



Ballina River Street Preschool's Family Handbook

Quality Area 6: Collaborative Partnerships with Families

2022

Welcome | Our Family Handbook provides important information you need to know to ensure the best possible start to quality education and care at Ballina River Street Children's Centre Inc- Preschool

We strongly recommend you read the provided information and ask questions to confirm your understanding of how our service operates. You will be required to sign and return the form on the last page of the handbook to confirm you have read and understand the information you have been given in your enrolment pack.

We have an open-door policy and you and your family are welcome to visit our Preschool at any time. We do ask that you call before coming into Preschool, as keeping children and staff safe is our highest priority. Due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic, we have restricted access to the Preschool to minimise the risks of transmission. This does not mean no access and we can arrange times for meetings with Teachers or the Preschool Director. Please call the Preschool 66864615 to arrange.

HISTORY OF OUR PRESCHOOL

River Street Children's Centre has operating for over 40 years. It began operating at this location (12 River St) in 1980 in a small "cottage", originally a NSW Maritime Services Board residence. The cottage, since then, has undergone extensive renovation and extension in response to the growth of Ballina and was officially opened, as it exists now, on 27 November 1993, by Ms June Wangman, who at the time, was the Head of Studies at the Institute of Early Childhood Macquarie University.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY MANAGED CHILDREN'S CENTRE?

Ballina River Street Children's Centre Inc. is a community-based children's service (Preschool), not a private business. The Preschool is **managed by a Parent Committee** consisting of elected representatives from the Annual General Meeting held at the beginning of each year, to which all parents and staff are invited.

The Management Committee, consists of parents and community members:

- the Executive team – President, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President,
- and three other elected parent representatives,

The Parent Management Committee has the responsibility, along with the Preschool Director, of the total management of the Preschool. Obligations relating to the management are of a legal, financial, employment and policy nature. The Preschool's Management will focus on sustaining a preschool service that reflects quality practices as opposed to focus on profit margins.

The Preschool Service is registered as an Incorporated Association under the 'Associations' Incorporation Act 2009' which provides the legal identity for an organisation such as this.

We rely on parents, carers, and community members to be a part of our Management Committee. Without people volunteering to be a committee member we are unable to operate the Preschool service.

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Preschool Information

We are a Community Based Preschool which is a non-for-profit organisation that is governed by a Parent Management. We provide an educational learning environment for children aged 3 years to 5 years. We open from 8:00am and close at 3:30pm Monday to Friday (40 weeks of the year).

Preschool is CLOSED for Term breaks and on Public Holidays.

Notice will be given of the school terms and public holidays at the beginning of the year in our newsletters and on the preschool notice board & children's communication folders. These folders are bright coloured and have children's names on them and are found near the sign in area. They can be checked for preschool information, invitations from other families, fee invoices and information requests from the office re- immunisation updates or more general communication. So please check your folder regularly 😊.

We have 3 Preschool Classrooms, and children are allocated into a room based on availability of days and age of the child at the time of enrolment.

We have priority of access guidelines which our preschool must adhere to in line with our funding Guidelines and agreement with the NSW Department of Education. Refer to our Enrolment Policy.

Contact Information

Address: 12 River Street (PO BOX 346) BALLINA NSW 2478

Phone: 02 66864615

Email: brscc@bigpond.com

Website: www.riverstreetpreschool.com.au

Instagram: river_street_preschool_

Management Structure

Approved Provider: *Ballina River Street Children's Centre Inc- Parent Management Committee*

Nominated Supervisor: *Maxine Smith*

Director: *Maxine Smith*

Assistant Director: *Carly Smith*

Educational Leader & early Childhood Teacher: *Carly Smith*

Our Preschool Team



Carly Smith
Educational Leader
Assistant Director/Early
Childhood Teacher



Maxine Smith Preschool
Director/Early Childhood
Teacher



Lisa Ledgard
Early Childhood Teacher



Emily Betts
Diploma Educator



Claire Wood
River Room Leader
Diploma Educator



Melissa Layton
Diploma Educator



Douglas Egan
Diploma Educator



Sheree Hyslop –
Diploma Educator



Lisa Rabbitt
Educator

Educator



Jenny Hayes
Diploma Educator



Tracey Wheeler
Administration Officer

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Our Preschool is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times whilst being educated and cared for by early childhood teachers and educators.

