission of parent/guardian of children will, on every occasion, be obtained prior to a child's photograph being taken to appear in any newspaper/media or external publication, including the service's newsletter, publications and website.
- Access to photographs/videos Access to any photographs or videos, like other personal information, is set out in the service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy, which is displayed at the service and available on request.

**PRIORITY OF ACCESS: Pink CCS Funded Program**

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare operates a long daycare program integrated with our Pink Kinder Funded sessional program. Our Enrolment and Orientation policy outlines how places are allocated when demand exceeds availability, ensuring fair and transparent access whilst prioritising children and families most in need. There are no regulatory requirements for filling vacancies in long daycare programs.

As an approved provider, Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare has established this policy to guide placement decisions in accordance with Australian Government recommendations and our service values.

When allocating long daycare places, the following priority order will be applied:

Priority Level 1:

• Children who are at risk of serious abuse or neglect

• Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children

• Children who are from a refugee or asylum seeker background

• Children with disabilities or developmental delays

• Children of a parent with a disability

This meets the Australian Government's aims of helping parents/guardians who are most in need and supporting the safety and wellbeing of children at risk. A supporting letter from a paediatrician or allied health professional may also be requested for children with disabilities or developmental delays.

Priority Level 2:

Following Priority Level 1, consideration will be given to:

• Children currently enrolled in a kindergarten program at Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare

• Children who have accepted a kindergarten place for the following year

• Siblings of children who are currently attending the service

• Siblings of children who have previously attended the service

• Families who live in close proximity to the service

• Families who work or study in close proximity to the service

• Length of time on the waitlist (this applies for mid- year entry, or when vacancies become available.)

To support continuity of the CCS Funded Program, places will be allocated to ensure the program has a balance of children attending 3-year-old kindergarten and 4-year-old kindergarten. No child will be able to start until they have had their 3rd birthday and will be required to pay full fees for all booked days until their start date. CCS is not available for days prior to the child's physical start date.

## REST TIME AND SLEEPING

Our programs adopt a holistic approach to rest times, while recognising the importance of physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of all children. We aim to provide a balance of active and restful experiences throughout the day including providing opportunities for each child to sleep, rest or engage in appropriate quiet play experiences.

Our programs will be responsive to the individual rest and sleep needs of children; including if this is a part of their daily routine, children request a rest, parenting beliefs, values, practices, requirements, circumstances or events occurring at the child's home, and consistency of practice between home and the centre.

The centre provides bedding and linen.

Children will be supervised at all times whilst sleeping or resting.

If parents would like their child to have a rest, please speak to the child's teacher to discuss their needs.

## PLANNED CLOSURES

All Public Holidays: 1 Staff professional development day per year and the centre is closed for 3 weeks over the Christmas/New Year period.

## POLICIES

Full versions of all centre policies are available on the kindergarten website, or can be provided to you upon request.

Please familiarise yourself with all policies, making note of the parent/guardian responsibilities.

Some policies will require a signed acknowledgement that you have read and will abide by such policies.

The centre policy folder is kept in the office and is available to you and can be accessed at any time.

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

During the year the centre will be closed for all Government gazetted public holidays. CCS Funded Program fees are **NOT** charged for these days.

## RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (RAP)

The Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare is proud to have a published Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) that states our commitment to reconciliation with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The RAP helps to support our service to develop respectful relationships and create meaningful opportunities with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Our vision for reconciliation is to :

Continue learning alongside children about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's histories, cultures and perspectives. We strive not only to be a culturally safe service, but also a culturally rich, proud and responsive one.

By respectfully embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander pedagogies and perspectives throughout our curriculum and community, we aim to create an inclusive, respectful environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and is supported to learn and grow together as we continue building relationships with he local First Nations peoples.

## QUALITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (QIP)

What is a quality improvement plan?

A Quality Improvement Plan is a moving document that changes and evolves with our service. It allows us to set goals and use feedback from the children, their families and the staff to improve our quality of service.

The National Quality Framework which guides every children's service in Australia requires us to write a Quality Improvement Plan each year.

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare has a quality improvement plan (QIP) which is developed through consultation with staff, committee, parent feedback and the children's voice.

The QIP is a working document, and families are welcome to review the plan or contribute to it at any time. Throughout the year, the committee and staff work to make the improvements identified in the QIP, formally updating the plan at least once a year.

A parent survey is developed each year, which focuses on the quality areas, and we would appreciate it if you could take some time to complete our survey, as the information we gather from the survey helps to drive our future quality improvement plans

Please feel free to pass on your ideas and suggestions! We welcome your feedback, praise and constructive criticism.

## ASSESSMENT AND RATING

The Assessment and rating process is a government initiative which aims to regulate the standards of care provided by early childhood centres. The centre is currently rated as EXCEEDING THE NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD in all areas and is constantly continuing with the centre's quality improvement plan.

## RELIEF STAFF

Relief staff may be called upon when a permanent staff member is absent. To support continuity and minimise disruption to children and families we endeavour to provide the same relief staff members wherever possible. However, this cannot always be guaranteed.

Our centre maintains a pool of regular relief educators who are familiar with our environment, routines, policies and, importantly, the children in our care. These valued Emma McLean casual staff support children's safety, consistency and familiarity in relationships, helping children feel secure and comfortable when their usual educators are absent.

When a permanent staff member is absent, a notice will be displayed on the entrance door to your child's progam advising families of the staff member who will be providing relief that day.

