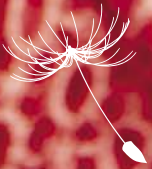




Pod.
Early School



Parent
Handbook





Dear Families,

It is with great pleasure that I introduce myself as the Owner and Operator of Pod Early Schools.

Pod is a very personal story for me and with 25 years in the making I am very proud of our new boutique Education facilities.

By way of background, I have worked in the area of Early Childhood education for over 25 years. Designing, building and operating child care centres is my area of expertise and my personal passion for quality early childhood education has been the key driver for the concept of Pod.

I have carefully selected the location of Pod Early schools to ensure that we are part of an education community. We work alongside families, local schools and our local community to ensure that children are well prepared for their first year of formal schooling and their continued learning journey.

At Pod our philosophy is, 'Every story has a beginning'. This philosophy has been the foundation for the design of our beautiful logo which incorporates dandelion Pods, representing our role to nurture and grow. We are passionate about building the right foundations for children to become lifelong successful learners. For this reason the close proximity of Pod to local schools is critical to the development of a continuous education journey for children within their local community.

The design of our Pod Early Schools are beautiful, warm and engaging. They are a lovely fit within local street scapes and create a natural setting for children to immerse themselves in an adventurous, interactive environment for learning.

Our play scapes at Pod have been carefully considered and professionally designed to ensure that children of all ages are able to interact in meaningful life experiences in our beautiful natural surrounds. Teaching children to recycle, care for animals, tender to sustainable gardens and collect fresh produce to be included in our seasonal menus and enjoyed in our outdoor Chow House, is part of our belief in building environmental awareness and a strong education platform for social responsibility.

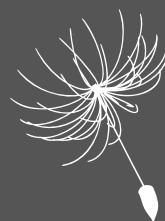
We look forward to enriching your child's life in our Pod Early School Community.

Kind Regards,

Jillian Green
Director

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A collection of white dandelion seed heads on a dark grey background. One seed head is on the left, and a cluster of several others is on the right, with some seeds appearing to float away.

Every story has a beginning.

Our Philosophy

All educators are encouraged to actively promote and incorporate our Centre Philosophy into the Educational Programs, curriculum decisions, educator practices and classroom environments. The Centre Philosophy has been derived from the principles of the National Quality Framework, which underpin our quality practices and beliefs.

Our centre has its own specific philosophy developed in consultation with families, educators, children and their local community.

Our philosophy is broken down in to ten areas that we feel strongly about;

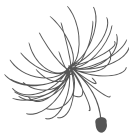
- Play
- Relationships
- Equity
- Diversity
- Holistic Approaches
- Responsiveness to Children
- Intentional Teaching
- Natural Environments
- Continuity of Learning and Transitions
- Evolving

Our Centre Philosophy is on display in our foyer for everyone to have access and contribute to.

Settling in to care

Introducing your child to an education and care service for the first time can be an emotional time for both the child and the family. There are many ways to assist you and your child through this transition. Here are a few suggestions to help you prepare before the big day arrives:

- Parents are encouraged to attend the centre for an hour or two twice a week leading up to your child's first day. This is a great opportunity for families to interact with the educators, exchange information and allow your child to become familiar with their new environment with the security of knowing you are there.
- Exchanging information and communicating with the Centre Director and Educators about your child's needs, requirements and routines allow us to work in partnership with families to provide a smooth transition.
- Bring along your child's comforter, whether this is a teddy, blanket, dummy or even a family photo to help your child feel safe and secure. When you are ready to leave, say goodbye and reassure your child you will be back a little later to get him/her. We discourage parents/guardians to prolong the goodbye, as this often results in your child becoming confused (thinking you are staying with them or they are going home with you) which further causes anxiety during the separation. The best thing to do after the goodbye is to walk out the classroom door and allow the experienced staff to settle, comfort and reassure your child about the exciting activities and games set out for the day.
- We encourage families to participate in our educational programs and we welcome you to join us and your child for those special moments throughout the year.



What we do

We understand that children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates. We provide an environment that is responsive to our children's capabilities in order for all children to experience feelings of success and accomplishment.



Who we are

At Pod we are passionate about giving children the best possible start in life. We believe that children learn best in a quality environment that is happy, nurturing, engaging and safe.



Why we do it

We recognise the importance of our role in guiding and teaching children how to protect, and honour our natural world for future generations. This has laid the foundations for the unique design of our Pod Early School and integrated play spaces.

Your Child's First Day

What to bring?

- Backpack
- Hat
- Two spare changes of clothes to suit the weather
- Comforter such as dummy, teddy or blanket
- Drink bottle with water only
- Sterilized Bottles – milk teats must be covered by a cap. Bottles to be made up for formula must contain the correct amount of cooled boiled water
- Formula (pre-measured in measured container) or breast milk if required

Please ensure all items are clearly labelled.

What to wear?

Please dress your child in comfortable clothes according to the weather. Non-restrictive clothing that can easily be removed for toileting and is suitable for running, jumping, climbing, painting, playing with sand and water. We recommend safe, sturdy, closed toe shoes that can be easily managed by the child to encourage self-help skills.

What to expect on your first day?

When you arrive at the centre you will be greeted by the Centre Director and Educators. You will be required to sign your child into the Kiosk then you will be shown through to your child's classroom where you can put their bag in to an allocated locker. This is the time to exchange information with Educators. Please ensure any medications needed for the day are handed directly to the Educator and a medication form will need to be completed.

When you arrive back to the centre to collect your child, walk in to the classroom and greet your child, collect your child's belongings (including medications), exchange information with the Educators about your child's day and say goodbye to the educators in the room. You will also need to sign your child out through the sign in/out kiosk.





