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Handbook 2024



The three year old and four year old kindergarten programs at Home Road Kindergarten are supported by the Victorian Government.

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Important Dates

2024 Timetable

PLATYPUS ROOM

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
GREEN GROUP 8:45 am to 2:45 pm 3yo - 6hrs	RED GROUP 8:15 am to 3:45 pm 4yo - 7.5hrs	YELLOW GROUP 8:45 am to 4:15 pm 3yo – 7.5hrs	GREEN GROUP 8:45 am to 2:45 pm 3yo - 6hrs	RED GROUP 8:15 am to 3:45 pm 4yo - 7.5hrs

KANGAROO ROOM

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
ORANGE GROUP 8:30 am to 4:00 pm 4yo - 7.5hrs	PURPLE GROUP 8:30 am to 4:00 pm 3yo - 7.5hrs	BLUE GROUP 8:30 am to 4:00 pm 4yo - 7.5hrs	ORANGE GROUP 8:30 am to 4:00 pm 4yo - 7.5hrs	BLUE GROUP 8:30 am to 4:00 pm 4yo - 7.5hrs

Term Dates

Term 1	<i>Monday 29 January</i> <i>(Children start attending from Wednesday, 31 January)</i>	<i>Thursday 28 March</i>
Term 2	<i>Monday 15 April</i>	<i>Friday 28 June</i>
Term 3	<i>Monday 15 July</i>	<i>Friday 20 September</i>
Term 4	<i>Monday 7 October</i>	<i>Friday 20 December</i> <i>(Children will finish on Wednesday, 18 December)</i>

Public Holidays (in term time) – Centre Closure

<i>Monday 11 March</i>	<i>Labour Day</i>
<i>Friday 29 March</i>	<i>Good Friday</i>
<i>Thursday 25 April</i>	<i>Anzac Day</i>
<i>Monday 10 June</i>	<i>King’s Birthday</i>
<i>Tuesday 5 November</i>	<i>Melbourne Cup Day</i>

**Our centre will also be closed for one day during the year for a Staff Professional Development Day.
Sessions will be CANCELLED on this day; you will be notified as early as possible in 2024.**

Curriculum

Our curriculum is informed by our philosophy, our strong respect for Country and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives; inclusion of all children; the Early Years Learning Framework; the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework; National Quality Standard and the Child Safe Standards, as outlined below.

Home Road Kindergarten Philosophy

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands, skies and waterways. Our kindergarten sits proudly on Boonwurrung Country, and this is where we take the time to foster a deep respect for Country, embedding First Nations perspectives and sustainable actions into our programs.

We acknowledge that reconciliation takes commitment and action, and we are unapologetic in our efforts to close the gap for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, their families and communities.

We create a child safe learning environment, where our play-based learning programs foster independent thinking and autonomous decision making. Children thrive in an environment that provides certainty, stability and emotional security.

We believe in authentic inclusive practice. We advocate for the rights of all children to access early learning. We provide a supportive environment in which each child can learn in the best way that suits them.

We are a collaborative team who connect with families and respond with a tailored and varied curriculum to support the individual children in their growth as humans in our society.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Perspectives and Kinder on Country

Our kindergarten sits on Boonwurrung Country. Supporting children to understand and appreciate their own connection to Country and to the people who have lived and cared for Country here for thousands of years, forms an important part of our curriculum. We feel strongly that we are on a journey *with* the children as we attempt to navigate these concepts with respect and authenticity.

As non-Indigenous educators, we seek input and guidance from trusted resources such as 'Possum Skin Pedagogy' and we are working to build connections with local elders. We have an active Reconciliation Action Plan committee who are working on our key priorities in the Narragunnawali action plan. In our rooms, you will see a variety of resources, books and imagery that have been carefully selected to promote conversation and questioning from the children. The children come to know Bunjil the Eagle and Waa the Raven. They learn about the traditional seasons of the Boonwurrung through spending time in nature and they learn about the cultural value of a possum skin cloak.

The wider landscape outside our kinder fences provides rich and varied opportunities for learning and connection. Regular outings to local parklands and community sites give children a chance to explore the local area and see themselves as active participants in the wider community. Kinder on Country is an acknowledgment of the value we place on fostering an ecological identity in young children; supporting them to feel themselves as being in relationship with the natural environment. During our outings we spend time listening to the wind and watching Sky Country, we start to build an understanding of local birds and what they like to eat, and we interact with plants and trees with respect and gratitude.

The National Quality Standards, the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, along with our philosophy, highlight the importance of learning in nature and within the local community. Having an active presence in the local community strengthens community links as well as children's interests and skills in becoming active contributors to their world.

3 year old groups will focus on walks to Digman Reserve and along Home Road, practising their road safety education and getting used to being out together as a group safely in the community. 4 year old groups will have regular walks and excursions to explore and learn within the local area. Our regular outings permission form includes Digman Reserve, Hall Street and Mason Street shops, Newport Community Hub and Newport train station. Excursions organised in the past have included visiting Sandy Point, Newport Lakes, a train ride to Williamstown Botanical Gardens or the beach, a train ride to Point Gellibrand or a bus ride to a supermarket. Kinder on Country will be tailored to each group and will depend on the individual group's learning interests and inquiries that come up throughout the year. Families will be informed of community outings and permission notes will be distributed for outings that are not part of the regular outings permission form that is signed on enrolment.