## SCHOOL READINESS FUNDING

Kindergarten services are now required to collect information from all parents/guardians about their education and employment.

Why are we collecting this information?

Collecting this information will help the kindergarten to receive School Readiness Funding. This is in addition to normal kindergarten funding. The amount of funding each kindergarten receives will be based on the needs of its children, as determined by their parent/guardian occupation and education information.

What is School Readiness Funding?

School Readiness Funding will help children get even more out of their time at kindergarten. It can be used to purchase a range of programs and supports, such as programs to support children's language development, resources for educators to help children manage their emotions, or professionals such as speech therapists to work with children, teachers and families.

What information needs to be collected?

The following education information is required from parents/guardians:

- highest level of primary/secondary education (e.g. Year 10 or equivalent, Year 9 or equivalent)
- highest qualification they have completed (e.g. no non-school qualification, bachelor's degree).
- Equivalent overseas education and qualifications are recognised for the purposes of this data collection.

The following occupation information is required from parents/guardians:

- identify the occupation group from the Parental Occupation Index relevant to their work.
- If a parent/guardian has more than one job, they must select the occupation group which includes their main job.

What accurate information is difficult to collect?

The information collected will help ensure that School Readiness Funding supports the children who need it most - this is why accuracy is important. The Department will be working with all kindergarten services to assist them to provide accurate information on the education and occupation of parents/guardians.

We Will Respect Your Privacy

This is the same information collected by schools when a child is enrolled in prep. All information provided during the enrolment process will only be used to inform kindergarten funding. For further information on the Department's Privacy Policy, please visit https://www.education.vic.gov.au/pages/privacypolicy.aspx

Questions?

Visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/school-readiness

Or contact the Early Childhood Improvement Branch in your regional office https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/pages/regions.aspx.

## STUDENTS ON PLACEMENT/WORK EXPERIENCE

Emma McLean supports students from a variety of training institutes, such as Melbourne University, Monash University and Victoria University. Students attend for a varying number of days and undertake practicum requirements including participation in the daily program. Students from local secondary schools also attend the centre to complete their work experience placement. All students are fully supervised and are never left in charge of the children. Students work under our Participation of Volunteers and Students policy, including undertaking a robust induction process. Families will be communicated via story park the details of a student placement.

## SUN SMART

Emma McLean Kindergarten is recognised as a SunSmart centre. From the 1st of September to May the following year we require the children to wear hats during outside play. It is the family's responsibility to ensure children have sunscreen applied before they arrive or upon arrival. We have a sunscreen station set up in the foyer and in each room to support this. If your child cannot wear the centre sunscreen please provide your child with a sunscreen of preference.

Wide brimmed hats, legionnaire hats (no caps), clothing with shoulder protection (no shoestring straps on dresses, shirts etc.) Please also consider your child's clothing is loose-fitting, made from cool, densely woven fabric and covers as much skin as possible. Singlet tops and shoestring clothing are not supported in the policy as they do not provide adequate protection in the sun.

Please ensure that all items are labelled with your child's name.

## SUSTAINABILITY AND OUR ENVIRONMENT

Emma McLean Kindergarten and Daycare are committed to promoting respect for, and an appreciation of, the natural environment among all at the service. We work to foster children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment, and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land

Positive attitudes and values in line with sustainable practices are developed throughout the service ensuring that educators and other staff endeavour to always engage in sustainable practices.

Hand dryers are used, and the use of paper hand towel will be kept to a minimum.

The introduction of NUDE FOOD supports our sustainable practices.

We actively engage in the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program.

We actively include the worm farm in our educational programs, look our for any worm juice we offer to families for their home gardens.

We teach the children to dispose of our rubbish in line with the Hobsons Bay Council rubbish program, sorting into landfill, recycling, and green waste rubbish bins.

## TOILETING

Toileting is a vital step in a child's development and like any aspect of development, "readiness and achievement" of toileting can vary depending on the child.

Children attending the centre wearing nappies, or requiring nappies for sleep time, will be supported in their wellbeing needs. Open and regular communication about your child's needs and/or progress towards toilet training ensures the centre can make the necessary preparations and work in partnership with the family in encouraging and maximising success. Maintaining the consistency between home and the centre makes the process of toileting easier for children, families and staff. We will ensure we work with families and communicate any observed readiness cues displayed by their child in our programs.

Families are to provide nappies for their child, and nappy wipes if there is a family preference of these. Multiple changes of clothes are also important to be packed to support children's learning during this time.

## TOYS FROM HOME

To support a safe, inclusive and engaging environments for all children, we ask that toys from home are left at home. This helps reduce the likelihood of disagreements between children and prevents personal belongings from being misplaced or damaged.

We recognise that some children benefit from bringing a familiar and safe comfort item from home, particularly while they are settling into a new environment.

Families are welcome to speak with educators about a comfort item that may support their child. Together, we can develop an approach that respects the child's individual needs while gradually supporting their participation and sense of belonging within the learning environment.

## WHAT TO BRING EACH DAY

Backpack big enough to pack your child's belongings in.

Food for morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and late snack if applicable

Changes of clothes including underwear and socks

Sunhat or jacket depending on the weather

## WORKING BEE

Working bees are held periodically throughout the year to maintain facilities. Activities at a working bee may include minor repairs, gardening, some cleaning, raking mulch, sand etc.

Working bees are a fun way to get to know staff and other parents. Children are welcome to attend and usually enjoy spending time at the centre playing. During the working bee children remain the responsibility of their families and we ask that families restrict the children to playing outside in the yard.