General Information about our Early School

Below we have provided you with general information parents need to know about the centre before your child attends for their day of care.

Toys and personal treasures

Why it is important to keep special toys and personal treasures at home? At Pod we have chosen a wide range of developmentally appropriate equipment and toys for the children to play with throughout the day.

We would appreciate your support about our ideals and beliefs by encouraging children to leave their special toys and treasures at home. Cuddle or security toys are welcome but these items are required to be clearly named.

In older age groups "Show and Tell Rosters" are generally established so children can gain confidence and self esteem whilst talking in front of their peers. Items brought for "Show and Tell" purposes must be of an educational nature, clearly named and cannot be the responsibility of classroom staff.

Lost property

At our centre we provide containers for unnamed items and lost property. We suggest to parents to check these containers regularly as items that are uncollected will be donated to a local charity.

General accidents or injuries at the centre

In the event of a minor accident or injury that occurs at the centre, first aid will be administered by staff and a report will be written to document the accident or injury that occurred. This will include details of; the first aid treatment given and who administered the treatment, location of staff, structures or pieces of equipment involved, number of children present, and notification made to parents/guardians if the accident or incident was of a serious nature or the child needed to seek medical attention from a General Practitioner or medical facility.

If parents require a copy of this Accident or Injury Report please speak with your Centre Director.

Please note before Centre Directors can issue the Parent Copy of the Accident or Injury Report, the Approved Provider reserves the right to review the records. Prompt and reasonable time frames will be adhered to.

Serious accidents or injuries

If a more serious accident or injury occurs, the parents/guardians will be contacted immediately to discuss the situation and the course of action taken.

Please ensure the centre always has your correct and up-to-date emergency contact information in the unlikely event where parent/guardian notification is required.

Please note in an emergency situation, should the person in charge determine the injuries are serious enough to seek urgent medical attention or the injuries received are life threatening or detrimental to the child's safety and wellbeing, an ambulance will be called immediately. If the parent/guardian does not reach the centre in time and the ambulance must leave immediately to begin medical treatment of the child, a staff member familiar to the child will travel in the ambulance to provide comfort, familiarity, and protection and will stay with the child at the hospital or medical facility until the parent/guardian or emergency contact person has arrived.


Please note the cost of the ambulance transfer to the hospital and medical treatment provided during and post the emergency situation will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian or person legally responsible for the child.

All incident, injury, trauma and illness records are the property of the centre and legislatively and legally must be kept as an official record for several years. The information on these documents must be kept by the approved provider and may be needed to liaise with medical, government and external agencies.

Parents/guardians cannot take the original copy of the incident, injury, trauma and illness record for their records, but can make a request to the Centre Director for a Parent copy.

The Director in consultation with the Approved Provider will prepare a "Parents/Guardians Copy" which has all the information they require pertaining to their child's Incident, injury, trauma and illness record.

As incident, injury, trauma and illness records are legal documents, they must be signed by both staff and parents/guardians to confirm the recording and notification of the accident or incident that has occurred.



Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn

~O. Fred Donaldson

Visitors to Pod

From time to time, you will see new faces at the centre. Relief staff, volunteers and students are screened before participating in our daily activities and must adhere to our Centre Philosophy and policies whilst at the centre.

At no stage will a voluntary worker be left in charge of a group of children at our centre. The Educators will always be available and in times when staff are absent due to illness or holidays, familiar relief staff who have undertaken strict state based safety screenings and criminal history checks will be provided to maintain consistency and routine for the children so their care and education is not affected.

Excursions and performances

Excursions and performances will be arranged from time to time as part of your child's experience at the centre. Parents are encouraged to attend at any time and must sign and pay for their children to participate.

If an excursion occurs at the centre, excursion permission forms, excursion plans, risk minimisation plans and other related documentation will be on display for parents to read and complete before their child is allowed to go on the excursion. All excursions that are proposed for future implementation must be reviewed and approved by the Operations Manager to determine risk, safety standards, evacuation and emergency procedures and an assessment of the overall appropriateness of the planned experience.

Birthday celebrations

Birthdays and celebrations are a special time for children and staff to enjoy and celebrate. We encourage our families to celebrate their child's birthday at the centre.

Parents/guardians are welcome to organise and arrange a small celebration to be held in the classroom after prior consultation with classroom staff to discuss the logistics of the celebration.

If parents wish to bring a birthday cake or party food to the centre, careful consideration and planning must be undertaken by staff and the parent/guardian involved to determine if any children in their class group have food allergies, food intolerance or cannot eat cake or party food due to dietary, religious or medical reasons. Cakes purchased from registered food licensed premises are recommended due to ingredient listings provided on the packaging.

We encourage parents if they wish to provide birthday cake or party food to ensure it is simple and the ingredients used are not overloaded with sugar, artificial colours, flavours and enhancers they may affect the children's wellbeing.

A suggested practice commonly used at the centre is for the parent/guardian of the birthday child to make or purchase individual cupcakes to share with friends to celebrate the special occasion. The birthday child can have a candle placed on their individual cake (supervised by classroom staff and the parent/guardian) to minimise the spread of infection caused when the child excitedly blows out the candle.

The centre Chef can also assist you with providing a cake for a small fee. If you have any further questions in relation to birthday celebrations, please speak directly with the Centre Director.



Nominated authorised person to collect your child

Upon enrolment you have the opportunity to nominate an authorised person to collect your child in your absence. Changes to these authorised people can be made through written authorisation from the parent/guardian.