Our Preschool is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times, whilst they are being educated and cared for at Ballina River Street Preschool. We promote a child safe environment that minimises the risk to all children in our care from all types of abuse, harm, and neglect. We understand our responsibilities and statutory duty of care to adopt and comply with the National Principles of a Child Safe Organisation and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to build our capacity as an organisation to prevent and respond to allegations of child abuse.

Our Teachers and Educators carry out their responsibilities as mandatory reporters as required by law under the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection Act 1998) and maintain up to date knowledge of child protection law and complete child protection training.

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

We have a zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards children and any breach of child protection law. Any allegation or concern will be responded to promptly by management. We request that you contact our Nominated Supervisor Maxine Smith if you have any concerns. Phone 66864615 or email brscc@bigpond.com

Code of Conduct

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

Our teachers, educators, and staff

Our Preschool is made up of a team of high-quality professional Teachers and educators who are committed to and are passionate about early childhood education and care. Our teachers and educators promote the human rights, safety and wellbeing of all children and consider and respect the diverse backgrounds and needs of children.

We create an environment that promotes and enables children's participation and is welcoming, culturally safe and inclusive for all children and their families.

Our teachers and educators are continually evaluating how our curriculum meets the educational needs of our children and reflecting on ways to improve children's learning and development and continually engage in research and professional development. Our educational leader and early childhood teachers guide our educators in providing quality, research based educational programs.

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

All teachers are accredited under the Australian Professional standards for teachers and complete ongoing professional development which is approved by (NESA) NSW Education Standards Authority.

Our Early Childhood Teachers are accredited at Proficient level demonstrating achievement of all standards descriptions.

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

All teachers, educators, and staff hold valid Working with Children Checks have current ACECQA approved First Aid, Emergency Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications.

In line with the Public Health Order, It is a requirement that all early childhood education and care staff, visitors, students and contractors visiting our preschool service, are fully vaccinated with two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination. (Booster vaccinations are highly recommended at this time).

National Quality Framework

Our Preschool Service complies with the Australian Government's National Quality Framework (NQF) which consists of the legislative framework of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and the assessment and rating system. Our educational program and curriculum are based on the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). We regularly self-assess our practices against the National Quality Standard and strive for continuous improvement through our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) we currently use the Self-Assessment – working document. The QIP assists our preschool service to identify quality aspects of education and care we are already providing and assists in developing future goals for further improvement. Families are welcome to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Additional information about the NQF can be found at [ACECQA/nqf/about](https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about)

Regulatory Authority

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

NEW SOUTH WALES

Early Childhood Education Directorate

NSW Department of Education phone: 1800 619 113

Locked Bag 5107 PARRAMATTA NSW 2124

www.education.nsw.gov.au/ email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

Educator to child ratios (NSW)

We comply with the National Regulations for educator to child ratios across our Service to ensure adequate supervision is provided for all children. Ratios are calculated across the service (not by individual rooms). This provides us with flexibility to respond to children's interests and needs at different times during the day.

AGE OF CHILDREN:

36 months up to and including preschool age

EDUCATOR TO CHILD RATIOS:

1:10

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was developed to ensure all children in early childhood education and care settings across Australia, experience quality teaching and learning through play-based, holistic learning. The EYLF is made up of learning outcomes, principles, and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning. Fundamental to the EYLF is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming*.

From before birth children are connected to family, community, culture, and place. Their earliest development and learning take place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.

BELONGING

Experiencing *belonging* – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood, and a wider community. Belonging acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

BEING

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

BECOMING

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills, and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. Becoming reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

The framework conveys the highest expectations for children's learning from birth to five years and through transitions to school. The expectations are communicated through the five overall learning outcomes.

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

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

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

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active community participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

- Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, enquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learned from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, place, technologies and natural and processed materials

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

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

Educational Program

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

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

We know that children learn effectively through play and teachers and educators support this learning responding to the play environment with open ended questions, allowing children time to respond and to come up with ideas or thoughts about the play, at times this can also lead to investigations and projects as children wonder about their world. Teachers and Educator plan and organise intentional teaching activities to provide the children with an authentic and meaningful learning environment that challenges, supports and nurtures a child's development.

