



Kindergarten Information Guide

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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Purpose of this Information Guide

This guide is to provide you with information about Home Road Kindergarten to help prepare you and your child for the Kinder year. It may promote some questions for you to ask during Orientation and is also useful to share with other carers who may be involved in your child's Kindergarten year. You will receive a detailed Handbook later this year and may wish to visit [Education - information for parents | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/education-information-for-parents) for practical information for parents.

Kindergarten Readiness

Kindergarten is an important time for a young child and for many children, it can be their first experience away from parents or caregivers. It is important that you help your child prepare for Kinder so their first experiences are as comfortable as possible. The following tips may be helpful to you:

- Talk about Kinder in everyday conversations. Go for a walk past Kinder in the holidays.
- If your child is not used to leaving you even for short periods, organise to leave your child with a friend for a few hours.
- Discuss any concerns that you may have with the Kindergarten educators during your Orientation Session (3yo) or Parent/Teacher meeting (4yo) at the start of the year.
- Ensure that you attend the Orientation Session. During the session, be sure to show your child the toilets and where their bag and belongings go. Introduce your child to the educators.
- Help your child to be confident and settle well by being positive and confident about Kinder.

Families can find more information here [Starting kindergarten | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/starting-kindergarten)

Four year old Parent/Teacher meetings

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 before the Kinder year commences. 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 will provide more details on this booking process at a later date. *Please note: three year old families have the opportunity to discuss their child's needs during the orientation session.*

Starting the year

To start the year for **four year old kindergarten** groups, the first session will be considered their orientation, a half session in half groups to allow children and educators some time to get to know each other. The normal timetable will be offered for four year old groups from Friday, 2 February 2024.

For **three year old kindergarten** groups, the first weeks of the Kindergarten year will run with a modified timetable to allow educators and children to get to know each other better. This will include shortened session times and half group attendance to ensure children are as relaxed as possible and do not get over-tired. There will first be an orientation session where a parent/carer stays with the child to familiarise them with the Kinder environment and introduce them to educators.

All children settle into the kinder routine in their own way, with some adapting quicker than others. Families can decide as to how best to induct their child into kindergarten and may choose for their child to attend shorter hours in the first weeks. Please discuss your child's needs with the educators and ensure that parents/carers are contactable by phone in the early weeks.

Toilet training: We strongly encourage children to be toilet trained before commencing kindergarten, unless there is a recognised issue or additional need. Please discuss with your child's teacher any concerns you may have regarding your child not achieving this prior to kinder commencing. Maternal and Child Health Nurses can also provide some guidance and strategies to assist you and your child.

Commencement of Three year old Program

Children must have turned three years old to attend this program and for those entering the program later in the year, must turn three years old by 30 April. Children CANNOT commence attending Kindergarten until they are three years of age. For younger children who do not complete the standard induction process at the start of the year, families can discuss with their child's teacher how best to induct their child. This may include attending shorter session times, or having a parent/carer stay with them for short periods.

Families with children born between 1 January and 30 April need to make an informed choice about which year they would like their child to commence school and therefore, which year their child will attend a funded three year old and four year old Kindergarten program. For those families who decide their child will start school in the year they turn six, parents will need to consider deferring their child's start to three year old Kindergarten. As three year old Kindergarten is now funded by the State Government, **there will be no opportunity to access a second year of three year old Kindergarten.** If you have any queries regarding when your child should start Kindergarten or school, please contact us to discuss.

Immunisation Legislation

The State Government legislation, known as "No Jab No Play", requires children to be fully immunised before they can commence at early childhood education and care services. The only exception is if your child has a medical contraindication from a doctor, or if your child meets the eligibility criteria for the 16 week 'Grace Period'.

An immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) is the only form of evidence that can be used to show your child's vaccinations are up to date for their age. ***Please note: Your child's place will not be confirmed until we receive the required evidence.***

Other immunisation records, such as your child's MCHN book, a letter from a medical doctor or a local Council immunisation service, a 'homeopathic immunisation' or a statutory declaration from you are not acceptable.

Evidence of up-to-date immunisation must be provided within the two months before your child commences at our service.

The quickest way to get your statement is by using your Medicare online account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Alternatively, you can request an immunisation history statement in person at your local Medical service centre or call the AIR enquiries line on 1800 653 809 to request a statement is posted to you. It can take 14 days to get your statement in the post.

If you are short of time, you can ask your GP or immunisation nurse if they can print your child's immunisation history statement directly from the AIR. Note, not all immunisation providers can do this. If you are experiencing difficulties accessing vaccinations or required related documents, please contact us for assistance as soon as possible. In some cases, children can commence at the service while the required documents are obtained.

Families who are not eligible to hold a Medicare card can ask their immunisation provider to print an Immunisation History Statement or they must call the AIR to request an Immunisation History Statement to be posted (up to 2 weeks for delivery).

A Translating and Interpreting Service is available by calling 131 450, Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:45pm.