Inclusive Kindergarten

We are an inclusive kindergarten and we advocate for the rights of all children to access early learning. We provide a supportive environment in which each child can learn in the best way that suits them. We are very proud to be truly, authentically inclusive. All children are welcome at our kindergarten and all children will be supported to participate in the program in the ways that suit them. For children with diagnosed disabilities or specific needs, we work with families and specialists to support inclusion, accommodations and participation. For children with undiagnosed disabilities or specific developmental needs, we support families with referrals or recommendations to a range of community or clinical supports.

We often have specialists or support workers attend our kinder sessions to support specific children. We can also apply for funding to employ additional educators if a group requires it. For children with disabilities and diverse needs, it means that they can access a diversified program that meets their needs. We do not do 'one size fits all' programming. We meet the needs of each individual child.

Diversity comes in many forms. As a parent, you will see children from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds, from non-traditional or same-sex families, children who are gender-diverse, with disabilities or diverse needs. You will also see children with hidden disabilities or with behaviors that you might find unfamiliar or confronting. Many children come to kinder without a diagnosed disability or they may never be diagnosed.

It benefits all children to have a diverse range of friends and classmates and to see and understand the different ways that we all operate as human beings. It fosters tolerance and understanding and appreciation for different ways of being. When your children come to kinder, they will see how their educators model kindness, empathy and a genuine desire to understand, support and teach all children. We teach children not to judge others, but to be curious, because curiosity leads to – not just tolerance, but - knowledge and understanding. Inclusion works for everyone.

The Early Years Learning Framework & Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Outcomes

The Early Years Learning and Development and Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Outcomes are embedded into the curriculum to ensure each child's strengths, needs and interests are supported. These outcomes also optimise each child's potential and enhance their overall development.

These are the five Outcomes:

1. **Identity** – Children have a strong sense of identity
2. **Community** – Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. **Wellbeing** – Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. **Learning** – Children are confident and involved learners
5. **Communication** – Children are effective communicators.

Families can access this document online at <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- a national legislative framework - Education and Care Services National Regulations, Education and Care Services National Law Act
- a National Quality Standard
- a national quality rating and assessment process
- a national body called the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Quality education and care shapes every child's future and lays the foundation for their development and learning. The early years are critical for establishing self-esteem, resilience, healthy growth and capacity to learn. Research shows quality education and care early in life leads to better health, education and employment outcomes later in life.

National Quality Standard

The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. The NQS is divided into seven Quality Areas:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Governance and Leadership.

Under the NQS, all early childhood education and care services undergo a process of rating and assessment. Approved Services will be assessed and rated against each of the seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. They will also be given an overall rating which will be published. The rating and assessment process aims to drive continuous quality improvement at services and provide families with better information for making choices about their children's education and care.

Home Road Kindergarten has been rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standard in all seven quality areas.

For more information on the National Quality Framework and Standards, please visit [Understand Service Quality Ratings | StartingBlocks.gov.au](https://www.startingblocks.gov.au/understand-service-quality-ratings).

Child Safe Standards

Home Road Kindergarten has an ongoing commitment to creating a child safe learning environment.

The Victorian Government is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. As part of the Victorian Government's commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Betrayal of Trust report, which found that more must be done to prevent and respond to child abuse in our community, there is a regulatory landscape surrounding child safety, underpinned by the PROTECT Child Safe Standards.

The Child Safe Standards are compulsory minimum standards for all Victorian early childhood services and schools, to ensure they are well prepared to protect children from abuse and neglect.

Parents can read more about this here:

[About Child Safe Standards | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/about-child-safe-standards)
[CCYP | For parents and carers](#)

Our Commitment to Child Safety

Home Road Kindergarten is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people. This is the primary focus of our philosophy, education, care and decision-making.

Home Road Kindergarten has zero tolerance for child abuse.

Home Road Kindergarten is committed to providing a child safe environment where children and young people are respected, safe and feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives. Particular attention will be paid to the cultural safety of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, as well as the safety of children with a disability.

Every person involved in Home Road Kindergarten has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Qualified Staff Members

All kindergarten educators meet the training and qualification requirements as set out in the Education and Care Services National Law Act and Regulations. Our kindergarten teachers are degree qualified or equivalent and the majority of our co-educators hold a Diploma qualification or above. The minimum qualification required for co-educators is Certificate III, however Home Road Kindergarten prides itself on supporting staff to continue their professional learning, development and growth. All educators possess and regularly update their First Aid, CPR, Asthma, Anaphylaxis and EpiPen (or Anapen, if required) training.

Relief Staff

When an educator is absent, a relief staff member will be employed in their place. The relief staff member must have approved qualifications and medical training and wherever possible, we aim to use relief staff that are familiar with our centre. We endeavour to use current employees for relief purposes wherever available or we acquire relief staff from external agencies.

Service Closure

During the year, sessions may be cancelled for child free days as per the staff award, staff professional development days, or for orientation sessions and induction information sessions. Also, in the event that an educator is absent and suitably qualified relief staff cannot be found, a session may be cancelled. We aim to give families as much notice as possible when these cancellations occur.

**Our centre will be closed on one day during the year for a Staff Professional Development Day.
All sessions will be CANCELLED on this day, you will be notified as early as possible in 2024.**

Arrival and Departure

Settling In

All children respond differently when introduced to Kindergarten and some need a little extra time to feel safe and comfortable. Be patient and understanding while your child begins this new experience. It is important that you give your child reassurance during these first days.

A sessional kindergarten environment is quite different to long day care settings. We have set session times within which educational care is provided. As our sessions start at a set time, this means that majority of children are arriving at the same time. This can sometimes be loud and busy. The way parents feel can influence their child's adjustment to Kindergarten. If you feel reluctant and over-anxious about leaving your child, they may pick up on your feelings and also feel insecure and wary, making their adjustment difficult.