If we as Teachers and educators have any areas of concern about your child's development, our child's teacher will inform you and share our assessment of your child's development and may advise you of the need to seek further assistance e.g. speech therapy. When children receive extra support at this preschool age through early intervention support from a Speech therapist or occupational therapists this benefits their development and learning skills to increase and supports them to transition successfully into Big school program. Teachers are willing to discuss any aspect of learning and development with parents and support discussions with allied health professional's workers.

Goals for your child at our Preschool

“Observe and listen to children because when they ask why? They are not simply asking for the answer from you. They are requesting the courage to find a collection of possible answers. – Loris Malaguzzi

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

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

We will create a range of short and long-term goals for your child that we will program to and observe on which will be based on the outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework and include:

- mutual respect and empathy
- concern and responsibility for self and others
- a sense of self worth
- social awareness
- importance of sustainability
- self-discipline and self-regulation
- habits of initiative and persistence

- creative intelligence and imagination
- self-confidence as an independent learner
- a love of learning.

We strongly encourage communication between families and educators to ensure continuity in what we are delivering to your child and acknowledge that the role of the educator is to work in partnership with families, children's first, and most influential educators.

Documentation of Learning/ Portfolios

Educators observe children and facilitate their learning to provide each child with a personal, confidential portfolio by documenting their learning throughout the year. Our Preschool uses a variety of documentation to demonstrate learning which may include:

- your child's profile
- goals from families and educators
- observations- learning stories, captioned photos
- objectives for further development
- work samples- drawings, photos, recorded video
- checklists and transition statements.

The individual child's portfolio is maintained and used as a direct tool for evaluation and future planning within the Preschool's program. This makes the program reflect the value of individuality and is not used as a means of comparison between peers or stereotypes. You will be given your child's portfolio at the end of the preschool year or as they finish at the Preschool. The portfolio will be used in parent/educator meetings throughout the year and is always available for you to review at your convenience.

Communication

We work in partnership with you and your family. We support and encourage communication with your child's educators about your child's unique needs and their general enjoyment of their day at our Preschool. Everybody has a preferred time and method of communication. Sometimes, mornings and afternoons can be a little rushed, and not the best time to discuss your child's progress. You are encouraged to talk to our Nominated Supervisor/Preschool Director or email the preschool brscc@bigpond.com to arrange to meet your child's Teacher at a mutually convenient time.

Our Preschool uses the Story Park App to provide families with updates about their child or events at Preschool.

We also use many other types of communication which include:

- Newsletters
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Letters/invitations – Children's folders
- Face to face conversation
- Mid-year and End of year interviews
- Formal meetings

Enrolment Information

Prior to your child commencing at our Preschool, you'll be required to complete an enrolment form, provide documentation and pay the administration and membership fee.

Enrolment Form

If you require assistance completing the enrolment form, please contact our Nominated Supervisor or reception staff for assistance.

We will require a copy of your child's birth certificate or passport, and immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register. This must show that your child is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR your child is on a recognised vaccine catch up schedule OR has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

Please note, the names written on the enrolment form must match the names on your child's birth certificate to meet legal requirements.

Family law and access

Our Preschool will uphold any responsibilities or obligations in relation to Family Law and access to the Preschool. We require certified copies of any court order, parenting orders or parenting plans, relating to your child and request that if situations change, a copy of the Court Order is provided to our Preschool. We will only allow children to leave the Preschool with the written permission of the custodial parent/guardian. Without a Court Order we cannot stop a parent collecting a child.

Authorised Nominees

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

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

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

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

Authorisations

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

Excursions / Regular Outings – Public Library visits

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

are planned. Our regular excursion is a visit to the Ballina Public Library which is located next door to Preschool. Transport is by walking. Preschool will provide families with information about any excursions that we have planned or any Incursion events – such as Circus days with Shorty Brown the clown, Drumming with Gareth or visits from the Wildlife Twins.

Photographs, social media, and Story Park

As part of the enrolment process, we will also ask for your permission to take photographs and video of your child during normal activities and excursions for sharing with our parent community through our daily Program and/or through Story Park, we do not show children on our Instagram or Facebook sites as we value their privacy and consider the child protection risks and we wish to keep all children safe from harm. We Do not allow families to take photos of their child or children within the Preschool premise for the protection of All children and keeping their identity safe. Photographs and video may also be used as part of our observation and programming process, but these will only be shared through the Story Park App and as a printed copy to go in the child's journal.