If an unauthorised person arrives to collect your child the responsible person in charge will contact the parent/guardian immediately. The unauthorised person will not be given access to any part of the centre until the parent/guardian gives verbal authorisation. If the parent gives verbal authorisation the staff member is to verify the identity of the person by sighting their photo identification. If the person is cleared to collect the child, the responsible person in charge must accompany them to the child, assist with the departure procedures and collection of belongings. If the parent does not give permission by phone for the child to be collected from the unauthorised person, the child must remain at the centre. The police will be contacted immediately if staff feel threatened in any way by the unauthorised person.

Court orders and parenting plans

Where there is a court order or parenting plan in place with specific access instructions relating to a parent/guardian, these instructions must be followed:

- The responsible person in charge will also follow the Custodial Action Plan for the particular child;
- If the non-custodial parent becomes aggressive or refuses to leave the premises, staff are required to restrict access to the rooms where possible and call the police;
- Families must provide the Centre Director with the most up to date information, court orders and parenting plans to ensure correct procedures are followed.

What if nobody arrives to collect a child?

If a child has not been collected from the centre by closing time and the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the responsible person in charge will:

- Phone the authorised emergency contact for the child to make arrangements;
- If the emergency contact persons cannot be contacted, the responsible person in charge will immediately phone the Approved Provider for authorisation to contact the local police;
- Contact the local police and or the relevant state Child Safety authority;
- Two educators will stay at the centre with the child until they are collected;

All children must be accompanied by a parent or responsible adult when arriving or departing the centre.

Please note that school age siblings cannot collect your child from the centre.

Centre Support Structure

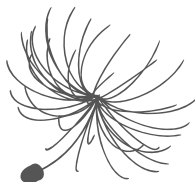
Classroom Educators are responsible for the day to day educational program, support and safety of your child.

Persons in day to day charge of the Service are responsible, fit and proper educators who have been appointed by the Nominated Supervisor to act on their behalf in their absence.

Centre Director/Nominated Supervisor is responsible for the day to day operational and centre matters, queries, or requests. Parent statement and account queries can also be addressed with the Centre Director or Centre Administrator.

The Approved Provider oversees the day to day operations and management of the core child care business and provides the policies, procedures and practices that underpin the centre's philosophy and goals. Further to this, they provide information and guidance to all centre staff to produce dynamic and innovative learning environments for the community.

The Approved Provider is responsible for and leads the operation and management of the whole child care business in terms of the financial, legal, licensing, approvals and operational responsibility.



Educational Program and Curriculum Implemented in our Classroom Environments

The education of a child begins at birth and there are many definitions about what “education” really means. We believe that education is the process in delivering and receiving systematic instructions, information and experiences to enable learning to occur. The education of a child is of the utmost importance and fostering a love of learning from a young age will start them off on their educational journey.

Children learn through play. As they explore and experience the world around them they are continually learning new skills and abilities. Given that every child that attends our centre has different skills and abilities and is at a different stage of development, we believe in providing all children with many learning opportunities that may come from a variety of curriculums, settings and theorists philosophies that promote exploration, curiosity and independence as a core learning belief.

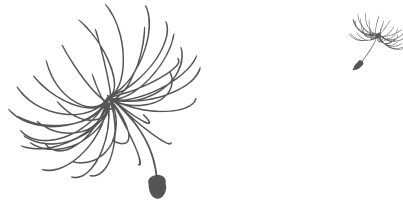
Educators create your child's learning journey through the use of visual portfolios. Observations are taken of your child and experiences they have participated in are documented.

The portfolios consist of:

- Observations
- Experiences your child has participated in
- Photos of your child
- Samples of meaningful artwork and project work
- Progress reports
- Lyrics of your child's favourite songs and nursery rhymes
- Recipes of messy play activities or your child's favourite meals at the centre

The Portfolios are freely available for families to view and contribute to. Families are regularly asked to fill out feedback forms, assisting educators to set yearly goals for their child or writing little letters for you and your child to reflect upon at the end of the year.

An Educational Program for the whole group is devised based on each child's needs and interests.



Approved Frameworks and Program Planning

We actively encourage all children to be part of one of the approved, interest based framework. Educators program in line with an approved framework to ensure a National Standard is maintained.

- Early Years Learning Framework (birth to school age)
- My Time Our Place (School aged Children)

The framework enables children to participate and become successful and confident learners through self-navigation and curiosity opportunities.

The Educational Curriculum will also be flexible, allowing children to make choices and navigate their own learning experiences.

Educators will guide the children's learning from birth to five years and assist with the transition phase of preparing them to enter a more formalised schooling environment (Prep year).

Where applicable, Educators will follow the My Time Our Place School Age Framework, which aims to extend and enrich children's wellbeing and development in school age care settings such as Vacation Care and Before/After School Care.

Our Educational Program incorporates and encompasses all state based legislation in terms of expectations with programming requirements for observing, interpreting the learning, planning for activities/learning/experiences, evaluating the learning and further planning concepts.

As part of our Educational Curriculum we focus on the 5 Learning Outcome Areas derived from the Early Years Learning Framework. These are:

- Outcome 1 Sense of Identity
- Outcome 2 Connected and Contribute to their World
- Outcome 3 Sense of Wellbeing
- Outcome 4 Confident and Involved Learning
- Outcome 5 Effective Communication

The Early Years Learning Framework describes the Early Childhood time as:

- **Belonging:** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and the centre;
- **Being:** is about living here and now. Early childhood is a special time and children need time to just be, time to just play, time to try new things and have fun;
- **Becoming:** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which helps to shape the type of person they will become within their community.