Your child may be very reluctant to leave you. Establishing a consistent goodbye routine supports your child to feel safe and comfortable at this time of day. When you are dropping your child off, give your child a cheerful kiss goodbye and then leave promptly after reassuring them that you will be back to pick them up. Don't hover around once you have said you are going and please don't slip out the door without saying goodbye, or your child may feel anxious. If you are still concerned after leaving your child, please call us during the session to see how they are going on **9391 2958**.

We always endeavour to work closely with families to find solutions to transitions that work for them. Please talk to your child's educators if you feel that you or your child need additional support.

As we have set times for educational care, it is very important that you are punctual when picking up your child; otherwise, they may feel forgotten and worried, making their adjustment to Kindergarten more difficult.

Attendance Record

As a requirement of the Education and Care Services National Regulations, each centre must keep an attendance record. We will be using Xplor for a digital sign in/out process so parents must download the Xplor Home app. An iPad will be available at the service to complete digital sign in/out, or parents/carers can complete this process using their phone. *Please note: any person dropping off or collecting a child will need to be authorised in the child's Xplor profile and have setup an Xplor login account.*

We ask that you also notify us if your child will be late or absent using the Xplor Home app.

For any adult helpers visiting during session times, you will be required to sign in/out of our digital visitor log, as well as any siblings. It is important that all people on the premises are accounted for.

Authorisation for Collection of Children

The Kindergarten educators are responsible for the children while at the centre, and therefore we must know which adults have permission to collect your child at the end of session. It is imperative that you record in Xplor any person who will be dropping off or collecting your child from Kindergarten. We need this authorisation to operate according to the Education and Care Services National Regulations.

Under no circumstance will a child be passed over to a person who is not included as an authorised contact in the Xplor enrolment record. When someone different is collecting your child, please let the educators know when you drop your child off. They may be asked to provide photo ID if educators are not familiar with them.

Arrival and Departure

When you bring your child to Kindergarten each day, please wait in the front entry area until it is time for the session to begin, when the front door will be opened. For your child's safety, please take the time to ensure that they are taken into the Kindergarten room, that the educators note their arrival.

When collecting at the end of the session, again please wait outside until the front door is opened. If you need to collect your child prior to the end of the session, please ring the doorbell and an educator will bring your child out to you. Educators will settle the children before parents/carers arrive, ensuring that everyone is ready to leave and relaxed before they go. Children must wait inside the Kindergarten room until an educator sights their authorised pickup person and calls their name. At the beginning of the year, the pick-up process can take some time as educators are getting to know the children and families. The children's safety is always our priority, and the teachers and educators may not have time to engage in a conversation at pick-up time. If you do need to share information or ask a question you can always email or call us or wait until all other children have safely left the kindergarten room.

If you need to collect your child early, please inform us at the start of the session or call the centre. If for some reason you are late for collection, please telephone us so that we know and so that we can reassure your child that you are on your way. Penalties may apply for repeatedly late collection.

The front gate is a safety gate. Only adults are asked to open it. Please do not lift your child to open the gate or allow primary school children to open it as this defeats its purpose. Also, please do not allow your children to stand or swing on the gate as this weakens the self-closing mechanism; or to climb on the front fence. This is for the safety of all children.

Please be VERY aware of any unaccompanied children exiting the Kindergarten when the gate is open. Young siblings can be particularly notorious for their quick exits. At no time should the gate be propped open. Please supervise all siblings closely when waiting at arrival and departure times.

Road Safety

Road trauma is one of the leading causes of death among young Australians. Young children are at risk as passengers in motor vehicles, as pedestrians and as cyclists. They are particularly vulnerable because of their small size and the fact that their cognitive and perceptual skills are still developing.

We ask families to be mindful of safe road practices to ensure the safety of their children when arriving and departing Home Road. The safest way for children to exit a parked car is on the curb side. Ensure that you hold your child's hand when crossing all roads.

Children aged 4 years to less than 7 years must use either a forward-facing child restraint with an inbuilt harness, or a booster seat. An adult lap-sash seat belt is designed for people with a minimum height of 145cms. The average child will reach this height between 10 to 12 years of age.

Children who are not tall enough to use an adult seat belt can slump into their seat. The lap part of the seat belt is then too high on their stomach which causes more serious injuries in a crash. Therefore, it is recommended that your child continues using a booster seat until they have outgrown it. There are some booster seats available for children up to the age of 10 years.

Trained child restraint fitters can help you to install your child restraint or booster seat properly. If a child restraint is not fitted properly, then it may not help to protect your child in a crash. Restraint fitting stations are available throughout Victoria. Here trained installers can fit your restraint, check that it is installed correctly or fit an anchorage point to your vehicle if you need one.

Parents can read more information here:

<https://www.vicroads.vic.gov.au/safety-and-road-rules/vehicle-safety/child-restraints>

<https://www.racv.com.au/on-the-road/driving-maintenance/road-safety/child-safety/child-restraints.html>

https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Safety_Child_car_seats/

Never Leave Kids in Cars

The Never Leave Kids in Cars campaign prompts parents to take their kids with them whenever they get out of the car, just as they do their everyday valuables, to avoid potentially tragic consequences.

Leaving children unattended in a car on any day is dangerous, let alone when it's hot. It could result in serious injury or death. In Victoria, it is against the law to leave children unattended in a car. Parents or carers could face fines or up to six months' jail.