Medical conditions- Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes or Epilepsy

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

Our Preschool requires a Medical Management Plan or ASCIA Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan to be completed by your General Practitioner to assist in managing your child's needs. This needs to be provided prior to your child's commencement at the Preschool. In consultation with the Nominated Supervisor and/or child's Teacher, you will be asked to develop Medical Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan to assist our educators and staff. Any prescribed medication that your child may require must be provided each day they attend our Preschool.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child, please update your child's Medical Management Plan/ Action Plan every 12 months or whenever a change in their medication or treatment occurs. (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) (ASCIA).

Diagnosed disability

If your child has a diagnosed disability, please speak to our Nominated Supervisor prior to enrolment.

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

We aim to develop and sustain supportive relationships with families and encourage discussions about how we can support your child to have equitable access to resources and participation. If your child has a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) package, we may need your consent to for any specialised services and/or therapists to contact Preschool. The support team who are working with your child, may need to schedule a visit to Preschool to observe your child engaging with other children and to seek information or to provide information to preschool regarding your child's NDIS goals and learning plan to support continuity of learning. We are a busy preschool, and we have an outstanding learning program for all children, this program is delivered by University Trained Early Childhood Teachers, and we would like to ask that families do not schedule therapist visits at preschool. All visits by support therapists must be scheduled through the office and be at a time that is best arranged for the observation of the child within the Preschool program. Visits are limited at Preschool to lessen the disruption to the preschool program. Our Preschool may be able to apply for additional support by applying for funding under the NSW Department of Education - Disability and Inclusion Program.

Fees

Our daily fee is subsidised by the NSW State Government – this allows for 2 days of fee free preschool for families

- if your child attends for a third day – the Daily Fee is \$30
- \$15 a term – Fund Raising Levy (voluntary contribution) this money is used to pay for the Inclusions such as the Circus Day, visit to preschool by Wildlife Twins – Reptile show and Drumming

Payment methods

Direct Bank Deposit or Cash are the only methods of payment. Invoices/receipts can be found in your child's communication folder.

Withdrawal from care/Reducing Enrolment Days

We require children to be enrolled for 2 days of Preschool this provides children to access the Educational Program within their class group and to develop the skills required to transition successfully into Big School.

We ask families to give **2 weeks** written notice to withdraw their child as this allows their teacher to gather the child's documentation and for families to finalise all arrangements with Preschool.

Service Closing Time

Our preschool closing time is 3:30pm and we appreciate if families can arrive before this time to collect their child.

Waiting list

Third Day Permanent waiting list: If you would like to increase your child/ren's days from 2 to 3 but there are no permanent vacancies, your child/ren will be placed on a waiting list until a position becomes available. Positions will be allocated in order of application.

Priority of Access Guidelines

Our Preschool is required to give equal priority of access to:

- Children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and not enrolled or registered at a school
- Children who are at least 3 years old on or before the 31 July in that preschool year and from low income and/or Aboriginal Families
- Children with English Language Needs
- Children with disability and/or additional needs
- Children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective).

There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above. Priority must be given to the groups outline above before any other groups, including non-equity 3-year old.

The guidelines are intended to assist services with making enrolment decisions, in a way that seeks to allocate places to those in the greatest need. However, the community needs of the preschool will also be relevant. Services may consider the hours children are enrolled at other funded services when making enrolment decisions.

The department will compare data collected through the August 2021 Preschool Census to the service's reported enrolment in the August 2020 Preschool Census to review priority of access. The department periodically conducts reviews of preschool services and may request a funding compliance review in these or other circumstances.

Preschool Policies and Procedures

You will find a copy of our preschool policies and procedures on the River Street Preschool website- www.riverstreetpreschool.com.au or a hard copy can be read at the office, or a copy can be emailed. We expect our staff and families to adhere to our policies and procedures at all times to ensure we maintain compliance and abide by the National Law and National Regulations.

Educators cannot make exceptions for individuals unless the Nominated Supervisor or Parent Management committee meet and vote to change or update a policy or make exceptional circumstances agreements and do so on account of serious and/or unusual circumstances. Any decisions would be made in compliance with the National Law and Regulations.