Our aim is to ensure by the time each child reaches the Kindergarten classroom (oldest aged classroom at the centre) that they are well prepared to continue their early learning journey into the formalised schooling setting (primary school).

A solid foundation is laid down in our Educational Programs in younger classrooms of the centre, and our programming formats and classroom routines become more structured as the child develops and moves through the centre.

We believe that children learn at their own pace, therefore our groupings of children for learning activities will reflect their developmental abilities and interests rather than their chronological ages.

The final year for children aged four to five is the year in which we will work intensively to prepare and promote "School Readiness" within our Kindergarten Program.





Teaching children about the natural world should be seen as one of the most important events in their lives

Thomas Berry, The Dream of the Earth



National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating

The aim of our centre is to provide high quality care and education that meets the needs of the families in the community. It is our commitment to work side by side with parents and share the role of caring and educating their children at this most important stage in life; the early years.

The centres operate under the National Quality Standard Assessment and Rating governed by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

For more information on the Assessment and Rating process please visit www.acecqa.gov.au.

All staff are required to actively participate in the Assessment and Rating Process at the centre. Staff are encouraged to work together and support one another during the lead up (Assessment and Rating preparation) and on the days of assessment. Our overall rating will be on display in our Centre Foyer and published on the My Child Website.

Important Centre Administration Information

Payment of centre fees

Upon enrolment at the centre, you will be given information outlining the fee structure and a Debit Success form to complete. Payment of the child's first week and an additional week's worth of care, at the child's weekly fee must be paid prior to the child commencing their enrolment at the centre.

It is the centre's policy that all accounts remain one week in advance at all times. Our centre's method of payment is by weekly Debit Success payments (automatic direct debit system) which ensures our customers are up-to-date with weekly payments.

If fees are not paid weekly or a customer's account is in arrears, management reserves the right to:

- Place the customer automatically on our Debit Success Program (if the customer is not already) to ensure successful and weekly payment occurs for the service used at the centre;
- Request payment in full to be paid within 3-5 working days;
- To terminate your child's enrolment and forward any unpaid accounts to a Debt Collection Agency to legally pursue any monies outstanding.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties please do not hesitate to contact the Centre Director to confidentially discuss.

Fee payment options available at our centre

Debit Success direct debiting service is provided as our preferred payment method allowing weekly fees to be debited directly from a savings or credit card account.

Please note that our centre is cashless therefore we cannot accept any payments made by cash.

Additional Charges (that can occur throughout the year)

- Special centre events
- Centre excursions and incursions
- Fundraising ventures

Cancelling your booking

We require 2 weeks advance notice in writing of any cancellation to your booking to enable us to fill the position with a family requiring care from our active centre waitlist.

Please note; full fees will be charged to your account in lieu of notice given. As per the Child Care Services (CSS) Handbook, any absences during this notice period will not attract CCS and full fees will be applied in these circumstances.

Your child's position may also be terminated where an enrolled child is absent from the centre for two weeks or more without prior written notice of the child taking holidays, or a phone call to the centre advising the Centre Director that the child is absent due to an illness.

Making changes to your booking

If you wish to make changes to your child's current booking (pattern), two weeks' notice in writing must be given to the Centre Director to process your request. This gives the Centre Director reasonable time to fill the position or days with another family requiring care from our current families attending the centre or a new family from our active centre waitlist.

Am I entitled to Government Assistance? Child Care Subsidy

To aid in the payment of child care fees, the Commonwealth Government (Centrelink – Family Assistance Office) has provided assistance to parents, called Child Care Subsidy (CCS). This assistance contributed by the Australian Government is designed to assist families towards the cost of childcare. Families using approved childcare are able to receive CCS towards the cost of their fees (if they are eligible and have been assessed via the Family Assistance Office). It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to register for CCS. You can access information and forms through www.humanservices.gov.au, your MyGov app or by calling 13 61 50 to speak with a Customer Service Officer.



CCSS (Child Care Subsidy System)

With the Government's Child Care Subsidy System, families are linked through our software program which interfaces with the Government's system to receive CCS payments and changes immediately.

The CCS information the centre is provided with has come directly from the Family Assistance Office via the CCSS system. If a parent/guardian disputes this information or believes it is not correct they will need to take this up with the Family Assistance Office as the Centre Director does not have access to make changes to this information.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligibility

To be eligible for the CCS, you must meet the following criteria:

- The child must be 13 years or younger (not in Secondary School);
- The child must meet immunisation requirements, and;
- The individual or partner must meet residency requirements.

There are 3 factors that will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy.

- Combined Family Income;
- Fortnightly Approved Activity Hours (Activity Test);
- Service Type – In our case it's an approved long day care centre that is eligible for funding.

Additional Child Care Subsidy may also be available to families, depending on their individual circumstances.

There are 4 areas to additional child care subsidy, these being:

- Child Wellbeing (Please speak with the Centre Director for eligibility)
- Grandparents (Please speak with Centrelink directly for eligibility)
- Temporary Financial Hardship (Please speak with Centrelink directly for eligibility)
- Transition to Work (Please speak with Centrelink directly for eligibility).

The Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to the centre, to reduce your out of pocket weekly/fortnightly costs.

Additional parent fact sheets regarding the Child Care Subsidy is available at the centre, as well as in our parent resource section on our website.

Absences from the centre

Parents/guardians are required to contact the centre if their child is unable to attend for the day. If your child is unable to attend due to a contagious illness, then notification must be made by the parent/guardian to the Centre Director to discuss the period the child will be absent.