What are the risks?

Even on mild days, the temperature inside a parked car can be 20 to 30 degrees hotter than the temperature outside. Within five minutes, the temperature in the car can double. When it's 30 degrees outside, your child could be suffering in up to 60 degree heat. As a child's body temperature rises three to five times faster than an adult, the impact of this heat on a child's body is almost immediate. This puts them at greater risk of life-threatening heat stroke, brain injury, heart and lung failure, and dehydration. Large cars heat up just as fast as smaller ones. Leaving the windows down slightly has little effect on the inside temperature. Tests have shown that when windows are left open by 10cm, it reduces the inside temperature by only five degrees.

Parents can read more information here: [Never Leave Kids in Cars | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/never-leave-kids-in-cars)
[Children Left Unattended in Cars - Kidsafe VIC](https://www.vic.gov.au/never-leave-kids-in-cars)

Doorbell

The educators will open the front door when it is time for the session to start and again at dismissal time. If you need access at any other time, please ring the doorbell located near the front door. The corresponding rooms are marked. Only Kindergarten staff and Committee members are asked to open the front door to ensure security at all times. We ask for your patience when you ring the bell as educators are in session and may be engaged with children and may take some time to get to the door.

Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

It is in the best interest of your child that you ensure that they are collected promptly at the end of the Kindergarten session. If you are running late, PLEASE call and let our staff know! The Home Road Kindergarten phone number is **9391 2958**.

In the situation where the parents/guardians or authorised person is more than 10 minutes late in collecting their child/ren and has not notified the centre that they will be late, the educators are responsible for:

- Contacting parents/guardians or the authorised nominee to request collection
- Ensuring educator to child ratios are maintained at all times that children are present at the service
- Continuing to attempt to contact the parents/guardians or authorised nominees
- Contacting the Approved Provider (Committee) to inform them of the situation
- Contacting Child FIRST/The Orange Door or the local police if the parents/guardians or authorised persons are still not contactable after 1 hour.

Once Child FIRST/The Orange Door or the police have been contacted, the child is no longer the responsibility of the educators. **NOTE: educators and committee members are not permitted under any circumstances to take a child home in their own car.**

Late Collection Register and Fee

The committee reserves the right to implement a late collection fee when parents/guardians are late in collecting a child/ren. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to collect their child/ren promptly at the conclusion of a session. Educators may request parents/guardians or the authorised nominee to complete the Late Collection Register on arrival to collect the child/ren. A late collection fee may be applied when:

- The parents/guardians are between 10 and 30 minutes late in collecting their child. The fee will be based on \$10.00 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, from the conclusion of the session.
- The parents/guardians are over 30 minutes late collecting their child. The fee will be based on \$10.00 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, for the first 30 minutes from the conclusion of the session and then \$15.00 for every 10 minutes or part thereof, after that.

Appropriate Clothing

Suitable Clothing

Children have more fun at Kindergarten when they are not restricted by having to keep clean. Educators will do their best to protect clothing and smocks will be available for messy play and painting, however children will not be forced to wear one and staff will not be held responsible for any damage to clothing. We strongly encourage older clothing and easily washed clothes be worn to Kindergarten, as they allow children more freedom to explore the environment.

Thongs or Crocs are dangerous when climbing and running and therefore should not be worn at Kindergarten. Closed toe sandals and runners/sneakers are ideal.

Please consider how your child will manage their clothes when toileting. When in a hurry, a playsuit, tights or jeans with button/zip can be difficult to manage. In case of accidents (not just with toileting), please supply a change of clothes in your child's kinder bag. Please label all belongings, especially those that are often removed such as hats, coats, jumpers, socks and also bags. Providing a wet bag from home is also a great idea, so that any wet/dirty clothes can be returned to you safely for washing.

As we have an indoor and outdoor learning program, your child will need a sunhat and sunscreen applied prior to each session whenever the UV levels are predicted to reach 3 or higher. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen to their child before the start of the session and it will be reapplied where applicable. We provide every child with a Sun Smart legionnaires hat in their group colour, and this should be kept in the child's Kinder bag and will be required throughout the year. Coats and a beanie are essential in Winter, as children will be outside even on cold or wet days.

Sun Protection Policy

Our policy is that:

- Each child, educator, adult helper and sibling will be required to have appropriate head and shoulder coverings during attendance at Kindergarten.
- By wearing hats the educators will provide a role model for the children and they will encourage parents and others to also act as appropriate role models.
- The Kindergarten will provide spare children's hats that can be laundered after casual use. However, please ensure their Kinder hat is packed in their bag each session.
- The children are required to arrive at Kindergarten wearing appropriate clothing (shoulders must be covered – no singlets/strappy dresses), hats and sunscreen on days of risk to ultraviolet exposure, generally during the months between August through to the end of April or whenever the UV levels reach 3 or higher.
- The Kindergarten will encourage each family to apply sunscreen to their child prior to arrival at kindergarten. If your child has sensitive skin and allergies, you are strongly encouraged to provide your own sunscreen and educators will assist with application where necessary.
- The program will reflect the Sun Protection policy and educators will ensure a combination of sun protection measures are applied during outdoor time with particular care taken when UV levels reach their peak.

Further details are available in the Home Road Kindergarten policy manual located in the foyer or on our website at [Parent resources — Home Road Kindergarten](#)

Personal Items at Kindergarten

Lockers

Each child is allocated their own locker to keep their belongings in during session time. These lockers are shared by all groups, therefore are emptied each day.