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

Orientation visits -Preparing for your child's first day

Orientation is an important start for your child and family to connect to our Preschool. We encourage each child to attend our Preschool in the company of a family member before they start their first day with us. This gives you and your child the opportunity to gain an understanding of our program, the lay out of the preschool and your child's classroom, where to put your child's belongings, provide educators with additional information about your child and how we can best support their transition and settling in period. The Administration Officer or the Preschool Director/Nominated Supervisor will contact you to arrange suitable times and days for visits.

If your child is reluctant to attend, please discuss this with the Preschool, your child's teacher will develop strategies with you to support the transition from home to the Preschool.

Arrival and Departure

Each day, you must sign your child in upon arrival and sign out upon departure and note the date and times. We are required by legislation to maintain an attendance record, each day. This record may be used in the event of an emergency at the Preschool and as a record of who is at preschool today. It is also a record of who is collecting your child, we ask that you provide this detail by writing the person's name – not mum or dad.

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

The first day/week

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

Saying goodbye

Due to restrictions currently in place for parents and visitors to enter our preschool, one of our educators will greet you and your child on their first day outside the classroom. We have had a lot of experience meeting and greeting children and their families over the past 2 years due to the pandemic and we have found that children transition to this routine very easily and without as many tears as previous arrangements. These restrictions may change in 2023

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

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

What you need to bring

BACKPACK

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

SPARE CLOTHING

Every now and then, accidents occur, and it may be necessary for your child to get changed into a fresh set of clothes. Please include a complete change of clothes every day which can stay in your child's bag...just in case! Please remember to change these clothes regularly as the weather changes, we would appreciate families packing a wet bag for any wet clothes.

DRINK BOTTLE

A labelled drink bottle is required every day for water. Children are able to refill their drink bottle when necessary, throughout the day. We always provide water and cups, but a drink bottle is a great start to school readiness.

SUN HAT

Please make sure to include your child's preschool hat and place it in your child's bag every day regardless of the weather conditions.

MORNING TEA AND LUNCH

Children are asked to bring their morning tea and lunch in a plastic/metal lunch box with a lid that they can open. As all food will be placed into the fridge in each room, please do not send it in a cooler bag, as these are not effective in the fridges. We ask you clearly mark your child's name on the bottom of the box and lid. We also ask that you think about your child's ability to unwrap their lunch and open such things as muesli bars. Educators can provide tips to make this easier for your child. We will teach children how to open these food wrappers, containers and to close lunchbox lids as part of school readiness.

We try to encourage healthy food choices at the Preschool and request that you provide sandwiches or wraps with nutritious fillings. Celery and carrot sticks or a salad are good additions to your child's lunch. See the following Information on the nutrition requirements recommended for 0-5year old children.

What food to pack your child for a busy day at our Service

LUNCH BOX

What should I pack— as a guide –try 1 main food item (sandwiches and its ok to pack 2, a roll, wrap or leftovers), a vegetable and/or a fruit snack and 2-3 more snacks.

Crunchy vegetables

Protein– Meat, hard boiled eggs, beans

Bread, a roll, flat bread, fruit bread or crackers

Dairy foods, cheese sticks or slice, grated cheese, milk or yogurt

Fresh Fruit

WATER to drink—only

Sometimes we do ask families to restrict or limit some foods as we may have a child with an allergy to a certain type of food. We will advise families each year but if these foods do turn up in a lunch box, we will not let your child go hungry.

At Preschool we provide lunchbox ideas from the organization Munch & Move who provide information about Healthy Eating & active living. We also participate in Veggie Month each March and read stories about the magic lunchbox. We grow food and investigate the human body and what it needs to help it grow. We are happy to talk healthy lunchboxes anytime. A healthy lunch box environment is a group effort by all families and staff.

We do allow celebration food for special occasions – birthdays please talk to your child's teacher for more information.

Clothing

It is helpful to your child if they are dressed in non- restrictive, easy to wash clothes so that they feel free to join in all the activities and to develop independence. Shoes also, need to allow children freedom to run, climb, hop and jump as well as being easy for the child to take off and put on by themselves. Joggers and sandals are appropriate shoes to wear.

If children wear Thongs, slippers and gumboots at preschool they can take them off to participate in activities as these shoes can be a bit slippery. Also, please consider clothing that enables the child to move around easily and allows children to be independent in dressing. Clothing such as long dresses, overalls, braces, belts and stiff buttons can prove a problem for children who need to go to the toilet. We require all t-shirts and dresses to have sleeves for sun protection.