CCS is paid in certain circumstances when a family is charged for care that their child does not attend. Absences are categorised into two groups: Absence Days and Additional Absence Days.

Absence days

CCS is paid for up to 42 absence days for each child per financial year across all approved LDC services, FDC services, IHC services and OSHC services. Absence days are referred to as 'Initial 42 Days Absence' in the family assistance law.

- Each child receives a new set of initial 42 Absence Days at the beginning of the financial year.
- These absence days can be taken for any reason provided the day being reported as an absence is a day on which care would have otherwise been provided.
- These absence days cannot be reported before a child has begun care or after a child has left care.

Additional absent days

Once all the first 42 absence days have been used CCS will also be payable for absences taken for the following reasons:

- Illness (with a medical certificate);
- Non-immunisation (with written evidence);
- Rostered days off/rotating shift work (with written evidence);
- Temporary closure of a school or pupil-free days;
- Periods of local emergency;
- Shared care arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan or parenting order (with copy of documentation);
- Attendance at Kindergarten;
- Exceptional circumstances.

Absence days taken for the above reasons, after the first 42 absence days have been used, are called 'Additional Absence Days'. There is no limit on the number of these days for which CCS may be paid, as long as the following occurs:

- They are taken for the reasons specified above;
- Supporting documentation (where required) is provided to the Centre Director;
- They are days on which care would otherwise have been provided.

CCS is payable for Additional Absence Days where a child, parent, sibling or another individual with whom the child lives is ill.

A medical certificate is required to support the payment of CCS in these cases. However, a parent on worker's compensation, or a parent or child with a medical certificate specifying that he/she has a long term illness, does not need a separate medical certificate for each absence day.

Once the initial 42 absence days are used, CCS can only be paid for absences due to illness where supporting documentation is provided. You must ensure you keep copies of this documentation.





Public holidays

Public holidays will be counted as an absent day if:

- The child would normally have attended the centre on that day if it were not a public holiday and;
- Fees have been charged in respect of the absent child for the day;
- CCS is payable for public holidays at the normal rate.

On return to the centre after any absence, parents/guardians must speak with the Centre Director or classroom staff to sign the attendance sheets/kiosk indicating a reason why the child was away to ensure that Child Care Subsidy is given if eligible and applied during the absence.

Please note: as the centre is not aware of the day a public holiday falls each calendar year, it is the policy of the centre to charge the "normal fee" for all public holidays that occur each calendar year at the centre.

- For more information on the above topics please contact the Family Assistance Office at: www.humanservices.gov.au
- For families who require a Family Assistance Office Multilingual Telephone Service please call: 13 12 02

Illness absence from the centre

If your child is absent from the centre due to illness, fees are still payable regardless of whether a medical certificate is supplied or not. There are no discounts available for illness related absences at the centre. If your child is absent due to illness you are required to log this via the kiosk on your child's next day of attendance to legally verify the record.

Holiday absence from the centre

If you request for your child to have a holiday absence from the centre, you are required to give two weeks' notice in writing to the Centre Director via a letter, email or by filling out the Holiday Folder located on the front counter or in the Centre Director's office. If this required notice is provided by the parent/guardian and is approved, the Centre Director will apply the centre's reduced holiday daily fee.

Please note: if your account is not up-to-date or the account is in arrears, the Centre Director reserves the right not to apply the reduced holiday rate which is offered by the company as a "good faith" gesture.

If you require more information on this matter please speak with your Centre Director.

Please note: that families are only entitled to take Holidays at the reduced full fee rate as per the below table per calendar year:

- Children booked in 5 days a weeks are entitled to take 4 weeks' worth of five days which is equal to 20 days in total;
- Children booked in 4 days a weeks are entitled to take 4 weeks' worth of four days which is equal to 16 days in total;
- Children booked in 3 days a weeks are entitled to take 4 weeks' worth of three days which is equal to 12 days in total;
- Children booked in 2 days a weeks are entitled to take 4 weeks' worth of two days which is equal to 8 days in total;
- Children booked in 1 day a weeks are entitled to take 4 weeks' worth of one day which is equal to 4 days in total.

Late fee

We ask for your cooperation in dropping off and collecting children within your booked childcare sessional hours. If at any time you have an emergency and are going to be delayed, please contact the centre immediately to report to centre staff and discuss other possible arrangements to collect your child by other nominated emergency contact people.

Please note traffic delays do not constitute a reported emergency and it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to make alternative arrangements and collect their child within the operating hours of the centre.

A Late Fee will apply to all children after closing hours. Parents/Guardians will be charged \$1.00 per minute per child. If a child remains at the centre half an hour after closing time and the parents/authorised nominee's cannot be contacted, the Responsible Person in day to day charge will report to the Approved Provider who will approve for the Responsible Person to contact Child Safety and the local police.

Session times

To ensure families are maximising their Child Care Subsidy hours and to reduce out of pocket costs, our centre offers the following session times.

Session	Session Time	Grace Period	Additional Charges
All Day	Open - Close	N/A	N/A
10 Hour	7:30am-5:30pm	30mins each side	\$5 per 30mins each side
9 Hour	8am-5pm	20mins each side	\$5 per 20mins each side

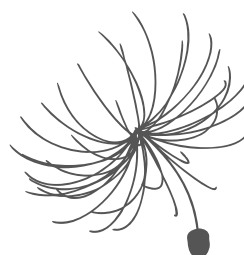
Families are encouraged to speak with the Nominated Supervisor to discuss what session time best suits their family.

What is the grace period?

We understand family schedules can sometimes get complicated by unplanned delays, so we're offering a grace period either side of your daily session time for arrivals and departures. Families utilising our all-day session, which runs for the duration of our centre's opening hours are exempt from the grace period.