Parents can read more about these laws here: [No Jab No Play - Better Health Channel](#)

Enrolment of children with a birth date between 1 January and 30 April¹

All children are eligible to access a funded three year old kindergarten program from 5 hours up to 15 hours per week from 2023 (hours offered will vary at each service). This funding is provided for one year only, there is no option to complete a second year of three year old kindergarten. Parents can read more about three year old kindergarten here [Give your child the best start | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start)

All children are eligible to access a funded four year old kindergarten program of 15 hours per week for 40 weeks (or 600 hours) in the year before school.

Families of children with birth dates between 1 January and 30 April have a choice about whether their child will commence school in the year they turn five or the following year, and therefore whether they commence four year old kindergarten in the year they turn four or the year they turn five.

All children learn and develop in different ways. Some children may benefit from starting school at a younger age, while other children may benefit from starting later. Families with children born between 1 January and 30 April need to make an informed choice about which year they would like their child to commence school and therefore which year their child will attend a funded three year old and four year old kindergarten program.

Prior to enrolment, families with children who are born between 1 January and 30 April need to choose carefully, as children are expected to complete a full year of kindergarten in the year they enrol and begin attending and are only funded for two years of kindergarten before school (unless they are eligible for a second year of four year old funded kindergarten).

Families who have questions about the best time for their child to commence school, and hence kindergarten, are encouraged to discuss this decision with an early childhood teacher, Maternal and Child Health Nurse, Pre School Field Officer (PSFO) through Hobsons Bay City Council, Prep teacher or School Principal and other professionals involved in supporting the development of their child.

Early childhood teachers can help to reassure concerned families by discussing the ways in which their child's individual learning and development needs can be supported within the kindergarten program.

During the four year old kindergarten year, the early childhood teacher and the child's parents will work together to plan for the child's transition to school. This will involve open and honest communication about the child's learning and development, and strategies to facilitate a smooth transition.

Guidelines for a Second Year of Four Year Old Kindergarten

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. In most cases it is appropriate for a child to transition to school after their kindergarten year. Schools are responsible for ensuring all students have access to a quality education that meets their diverse needs and are obligated under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* to make adjustments to accommodate students with a disability.

In exceptional circumstances where a child is observed to display delays in key outcome areas of learning and development, the possibility of a second year of funded four year old kindergarten may be considered.

However, a second year should only be considered where the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program and environment for that individual child, and that the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

Careful consideration should be given to this decision as in many cases, school can be the most appropriate environment for a child with identified delays or disabilities for a number of reasons including:

- increased contact time in an educational environment
- strong peer/friendship group support
- access to additional support, equipment or specialist staff.

¹ Sourced from The Kindergarten Funding Guide, *Department of Education*

It is important to consider the anticipated barriers to the child achieving good outcomes in school and what the experience of an additional year in kindergarten will provide to address these barriers.

From the time of enrolment in a kindergarten program, regular communication between the parent and the early childhood teacher in relation to a child's learning and development is very important. If a parent and/or early childhood teacher observes that a child's learning and development is not progressing at a rate similar to their peers, strategies can be planned and implemented to support the child's learning and development in those specific areas.

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.

A child receiving Early Childhood Intervention Services support may be eligible for a second year of funded four year old kindergarten; however this should not be assumed to be the case. A full second year assessment process must be carried out for each individual child for whom a second year is being considered, as depending on the child's circumstance it may be appropriate for the child to transition to school rather than a second year of kindergarten.

Eligibility

Determining eligibility for a second year of funded kindergarten

The early childhood teacher is responsible for determining a child's eligibility to receive a second year of four year old funded kindergarten. The assessment for determining eligibility should factor in:

- ongoing observations over the time they have spent with the child
- any formal assessments undertaken, which can be supported by Pre School Field Officers and tools such as Early Abilities Based Learning and Education Support
- consultation with the child's parents.

Eligibility criteria

The early childhood teacher can declare that a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded four year old kindergarten if:

- the child is observed as having delays in at least two outcome areas of learning and development detailed in the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*; and
- there is evidence to suggest the child will achieve better outcomes if they attend a second year of four year old kindergarten to strengthen the learning and development of skills in these areas and better facilitate transition to school the following year.

Assessing against outcomes

To declare that a child is eligible to receive a second year of funded four year old kindergarten, the early childhood teacher must have observed a delay in at least two of the following five outcome areas as identified in the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*:

- identity (emotional development)
- community (social development)
- wellbeing (self care)
- learning (cognitive development)
- communication (receptive/expressive language)

For more information, please speak to your child's teacher and refer to the DE website at [Does my child need a second year of kindergarten? | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](https://www.vic.gov.au/does-my-child-need-a-second-year-of-kindergarten)

National Quality Framework

To ensure Australian children get the best possible start in life, all Australian governments agreed to implement the National Quality Framework (NQF) for Early Childhood Education and Care. The NQF sets consistent, high quality standards for early childhood education and care, and outside school hours care services. It typically covers long day care, preschool/kindergarten, outside school hours and family day care services across Australia. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority or ACECQA guides the implementation of the National Quality Framework across Australia.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) sets benchmarks for the quality of children's education and care services in Australia. The NQS highlights the importance of children's development and education as well as relationships with families. Services are assessed and rated against seven quality areas that make up the NQS. Each service receives an overall NQS rating and a rating for each of the seven quality areas. **Home Road Kindergarten has been rated as Exceeding the National Quality Standards in all seven quality areas.**

The Early Years Learning Framework is a national document that compliments the NQF by providing educators with specific learning outcomes for the early childhood years. There are five outcomes; Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning and Communication which form the basis of our program.