Toys

The Preschool has an abundance of toys, and we ask that children do not bring in toys from home. We do understand that sometimes children need a special toy or that a home toy can help to start a friendship or open a conversation with their peers. We do ask families to make sure these toys are not valuable as sometimes they get lost or broken and your child will be disappointed and the responsibility on educators to track numerous toys throughout the day can become time consuming taking them away from the educational program. After awhile home toys will have a few rules applied to them – only coming out for show & tell or as a comfort at rest time.

Behaviour Guidance

We encourage children to engage in cooperative and pro-social behaviour. We give children the opportunity to self-regulate their behaviours during play to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Educators follow a *Behaviour Guidance Policy* that extends across the whole Preschool giving consistency of expectation in all rooms. We use a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour to help them develop a respect for others, for property and respect for self. On occasions we may need to have a discussion with your child about unacceptable behaviour especially if it involves hurting others. A teacher or educator will discuss this with you, and we will work together to come up with strategies, so your child understands what to do when they feel frustrated or angry. Ongoing aggressive physical behaviour will not be accepted, and we will request a formal meeting to discuss a behavioural management plan. If you require further information on this policy, please ask educators and refer to our Policy manual.

Wellbeing

Wellbeing is more than just feeling happy, it is about our overall health- physical, social, emotional, and mental. We provide opportunities for your child to develop a strong sense of wellbeing through dance, movement, yoga, mindfulness, music, and relaxation. We also promote empathy, kindness, and compassion towards others, we do this by asking children to help each other, wait for their turn and to share resources and equipment. When we show kindness to others our own wellbeing increase and we feel happy. 😊

Physical Play

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

Physical play provides children with the opportunity to:

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

Rest and Sleep

Rest and sleep routines vary according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide a rest mat for children and play soft music in the background, and we ask children to be still for a few moments to settle their bodies and relax their breath and reenergise. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest or sleep needs with educators as all children have their own individual needs.

Sometimes at rest time we have quiet activities, such as puzzles and books are available, or we do quiet drawing activities lying on tummies and drawing on a large piece of paper.

Sustainability

Our Preschool is passionate about sustainability. We believe in supporting children to appreciate and care for the environment by embedding sustainable practice into the daily operation of our Preschool, infrastructure, and teaching.

To promote our sustainability program, we emphasise children's ability to make a difference, enabling them to learn and appreciate their environment in an engaging, fun and exciting manner. We do this by engaging children in discussion about sustainable practice, encouraging them to participate in a recycling program, reducing energy and conserving water. We aim to provide children with the skills and knowledge required to become environmentally responsible.

Birthdays

It is very exciting for a child to be having a birthday. If a cake is required for a child's birthday it is recommended that cupcakes be provided as this reduces the major allergy risks associated with most other cakes and helps us to provide a hygienic celebration with only the birthday child blowing out the candles on their cake. Families are required discuss cake options with educators prior to the celebration as we monitor food and treats to ensure the safety of all children and staff. *For further information, please see our Celebration Policy.*

Philosophy Circle –

Each Year we create a Philosophy Circle within the classroom which is displayed on the wall. Our Philosophy is based on Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Approach (1979) and with UNESCO four dimensions of sustainable development (Elliot & Davis 2018). The circle's centre starts with the child and leads outwards showing the relationships of learning from family – preschool – community – cultural values – environmental factors- and the laws. Children's learning is influenced by many factors and our Philosophy Circle displays and acknowledges and celebrates these by photos of children and families, drawing of preschool and community and the environmental world. The individual child connections to everything and these connections bring the opportunity to learn & discover together. Creating a sense of self and a sense of belonging and being.

Sun Safety

We work in compliance with the *National SunSmart Early Childhood Program* to ensure children's health and safety is always maintained. We use a combination of sun protection measures; our outdoor environment provides shade for play experiences and we conduct regular risk assessments to ensure the play space and equipment is safe for children.

Children and educators must wear hats and appropriate clothing, including footwear when outside. Educators will encourage children, including by way of modelling behaviour, to avoid excessive exposure to the sun and to wear suitable sunscreen (at least SPF30 or higher broad-spectrum water resistant), which is reapplied according to the manufacturer's recommendations. We ask that children come to the Preschool with sunscreen already applied or apply on arrival in the mornings so everyone is ready to go outside after 20 minutes. Consent to apply sunscreen is included in our enrolment form.