Additional charges for session times

Families who drop off or collect after their session time grace period will be charged an early drop off or late collection administration charge of \$5 for each 30 minute period outside of the grace period.





Child Care Policies and Procedures

Priority of Access Guidelines for the Centre

The Australian Government has Priority of Access Guidelines for allocating and prioritising placement in a long day care centre.

In some communities, the demand of child care sometimes exceeds the amount of available places a centre can offer.

When this happens, it is important for services to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for child care support.

The Australian Government Priority Access Guidelines supports this process of allocating places in these circumstances.

They set out the following three levels of priority, which child care services must follow when filling vacant places:

- Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2 – a child of single parent who satisfies or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999
- Priority 3 – any other child

If you require more information about the Priority of Access Guidelines visit: www.education.gov.au/priority-filling-child-care-places

Other areas where Priority Access should also be given:

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families;
- Children in families which include a disabled person;
- Children in families on low incomes;
- Children in families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- Children in socially isolated families;
- Children of single parents.

These are some circumstances in which a child who is already in a child care service may be required to leave the service. Where a service has no vacant places and is providing child care for a child who is a Priority 3 under the Priority of Access Guidelines, the service may require that child to leave the child care service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child.

This will occur but only if;

- The person who is liable to pay child care fees in respect of the child was notified when the child first occupied the child care place that the service followed this policy; and
- The service gives that person at least 14 days notice of the requirements for the child to leave the child care service.





Centre Policies and Procedures Implemented at Pod Early School

At our centre we have an extensive list of policies that help support and guide our practices. It is important for a centre to enforce and implement these practices and strategies within the policies to ensure the highest standard of care and education is given to the children and families that attend our centre.

As we have so many different and diverse policies that we follow at the centre, listed below is just some information taken from some of our most important policies to promote our best practice standards and to ensure our learning environments are safe and suitable for the children in our care.

Should you wish to review any of our policies please speak with your Centre Director who can show you where to locate the Centre Policy Folder.

Multicultural Awareness Policy

Our program is committed to multicultural education. This means we share a commitment to human rights, dignity of the individual and social justice.

We strive to create a program that reflects the diverse lives of our children, families, and staff within our community. We seek to recognise, appreciate and respect the uniqueness of each child.

Non-Bias, Diversity and Equity Policy

We aim to provide opportunities for girls and boys to play freely regardless of the stereotype of the roles they choose. We actively encourage all children to explore and be curious and independent thinkers within the learning environment.

Rest Time Policy

All children are required to have a special designated time within the program to relax, rest and revive their bodies and minds.

It is our policy that if a child falls asleep during this period they are in obvious need of a rest and will not be woken up or kept awake unless they have been asleep for some time. Some children (particularly older children) may not need sleep, but are still required to rest and revive their bodies and minds to prepare for the afternoon session of the Educational Program.

It is a legislative requirement that we provide children an opportunity to rest and recuperate after a being actively involved in learning.

Children who do not sleep during rest periods will be provided with quiet time activities such as books, puzzles, arts and crafts to complete whilst their peers are sleeping or resting.



Toileting and Hand Washing Policy

Children are encouraged to go to the toilet individually and independently if possible. During the toilet training process, staff will support all toilet training attempts and positively encourage and praise all efforts made by the child.

It is an important part of the toilet training process that children are given regular opportunities to attempt toileting whilst being provided with emotional support, understanding, patience and empathy.

Parents/guardians and centre staff are encouraged to exchange information in relation to toileting success and toileting attempts and work together to support the child through the process.

Information regarding toilet training can be found at the centre. Ask one of our friendly Educators who can assist you with our fact sheets.

Nutrition Policy (Centre Provided Food)

There is now strong evidence that childhood nutrition has a lasting effect on many aspects of a child's health and wellbeing. Children need fresh, nutritional food and well balanced meals.

It is a policy of the centre to actively promote and encourage healthy eating and discussion during various meal times throughout the day.

It is important as part of this learning process to encourage children to make independent healthy food choices, learn about nutrition and to be active to maintain a healthy lifestyle balance. Our menus are carefully designed to ensure daily nutritional requirements are catered for. We continually seek feedback on our menus, so please ensure these are discussed with the Centre Director and Centre Chef.

Parent Grievance and Complaint Handling Process

Our Centre Director works very hard to oversee and manage the child care centre. We encourage you to speak with them directly if you have any queries as they are the best person to assist you in resolving any outstanding matters.

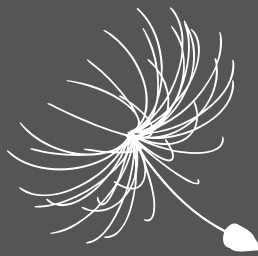
Parents are requested to raise any queries they may have regarding their child's daily care and education with the educator in charge of the classroom. If you feel the matter has not been resolved by the educator in charge, we encourage you to speak with the Centre Director who will ensure the matter is dealt with in a respectful, professional, and prompt manner as per our Grievance and Complaints Policy.

Our Centre Director is fully trained and experienced in operating the education and care centre whilst overseeing and managing the day to day operational tasks.

After this process is completed and you feel the matter is not fully resolved you are most welcome to contact the Approved Provider who can assist and help mediate staff matters to facilitate a positive and happy outcome for all.

The Centre Director will provide you with the contact details for the Approved Provider.