Personal Items

We ask that toys from home are NOT brought to Kindergarten as they may be lost, broken, fought over or distract from our programs. We ask for parent cooperation with this issue and please reinforce this rule with your child. Any toys that are brought should be sent home with parents or stay in the child's locker/bag until home time. No responsibility will be taken for any lost or damaged items brought from home.

If your child has a particular comfort toy that you feel will help them to feel safe while at Kindergarten, please talk to your child's educators.

Labelling

Please label all of your child's belongings; all items of clothing, their snack/lunch boxes, bags, hats and water bottles. We take no responsibility for lost items but if they are labelled, there is a better chance of getting them back.

Food and Drink

Water

Please supply your child with a labelled water bottle for each session. We are a water only centre. The children can drink from their water bottle at snack/lunch and anytime during the session. Educators will refill water bottles throughout the session as required.

Snacks & Lunch

Snacks and lunch from home contribute to meeting children's daily dietary and developmental needs. We aim to create social and relaxed environments for children to eat in while at kinder. Some groups may utilise progressive snack and lunch times, while other groups may find that a whole group experience works better for them. Individual needs are always considered, as children tend to eat more when they are comfortable and offered some level of choice about when and what they eat. We encourage you to include fruit and vegetables in your child's lunchbox every time they attend Kinder, in addition to other healthy snacks (please remember NO NUTS and NO EGGS). We will offer reminders and encouragement, but we cannot force a child to eat if they are not hungry or are avoiding a particular food. If you have concerns about your child's food intake while at kinder then please speak to one of your educators.

Food is NOT PERMITTED to be shared between children. Note that some groups may have additional food restrictions due to anaphylaxis or allergies of the children within the group. Please be mindful of these restrictions and help to minimise the risk for that child by not bringing the restricted foods to Kinder.

For 3 year old Green group:

- For the 6hr sessions children will require a snack AND lunch.

For the long day groups (4 year old Red, Blue and Orange and 3 year old Purple and Yellow):

- Children will require TWO snacks (morning and afternoon) AND lunch.

Please pack their snack and lunch in separate containers/compartments so as to minimise confusion and assist educators to support children to manage their food throughout the session. Snacks and lunch should be packed in a container your child can manage themselves, such as a lunch box or insulated bag and please include ice packs as refrigeration is not available. Food should not be brought in plastic bags, as these are a suffocation hazard.

We ask families to please consider sustainable packaging options for their children's food, such as reusable lunch boxes with separate compartments so that sandwiches do not need to be wrapped in foil or cling wrap; reusable squeezable yoghurt pouches or a small container with a tight-fitting lid and spoon; consider buying a large box of biscuits, BBQ shapes, popcorn or cheese and then adding a portion into the compartments of your lunch box.

For further ideas and information on what to pack in a lunchbox please visit:

<https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/schools/healthy-lunchboxes>

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/healthy-eating-school-lunches>

Important Anaphylaxis Message

Where a child diagnosed as at risk of Anaphylaxis is in your group, you will be advised of this at the start of the kindergarten year. You will be provided with information regarding the specific food restrictions and the risk minimisation strategies that will be undertaken at kinder. We ask for cooperation from all families in keeping all children safe at kindergarten.

Currently our centre is a "No Nut Zone" and "No Egg Zone". This means that nuts of any sort, nut spreads or any packaging of nut products; as well as eggs, boiled or raw and egg cartons, are not allowed into the centre or in the children's lunch boxes. Eggs in baked goods may be accepted, although egg sandwiches, egg mayonnaise, whole eggs, quiches, frittatas etc are not. Specific groups may have further restrictions depending on the risk minimisation required in each group. We ask for your full cooperation with this and please speak with educators if you have any questions.

Celebrations

Community Events

Throughout the year HRK holds several events to bring our community together. Examples of events include family welcome picnics, winter solstice gatherings and art exhibitions.

Birthdays

We value and embrace birthday celebrations at kindergarten and aim to create meaningful child-led rituals that honour this special day in a child's year.

We do not accept any form of birthday treats (food or toy items) to be shared amongst the group or handed out in the Kinder rooms. This is in line with our food sharing policy, as well as minimising equity issues arising from treats.

For children's birthday parties, if you wish to invite children from kindergarten, please place invitations, cards etc in the individual hanging pockets of the children. Handing them out to the individual children is not encouraged as other children might feel left out if they do not receive an invitation.

Cultural Celebrations

We love to hear about the different celebrations our families take part in and are always interested in sharing these with the children. Families are welcome to come into the kinder to share aspects of significant days or to share information and photographs with their child's educators.

Dress ups

While many children love to dress up, some children find dress-ups confusing, confronting or scary, and they can lead to games of exclusion. We also acknowledge that some children like to wear costumes to aid in their connection and socialisation with others. We ask that you do not dress your child in outfits that have face covering components/masks or that restrict their movement for kinder. Please discuss with your child's educators if your child has a specific outfit that they like to wear which might enhance their sense of safety and wellbeing at kinder.

Occasionally we may suggest that children and adults wear a certain colour to acknowledge a particular day, however HRK's curriculum does not include regular dress-up days.

Social Justice Awareness

HRK acknowledges several social justice issues throughout the year. These include International Women's Day, Neurodiversity Week, NAIDOC week, RUOK day and more. Educators share information with families and engage children in discussions and activities that build awareness.

Pockets, Notices and Enrolment Details

Hanging Pockets

Each child is allocated a hanging pocket in their classroom. Please ensure you check this hanging pocket each time you attend our centre. Birthday party invitations or children's artwork and belongings may be placed in the children's pockets regularly.