Parent Participation and Feedback

Our Preschool has an Open-Door Policy and actively seeks and encourages families to be involved in the Preschool. This can range from evaluating and adding input to your child's program and observations, volunteering within the Preschool and sharing skills and experiences that the children and the program will benefit from and providing feedback. [Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we may be restricting parents and visitors entering the Preschool to volunteer. Please check with the Nominated Supervisor for further details.]

You can be involved in our Management Committee. Your involvement can be as formal or active as you like as time permits. We respect that time is limited for most families and we ask that you inform us as to your preferred way of communication. We can arrange meetings with your child's teachers at a suitable time for everyone throughout the year and we offer email, Newsletters, Daily programs (photos) children's learning Journals and pride ourselves on strong verbal communication daily. We seek input from families on all aspects of the Preschool, working collaboratively we can build a stronger understanding of your child's goals, observations, and development,

If, for any reason you question or do not understand any aspect of the Preschool or your child's experience we ask that you come and have a chat or email the office and your child's teacher or the Preschool Director will call you or respond to your email. We believe that all misunderstandings or complaints can be discussed in an open manner so that we as a preschool along with families can come to an agreement on how to move forward. We do have a *Dealing with Complaints Policy* that supports all stakeholders in our community and like all policies, is available for families to consult and implement at any time. Copies of our policies are available at the office. You are welcome to take a copy and we will email it to you.

Family involvement

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

Your occupation or hobby

You are the most important person in their world. We welcome all parents to the preschool to talk about their occupation or hobby (e.g. music, craft). Everything parents do interest children, and these talks are the best educational resources you can provide for the Preschool. Please discuss this with your child's teacher.

Your home culture

We aim to foster relationships among families and community and invite you to share aspects of your culture, history, language and celebrations with our Service. Your involvement greatly assists us to enrich the lives of all our families and children.

Recyclable items

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

Special events

Our Preschool organises special events throughout the year. We will communicate these to families in a timely manner. We encourage parent input in all aspects of these events these include a Disco, Book week displays and parade and more. (Covid has prevented these events & we will communicate once these restrictions change).

Suggestions

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

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

Community Information

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

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

Health and Hygiene

Our Preschool has effective and systematic risk management systems in place to identify any possible risk of hazards to our learning environment and practices. Strategies are outlined in our COVIDSafe Plan. We strictly adhere to Public Health Orders and recommendations to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus. This includes all adults wearing a face mask whilst on premises.

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

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

When should I not send my child to the Preschool?

Please monitor your child's health and do not bring your child to the Preschool if they are suffering from any illness or infectious disease. We ask that families are vigilant and not send children to the preschool even if they have the mildest of symptoms of COVID-19.

To minimise the spread of infections and diseases, and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators, and staff, we implement recommendations developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC)- *Staying Healthy in Childcare*. Our policies and procedures for *Sick Children* and the *Control of Infectious Diseases* are available for all families to view.

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

If your child becomes ill whilst at the Preschool, we will contact you or an authorised nominee to collect your child within a 30-minute time frame where possible. If your child is unable to be collected, educators will contact the child's emergency contact for collection

Your child should not attend the Preschool if they have had paracetamol within 24 hours for a temperature. Children who are on antibiotics are to be kept away from the Preschool for the first 24 hours to allow the child to rest and the risk of spreading the infection to decrease. If your child has been vomiting or had diarrhoea, they will be excluded for 48 hours. For certain illnesses, a medical clearance certificate may be required before your child returns.

Please call the preschool to let us know your child is away.

Infectious Diseases

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

(Confidentiality is always maintained).

Recommended exclusion periods- Poster Staying Healthy: Preventing Infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services

CONDITION	EXCLUSION
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Until all blisters have dried
HIB	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness
Herpes- Cold sores	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible
Influenzas and flu-like illnesses	Exclude until well
Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash
Meningitis (Bacterial)	Exclude until well
Meningococcal Infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	Exclude the child for 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of rash
Salmonella	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases
Streptococcal Infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well
Tuberculosis	Exclude until a medical certificate from an appropriate health authority is received
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude if diarrhoea present

If your child is unimmunised according to our records, then they will be excluded until the threat has passed and upon advice of the Public Health Unit. This includes any child who is on a catch-up plan not currently up to date.