Parent communication at Pod

From time to time, important information needs to be communicated to our families at the centre. The following strategies are used to communicate with families that attend our centre:

- Communication via our bi-monthly Newsletters;
- Parent feedback and input forms;
- Parent surveys and questionnaires;
- Notices or letters given directly to families;
- Information;
- E-mails;
- Parent meetings;
- Signs and posters placed around the centre;
- Phone calls;
- Shared online platforms;
- Centre website;
- Centre Facebook page.

Communicating with families

It is the policy of the centre that staff develop warm and positive relationships with families and children in our care. Staff communicate daily with parents as an important part of connecting with families, knowing the child better, and developing a whole picture of the child in the context of family and the community.

Communication strategies

It is important to us to lay the foundations for strong partnerships with the families that attend the centre. This is achieved by:

- Ensuring that staff clearly convey to families that we value our relationship with them. Right from orientation of new families, staff seek information about the child and their background, likes and dislikes and individual needs so that they can provide appropriate experiences;
- Demonstrating to families an ongoing interest and concern for their child. Staff share stories with families about each child's day, their achievements and any changes in behaviour that parents should be aware of;
- Learning about cultural and religious backgrounds of all families so that staff can communicate appropriately with all families respecting specific individual needs.

Centre health, hygiene and medication

To minimise the risk of infection at our centre we follow the practices and recommendations as outlined in "Staying Healthy in Childcare Guidelines". It is the policy of our centre to allow our Centre Director to make decisions to manage infection control measures to ensure a safe and suitable environment.

If the Centre Director believes there is reasonable evidence of a suspected infectious illness of a child at the centre, the parents/guardians will be contacted and asked to collect the child immediately to minimise the risk of the suspected illness spreading through the centre.

It is vital that parents understand the importance of adhering to this policy as the health, safety and wellbeing of the children and staff at our centre is our first priority. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that if they are unable to collect their ill child, immediate arrangements are made for an emergency contact person to do so.

Epidemics of infectious illnesses such as Whooping Cough, Diphtheria, Poliomyelitis, Measles, Mumps and Rubella (German measles) have been rare in recent years as most people in the community have been immunised against these illnesses to protect their health and wellbeing.

If an outbreak of any of the diseases listed in the infectious disease schedule occurs within the centre, all families will be notified. We know that parents will understand and support our endeavors and agree that the containment of infectious illnesses and control measures put in place is a serious and urgent matter.

In an environment where so many children and adults are in constant contact with each other, we must put in place strict and concise guidelines around keeping all children, staff and visitors safe and well whilst in attendance at the centre. We believe it is a reasonable request to ask our parents to keep ill children at home, as it is extremely difficult for staff to provide the appropriate care for sick children whilst ensuring the safety and care of the other children who remain at the centre. We believe if a child is sick and need of medical attention, it is a priority for the child to be at home or somewhere quiet, where they can rest and recuperate.

Clearance letter or medical certificate

A clearance letter or medical certificate from your child's General Practitioner is required to confirm that the child is well enough to return to the centre.

Teaching children about the natural world should be seen as one of the most important events in their lives.

Thomas Berry, The Dream of the Earth

Immunisation Policy

On 1 January 2016 a new Queensland law came into effect. This law means: approved early childhood education and care services can refuse enrolment or attendance of children whose immunisations are not up to date.

Pod Early School supports this legislation and we are committed to the health and wellbeing of our staff, children and families. We encourage everyone to make sure their vaccinations are up to date.

To enrol your child and ensure their attendance at the service we require an immunisation history statement showing a child's immunisation status is up to date:

- upon enrolment
- throughout attendance (within four weeks of passing the vaccination milestones)

The only exemptions are where a child has a documented medical contraindication or is on a recognised vaccination catch-up schedule, so it is important that your child is vaccinated on the due date as outlined in the National Immunisation Program Schedule Queensland.

Diarrhoea and Vomiting

Diarrhoea and vomiting are contagious, and it is our policy that if your child is suffering from either of these, regardless of the cause, they must not attend the centre. This means that if your child has loose bowel motions or has vomited before leaving home in the morning they are unable to attend the centre.

We can appreciate that it may be caused by something the child ate, teething issues or an unsettled stomach, however a General Practitioner is the only person qualified to diagnose these suspected illnesses.

We often find that a child, who has been sick in the morning for whatever reason, usually presents the symptoms throughout the day and the child's health rapidly deteriorates which often results in the Centre Director contacting the parent/guardian to collect the ill child.

It is our recommendation with the amount of serious contagious illnesses in young children that you seek medical opinion from the General Practitioner.

If a child becomes unwell at the service and they have been sent home with loose bowel movements or vomiting they can return to the centre 24 hours after their last symptoms have occurred.



Medications

All medication brought to the centre must be clearly marked with the child's name and the dosage clearly recorded on the label. The medication must have a pharmaceutical label.

Please do not leave medication of any nature in the classroom or in your child's bag. All medication should be placed in the locked medication box or be given to your child's classroom Lead Educator.

The centre provides lockable containers to house both refrigerated and non-refrigerated medications. Please ask the classroom staff for assistance in the storage of your child's medication.

Prescribed medications will only be administered if the pharmaceutical label is current, intact and the instructions or recommended dosage guidelines can be easily read. The medication must not be past its expiry date and the medication must clearly have the child's name written on it. Medication will only be administered to the person specified on the label and all General Practitioners directions will be strictly adhered to.

Non-prescribed medication such as Dimetapp, Demizon and Panadol will only be administered as per the recommended guidelines provided by the pharmaceutical company who manufactures and produces the medication.

Medication Forms must be completed before any medication will be administered. Please discuss the correct process of filling out the required legal documentation, with the classroom staff on arrivals and departures. Information must be clear and specific in order for medication to be administered.