Notices

Notices relating to Kinder helper rosters, special events etc, may be posted on the front notice boards, placed in your child's individual hanging pocket or placed on Xplor.

Xplor communications or emails will also be sent to individual groups. Please make a point of reading the Xplor notifications, emails or notices displayed as they will include information relating to the program the children are involved in, special events, visitors or current issues in early childhood.

Changes to Enrolment Details

If during the year, your telephone, home address, email, work contacts, child-minding details, emergency contact details and/or names of persons you authorise to collect your child change, please remember to update your child's profile in Xplor so that your child's information records are kept up to date.

Illness, Allergy and Emergency

Illness and Absence

National Health and Medical Research Council suggest that to reduce illness in education and care services, the three most effective methods of infection control are: effective hand washing; exclusion of sick children, staff and visitors; and immunisation.

Within such a small community as Kindergarten, COVID-19, colds/flu, chickenpox and other infectious diseases are easily transmitted. We ask you to follow Department of Health advice and keep your child at home when they are displaying symptoms of illness to minimise the chances of other children and staff catching 'the bug'. For illness with symptoms such as vomiting or diarrhoea, children are required to be well for **24 hours from the last episode** before returning to Kindergarten.

Children with infectious diseases are to be excluded from the Kindergarten according to the Department of Health regulations. This information is displayed on the front windows and more information can be provided by educators if required. If your child has an infectious condition e.g. hand foot and mouth, chickenpox, gastro, conjunctivitis or head lice, please let us know so that we can alert other parents and inform you of the exclusion period.

Regarding COVID-19, please follow the Department of Health guidelines and if your child is showing any symptoms, please complete a rapid antigen test, keep them at home and please keep us updated with their status. Even the most minor illness can have big impacts on our service if you send your child to Kindergarten and they spread it to others, therefore educators will strictly implement these guidelines and send children home.

It is appreciated if families let their educators know if their child will not be attending Kindergarten, either via a phone call or through the Xplor Home app. This information helps to keep us informed of illnesses amongst the group, as well as plan for our session. Please also let us know if you are taking holidays during term time.

Sick or infectious children

If your child appears unwell, displaying symptoms or you have reason to think they may be infectious, please consider the other children and educators and keep them at home. If your child requires Panadol (or similar), they should not be coming to kindergarten.

- Diarrhoea – Your child should not return to the kinder until he or she has been free of loose bowel motions for at least 24 hours.
- Vomiting – Your child should not return until he or she has not vomited for at least 24 hours.

Educators will check your child's temperature if they show signs of illness. When a child becomes ill after arrival at kindergarten, the parent/guardian, or if they are unable to be contacted, the emergency contact person will be notified immediately and arrangements will be made for the sick child to be taken from the centre as soon as possible. If necessary, details will be recorded in the Incident, injury, trauma and illness record in Xplor.

Emergency Care

In the event of sudden illness or accident of a child, emergency procedures will take place and you will be contacted. Further details are available in the Home Road Kindergarten policy manual located in the foyer or on our website at [Parent resources — Home Road Kindergarten](#).

Head lice (Pediculosis)

Although not an infectious disease, head lice outbreaks are common in young children and it is included on the Exclusion list. If head lice are discovered in your child's hair, you will be contacted and required to collect your child from kindergarten. Families must complete the necessary treatment and head lice action form before your child can return to kindergarten. Follow up treatment is the most important step in eliminating head lice.

Please notify your educators if you discover head lice in your child's hair at home. Educators will confidentially notify the group and share treatment information with families so we can minimise infestation in the group.

Washing Hands

We ask that upon arrival at kindergarten, all children proceed to the bathroom and wash their hands. Adult helpers and siblings attending session that day are also asked to wash hands upon arrival. The children are also asked to wash hands before and after eating. We do this as it is good hygiene practice and risk minimisation for children with Anaphylaxis and allergies.

Accidents at Kindergarten

If a child has an accident or is injured at Kindergarten, arrangements will be made to notify the child's parent/guardian immediately. First aid treatment will be carried out and details of the accident / injury will be recorded in an Incident, injury, trauma and illness record in Xplor. Parents/carers will be able to view this record via the Xplor Home app, however you will be asked to read this information and sign and date the record via an iPad on arrival at the service.

In the case of a serious accident or injury, educators are required to submit a report to the Department of Education within 24 hours of the event occurring. A serious accident or injury would be defined as that which requires medical, hospital or ambulance attendance.

Anaphylaxis & Asthma Management

Where a child has been medically diagnosed as at risk of Anaphylaxis or Asthma, the child's family will provide the Centre with an action plan signed by a Doctor, an EpiPen, an AnaPen or Asthma medication and face mask/spacer. In collaboration with the family, the Educators and Committee of Management will adopt a risk minimisation plan. For Anaphylaxis, this may involve excluding certain foods from the centre and other risk minimising strategies.

Administering Medication

Administering medication to a child is an extremely serious matter. If prescribed medication is to be administered, in line with our Administration of Medication policy, the parental request should be accompanied by written medical advice, consent and very clear instructions for its administration. A medication record must be submitted in the child's enrolment record in Xplor.

All medication brought to Kindergarten must be:

- In the original container, bearing the original label and instructions.
- Clearly labelled with the child's name, dosage and expiry date.
- Brought to the attention of the Educators.
- Recorded in the **Medication record via Xplor**.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Please DO NOT leave any medication in your child's kinder bag.

All children with an ongoing illness, allergy, Asthma or other medical condition **MUST** have an action plan signed by both the doctor and parent/guardian. Please ask the Educators for a blank action plan to take to your doctor.