Immunisation

The Public Health Act 2010 requires all families to provide an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) for their child prior to enrolment in an early childhood education and care service. The immunisation history statement must show that each enrolled child is up to date with immunisations for their age.

The relevant vaccinations are those under the National Immunisation Program (NIP), which covers the vaccines usually administered before age five. These vaccinations must be recorded on the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR).

The only unimmunised children who can be enrolled in child care are those who are on a recognised catch-up schedule or those who are unimmunised due to medical reasons as described in the Australian Immunisation Handbook. Parents must provide an AIR Immunisation History Form or an AIR Immunisation Medical Exemption Form upon enrolment. In the case of an outbreak of any vaccine preventable disease, management will contact families as soon as possible. We ask that families immediately inform our Preschool if someone in their family is diagnosed with an infectious disease to help minimise the risk to other children, families and educators.

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

Medication

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

Educators can only administer medication that is:

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

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

Incidents, injury or trauma

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

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

If an injury or incident is serious and we believe urgent medical attention is required, the Nominated Supervisor will contact you immediately. If we cannot contact a parent or guardian, we will attempt to contact an authorised nominee for consent. Where you or your authorised nominee cannot be contacted, we may call an ambulance. If you are unable to meet the ambulance at the Preschool, we will send one of our educators/staff members to accompany your child in the ambulance.

Please note that Ambulance cover is the responsibility of each family.

An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* will be completed, and a parent will be required to acknowledge and sign this record. A copy of any documentation from the hospital or treating doctor will also be requested. Our Preschool will also be required to notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any serious incident or injury. In these circumstances, you may be contacted by our Approved Provider/Nominated Supervisor and the Regulatory Authority to follow up the incident and actions taken by our Preschool.

Safety in our Preschool-[Emergency and evacuation procedures](#)

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

An emergency evacuation plan and lock down procedure are displayed in every room and exit locations are clearly indicated.

Drop off and pick up time

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

- Please always hold your child's hand until you arrive at your car
- Be alert of reversing drivers as they are parking, as it is very difficult to see small children
- Use the kerbside, rear passenger door when getting your child into and out of their restraint
- Never leave a child or infant in the car unattended
- Never leave the front entry door/gate open
- Do not allow School age children to open gates and enter without an adult
- Always do a visual check around your vehicle before driving
- Please ensure children do not enter areas in the Preschool that are for adults/staff only.

Workplace Health and Safety

We are committed in providing an environment that is safe and healthy for every employee, volunteer, child, family and visitor. We have made every reasonable effort to minimise the risk of serious injury and request all persons to our Preschool to adhere to our policies regarding Workplace Health and Safety.

Each morning, our educators conduct daily safety checks of the indoor and outdoor environment and will alert management of any potential risk or hazard to children to ensure this is rectified before children use the equipment or area.

We welcome all feedback regarding the safety of our Preschool. If you see something that concerns you regarding safe work practices, the safety of building and equipment or general work health and safety issues, please contact the Nominated Supervisor immediately.

Our social media – Facebook & Instagram

We use social media Facebook & Instagram to celebrate what happening at preschool for our Ballina Community for this reason we DO NOT have photos of children, we only show activities or artwork.

We use Story Park to communicate, share information and celebrate what is happening in our Preschool with enrolled families.

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

Supervisor, and we set the highest level of privacy and security settings on the accounts. Content is regularly scanned, and any offensive language or comments removed immediately, and these users blocked.

Photographs of a child will only be added if written authorisation has been provided to the preschool, these photos are rare and are only added after special events.

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

Privacy and Confidentiality

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

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

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

Our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* is available to view at any time. This policy sets out how we ensure our Preschool acts in accordance with the requirements of the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act 1988. We ensure all personal information is protected, records and documents are maintained and stored in accordance with Education and Care Services National Regulations and that all staff understand the requirements of the Notifiable Data Breaches (NDB) scheme. Any Privacy complaints will be managed promptly and in a consistent manner as outlined in our *Dealing with Complaints Policy*.

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

We thank you for reading this Handbook and if you wish to discuss any part of the handbook please call/email or drop into the office anytime. 😊