In cases of a child's temperature rising above 38°C, parents will always be contacted to discuss their child's wellbeing and if collection of the child should occur.

If your child should get a high temperature whilst at the centre, it is our policy to firstly try to reduce high temperatures in children by:

- Removing articles of clothing to naturally allow the child's temperature to decrease;
- Sponge bathing to cool down a child with cool water to help assist the body to naturally reduce the temperature;
- Providing the child with additional water to drink to keep hydrated.

If these methods to bring down the child's temperature fail to remedy the situation the child's parent/guardian or authorised nominee will be contacted to collect the child and seek a further medical opinion.

In exceptional circumstances where the Centre Director cannot contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact person; the Centre Director will administer the child an "emergency" dose of Panadol to relieve the child's pain, discomfort or symptoms. If the Centre Director can get on to an emergency contact or parent, authorisation over the phone to administer the Panadol can be arranged.

The Centre Director will still continue to contact the parent/guardian or emergency contact person until someone can be reached to immediately collect the child to seek a further medical opinion.

Other exceptional circumstances may include parents/guardians on route to the centre to collect their unwell child but may be travelling a significant distance to get there.

The "emergency" dose of Panadol is to be issued by the Centre Director only and the dosage will be based on the age of the child as stated on the manufacturers label on the back of the bottle. This must be written up in the classroom Medication Folder and upon collection the parent of the child must sign to acknowledge the "emergency" dosage has been administered.

The "emergency" dosage of Panadol cannot be approved or administered because the parent does not wish to:

- Leave work to collect their child;
- Leave study to collect their child;
- Leave a social event, engagement or prearrange appointment to collect their child.

The child's safety and wellbeing will always be our first priority. The Centre Director reserves the right to make the decision on exceptional circumstances if they believe an "emergency" dosage is the best solution to relieve the child's pain, discomfort or symptom until the parent/guardian or emergency contact person arrives to collect the child.

It will be at the Centre Directors discretion as to whether an emergency dose of Panadol should be administered; or to call an ambulance is the best course of action to take, depending on the individual circumstances.



Hygiene practices at the centre

Correct hand washing procedures are implemented at the centre by children and staff as per the centres "Toileting and Hand Washing Policy".

Children are supervised at all times whilst washing their hands before and after meals and after toileting transitions, toileting attempts and after individual nappy changing transitions.

Behaviour management and positive behaviour guidance

Our Behaviour Guidance Policy is centered on the importance of respect and dignity given to each child, acknowledging and accepting children's feelings and encouraging these feelings to be expressed.

Steps that we take towards establishing good behaviour guidance include:

- Setting and maintaining appropriate limits and age appropriate consequences relevant to the occurred behaviour;
- Explaining the appropriate uses of materials and equipment and placing reasonable and age appropriate expectations on their intended uses and implementation in the classroom environment;
- Reinforcing positive behaviour with praise, rewards and responsibility;
- Explaining why a behaviour is inappropriate or unacceptable and providing acceptable options or choices in line with age and developmental ranges;
- Offering children choices and encouraging decision making amongst peers, by setting realistic expectations which are age and developmentally appropriate to meet the needs of the children in the group.

Strong relationships are built on mutual trust, respect and understanding. Relationships cannot be hurried as they take time to build. Families have to 'live' these qualities in their daily encounters with educators in order to believe in them'

~ Anne Stonehouse AM.





Reporting disclosures of harm or suspected harm

The centre is committed to ensuring that the safety and wellbeing of children and young people is paramount.

It is the policy of the centre that staff make an immediate notification to the relevant Child Protection Agency, Department of Education and local police station depending on the situation if they suspect that a child is at risk of harm or has been harmed. This includes the mandatory reporting required for the death of a child or a serious injury sustained whilst in care at the centre. Staff will participate in regular training on their responsibilities relating to Child Protection issues.



Learning Support and Additional Need Requirements

We aim to provide an environment that protects and facilitates inclusion where there are no limits or expectations placed on children who attend the centre on the basis of gender, equity, equality, background, religion, special needs or special requirements. Upon enrolling your child at our centre, it is important to discuss with us any special/additional needs, diagnosed medical conditions, pending medical diagnosis or special requirements that your child may need. This is to ensure our centre staff can support and assist them to confidently commence enrolment at the centre.

It is important that upon enrolling your child in the centre that we meet with you and your child to provide us with the opportunity to introduce ourselves. Thus we begin to lay the foundation to establish a trusting relationship/bond with your child prior to their commencement at the centre. This also helps to settle the child and alleviate any anxiety they may have as well as providing us with a better understanding of their individual needs and requirements. We believe in the importance of planning to ensure we consider the needs of the child, so it is important to us to gather as much information as possible from any related medical professionals such as Doctors, Paediatricians, Occupational and Speech Therapists, Support Workers, Respite Workers etc. It also provides us with an opportunity to organise any supportive material or aids required and to begin the process of establishing a positive professional relationship with support workers to ensure positive outcomes for the child.

We appreciate any assistance you can give us during this process by supplying us with all the required medical reports, therapy plans, action plans or recommend advice that we will need to develop an Inclusion Support Plan for your child and discuss our recommendations. It is important to us to promptly gather all this information, to allow time to contact relevant medical professionals or inclusion agencies to begin the process of enrolment.



*“The intention of the learning environment
is to give children exposure to a range of
materials, resources and experiences that give
them practice in skill refinement, in language
development, in creativity, and in play.”*

Kathy Walker



📍 Cnr Tudor St & Logan Rd, Mount Gravatt

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