In the case of administering medication in an emergency, educators will contact the parent/guardian as well as an ambulance if required.

Non-prescribed medication (with the exception of sunscreen) will only be administered with authorisation from a health care professional.

Emergency Management

Emergency management procedures will commence if the Nominated Supervisor or Responsible Person in Charge decides the circumstances warrant, or if directed by emergency personnel. Emergency management plans are displayed at various locations throughout the centre. Emergency management drills are carried out each term by Kindergarten staff to ensure the children are familiar with the process. Any visitors to the centre will be asked to participate in Emergency Management drills at these times. Further details are available in the Home Road Kindergarten policy manual located in the foyer or on our website at [Parent resources — Home Road Kindergarten](#).

Photographs, Incursions and Excursions

Photographs

A photographer will attend the Kindergarten during the year to take both individual and group photos of the children. You will be advised when a firm date has been set. These photos will be made available for families to purchase if you wish.

Throughout the year the educators regularly take photos of the children to document the learning that is taking place. We share these photos with you through Xplor and by including them in visual displays in the room. Educators are mindful of asking for children's consent before taking photos and have regular 'photo free' days.

Visitors to Kindergarten, Incursions and Excursions

At various times during the year, visitors are invited to the Kindergarten. These form part of the educational program the children are involved in at the time and are an extension of that program.

Part of the kindergarten budget is used for extra-curricular activities for the children. Examples of activities provided for the children include drama productions, sports, yoga, animals/reptiles, musicians, water safety, road safety, museum/dinosaurs, gardening etc.

We may take the children on local excursions; your child may get to go for a walk to the park, visit the local library or post a letter and buy some fruit at the local shops. These excursions may vary from year to year but all children will have the opportunity to participate and parents/guardians may also be asked to accompany us on the excursion. Due to safety and supervision requirements, siblings are not able to attend excursions.

Our kindergarten is committed to providing a high level of safety for the children in all circumstances. In line with the Education and Care Services National Regulations, a risk assessment must be carried out before authorisation is sought from parents for an excursion. This assessment ensures all risks are identified and assessed and explains how these risks will be managed and minimised, to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all children being taken on the excursion.

You may see fundraising events such as picture plates or movie nights but these are optional events and are provided for your enjoyment and benefit. Scholastic book orders are provided as a service to parents whilst also earning the kindergarten credits to use to purchase books and other resources.

Parent/Teacher Communication

Parent/Teacher communication and Orientation sessions

The Orientation Sessions for three year old groups at the commencement of the year provide an ideal opportunity to share information about your child with the educators. This is also a chance to discuss with your educators, your expectations of Kindergarten for your child.

To support the transition of the four year old kindergarten children into their new groups and into our Home Road Kindergarten community, there will be an opportunity for families to have parent/teacher meetings early in the year. These meetings will first be offered to children with additional needs, medical conditions and new families to our centre. If there are further bookings available, they will then be offered to all other families. However, if you would like to have a more detailed conversation that might aid your child's transition, we encourage you to arrange a separate time with your child's teacher.

We value the opportunity to informally chat to parents regularly throughout the year as a means of sharing information about your child's progress both at home and at Kindergarten. Day-to-day happenings at home can greatly influence your child's behaviour at Kindergarten and ongoing communication between parents and educators is vital in enhancing each child's Kindergarten experience.

More formal arrangements can be made to discuss your child's progress and/or development. Your child's teacher will be happy to arrange a meeting time with you. Teachers can be contacted via phone, email or by starting a conversation on Xplor.

Xplor

Xplor allows for quick and convenient communication, digital sign-ins and attendance and health event tracking. Xplor Office will save time and effort by digitising and streamlining the enrolment process and provide online access to all enrolment and compliance records. Xplor Playground will provide easy sharing of each child's learning and development. Families can view their child's individual learning journeys through the Home app and provide educators with updates (Moments) so tailored learning can continue in the service or home. Playground provides educators with a wide range of tools for managing administration, programming and planning and documenting health and learning. Less time on administration duties means more time to focus on caring for and educating children and engaging with families.

Parental Assistance

Parental assistance at Kindergarten

There are various ways in which you can help with the running of the Kindergarten:

Management Committee

The Committee is made up of volunteer parents and is responsible for the running of the Kindergarten. They are also responsible for employing teaching and administrative staff as well as cleaners, other contractors and maintaining the Kindergarten equipment. Another role of the committee is to organise events outside of the usual kindergarten program, such as Open Day, working bees and fundraising and social activities. Committee meetings are held once a month. Please consider joining the Committee and being involved in the Kindergarten management.

Kinder Helper Roster

You are welcome to bring younger siblings when being a kinder helper.

Parents/carers or other family members are welcome to assist with the program. For example, reading stories to the children, helping with puzzles and games or other special activities, assisting with clean up. At various times, parents or family members have enthusiastically brought with them their own culture, language or special skills, such as gardening, music, drama, cooking, sport and art. They have performed, demonstrated and taught the children. If you have any skills that you'd like to share with the children, please speak to educators.

This roster time provides you with an opportunity to see what your child does at Kindergarten and share with your child what is, at the moment, an important part of their life. If you are unable to be a Kinder helper, please feel welcome to talk to educators about other roles.

Laundry

Families are asked to take home the washing that consists of the art smocks, spare hats, kitchen tea towels and towels approximately once or twice during the year.

Working Bees

The maintenance of the Kindergarten grounds is the responsibility of the parent Committee. Therefore, working bees are held once per term to help with the upkeep of the Kindergarten. It is hoped that each family will be represented. The only people who will miss out if there is little support are the children.

Participation Guidelines

Parents/guardians, family members, volunteers and students on placement are a valued part of our program. Below are some helpful guidelines to ensure your stay with us is enjoyable and fun.

Why do we need guidelines?

The Education and Care Services National Regulations outline specific requirements for the protection of children from hazards, which includes providing adequate supervision at all times. Adequate supervision is defined as constant, active and diligent and involves educators keeping each child within sight or hearing at all times. In line with regulations, parents/guardians and volunteers are not recognised as educators and are therefore unable to be left alone with a child or children at any time.

Parents/guardians, family members and volunteers are encouraged to refer to the Home Road Kindergarten Code of Conduct policy for guidance when attending or assisting at Home Road Kindergarten. All families are asked to agree to and abide by our Code of Conduct policy and participation guidelines and an acknowledgement is included in your child's enrolment records. Here is an excerpt:

I commit to contributing to creating an environment at Home Road Kindergarten that:

- respects the rights of the child and values inclusion and diversity
- acknowledges the vulnerability of Aboriginal children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability and has zero tolerance of discrimination
- maintains a duty of care (refer to policy for Definitions) towards all children at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of each child at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff at the service
- provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- encourages parents/guardians, volunteers, students and community members to support and participate in the program and activities of the service.

Relationships with children

In our relationships with children, I commit to:

- being a positive role model at all times
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions
- allowing children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- maintaining a safe environment for children
- speaking to children in an encouraging and positive manner
- giving each child positive guidance and encouraging appropriate behaviour
- regarding all children equally, and with respect and dignity
- having regard to each child's cultural values
- respecting individual difference including age, physical and intellectual development, and catering for the abilities of each child at the service.

Relationships with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff and others

In my relationships with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff, other parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors I commit to:

- reading and abiding by the Code of Conduct Policy
- developing relationships based on mutual respect
- working in partnership in a courteous, respectful and encouraging manner
- valuing the input of others
- sharing our expertise and knowledge in a considered manner
- respecting the rights of others as individuals

- giving encouraging and constructive feedback, and respecting the value of different professional approaches
- respecting the privacy of children and their families and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know as required under the Privacy and Confidentiality policy
- following the directions of staff at all times
- treating the kindergarten environment with respect
- raising any concerns, including concerns about safety, as soon as possible with staff to ensure that they can be resolved efficiently
- raising any complaints or grievances in accordance with the Complaints and Grievances Policy.

In general

- The centre and staff are responsible for the children who are enrolled and signed in; that is, those children attending the children's program.
- Adults are responsible for all children who accompany them — for example, while on duty and at drop-off and pick-up times — ensuring they do not inhibit or disrupt the program in any way.
- Staff may ask parents/guardians to remove children not enrolled and signed into the program if they are disturbing the program.
- Parents/guardians must clean up after their children following meetings and activities that are not part of the program, such as a working bee, and leave all areas as they were found.
- Parents/guardians will also be responsible for children's behaviour when attending other activities and the child is not signed into the program, such as working bees and centre events.
- Smoking is not permitted on centre property at any time.

Lost Property and Recycled Materials

Lost Property

Labelled items left behind will be kept safe for the next session; all other items will be displayed in the entry area and reminders are posted on Xplor. At the end of each term, if items have not been claimed they will be disposed of. We ask that you do not take items that do not belong to your child.

Recycled Materials

Kindergartens love recycled materials. If you think you have anything that may be useful for us at Home Road, please let us know what you have before bringing it in as we have limited storage space. Scrap paper, foil paper, corks, bottle tops, ribbon, small boxes, wood off-cuts, material etc may be appreciated. Please do not bring in items that may have had nuts or eggs in them or polystyrene.

Children's Artwork

Artwork

During the year your child may create many paintings, drawings and collage works at kinder. When the artwork is dry, they will be placed into your child's locker, hanging pocket or given to them to take home at the end of session. It is the process of creating artwork and not always the finished product that is most important. Children take much pride in their efforts to create and want to share their work with their families.

Second Year Attendance

3 Year Old Kindergarten Program

From 2022 onwards, three year old kindergarten is funded by the Victorian Government therefore it will no longer be possible for children to attend a second year of three year old kindergarten. It is very important that families with children born from January to April need to consider carefully their child's starting age for Kindergarten and School and may need to consider deferring their child to start attending a year later. Please speak to us if you have any queries or concerns.

4 Year Old Kindergarten Program

The Department of Education (DE) provides funding to support children to access a four year old kindergarten program in the year before they start school. When considering whether a second year of funded four year old kindergarten will benefit a child, the early childhood teacher and parent must ensure that the child meets the eligibility criteria for a second year. Parents cannot elect for their child to attend for a second year, there is a process to be followed and paperwork to complete and submit to DE. For more information, please refer to pages 5 and 6 of our Kindergarten Information Guide, speak with your child's teacher and refer to the DE website at [Does my child need a second year of kindergarten? | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

Centre Policies

Home Road Kindergarten Policy Manual

A full copy of all Kindergarten policies are available to view on our website [Parent resources — Home Road Kindergarten](#) and also available in a folder in our foyer for parents to read; please note, the folder must not be removed from the centre. Please see staff or committee members for its location. Please do not hesitate to raise any concerns with staff or committee of management members. All parents are welcome to attend committee meetings if they have an issue to discuss. Minutes of meetings are available to parents upon request.