To read more about the NQF, NQS and ratings, please visit StartingBlocks.gov.au | [Early Childhood Education & Care](#)

Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme

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. These Standards have been updated from 1 July 2022 to further protect children and to ensure they feel safe.

Victorian early childhood services also need to comply with the Reportable Conduct Scheme which is overseen by the Commission for Children and Young People, to respond to allegations of child abuse.

Parents can read more about this here:

[Information-for-Parents-and-Carers-about-the-Child-Safe-Standards.pdf \(ccyp.vic.gov.au\)](#)
[CCYP | Recognising, respecting and defending the rights of children and young people](#)

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.

Kindergarten Handbook

You will be provided with a detailed handbook at a later date, which outlines all you need to know about bringing your child to Kinder to make it a fun, enjoyable and safe learning experience. The following topics are highlights from the Handbook and you will be able to access a full copy on our website:

- **Suitable Clothing**
 - Ensure your child is dressed in comfortable, easy to manage clothing which provides coverage in summer to meet our Sun Protection Policy and warm clothes in winter for outdoor play.
 - We prefer that children do not wear expensive/fancy clothes to Kinder, as this can cause them to be anxious and worry about getting dirty.
 - Thongs or Crocs are dangerous when climbing and running and therefore should not be worn at Kindergarten. Sandals and runners are ideal.
 - Please label all belongings, especially those that are removed such as coats, jumpers, hats.
 - Throughout the year, please ensure your child always has a change of clothes in their Kinder bag.

- **Sun Protection Policy**
 - Each child and educator will be required to have appropriate head, shoulder and leg coverings during attendance at Kindergarten. No singlets or strappy dresses to be worn.
 - Legionnaire hats are supplied for all children. Baseball style caps do not meet SunSmart requirements.
 - We require children to come to Kindergarten wearing appropriate hats and sunscreen on days of risk to ultraviolet exposure, particularly during the months between August through to April.

- **Drop off and pick up of children**
 - It is in the best interest of your child that you ensure that they are dropped off on time and collected promptly at the end of each Kindergarten session.
 - We need authorisation in Xplor of all persons who will be collecting children and photo ID may be required.
 - A late collection fee may be applicable if you don't arrive to collect your child on time– refer to policy.

- **Personal Items – Please advise your child to keep all toys and personal items at home and ensure they refrain from taking them to Kindergarten as they may get lost or broken.**

- **Morning/Afternoon Snacks/Lunch**
 - Your child may need to bring either a morning and/or afternoon snack and lunch, including a water bottle. All containers should be labelled.
 - The food should be packed in a container the child can open themselves, such as a lunch box or cooler bag and please include ice packs as refrigeration is not available.
 - We are a NO NUT and NO EGG Kindergarten so please ensure you DO NOT pack nuts or nut products (no Nutella or peanut butter), whole eggs or quiche in your child's lunchbox (other food limitations may be advised at the start of the year).

- **Illness and Absence**
 - Within such a small community as Kindergarten, colds and other infectious diseases are easily transmitted. We ask you to keep your child at home during the acute stages of any illness to minimise the spread of infectious diseases or other germs. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there are stricter hygiene, safety and illness measures in place.
 - If prescribed medication is to be administered then the parental request should be accompanied by written medical advice, consent and very clear instructions for its administration. The medication must be in its original packaging with label intact, bearing the child's name, dosage, instructions and expiry date. Please pass the medication directly to the educators – do not leave it in your child's bag.
 - In the event of sudden illness or accident of a child, emergency procedures will take place and parents will be contacted. Further details are available in the Home Road Kindergarten policy manual located in the foyer or on our website.

- Parental Assistance at Kindergarten. There are various ways in which you can help with the running of the Kindergarten:
 - The Kindergarten is run by a Committee of Management, made up of volunteer parents and meetings are held once a month. Please consider joining the Committee or Subcommittees and being involved in the operations of the Kindergarten.
 - Laundry. Parents are asked to take home the washing that consists of hats, towels and kitchen tea 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 during the year to help with the upkeep of the Kindergarten.
 - 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. Bottle tops, scrap paper, foil paper, corks, small boxes, wood off-cuts, material etc may be appreciated.
 - Families are encouraged to participate in our helper roster or you may be asked to assist with excursions. Parents/carers or other family members are encouraged to attend when invited to help assist with the program. You are welcome to bring siblings when being a helper (except on excursions).

Funding information

1. Free Kinder

The Victorian Government, Department of Education (DE) provides funding for each child enrolled and attending kindergarten in the two years before school. The Government expansion of the 'Best Start, Best Life' program means that from 2023, 15 hours per week of four-year-old kindergarten and between 5 to 15 hours of three-year-old kindergarten will be free for all families. Read more here [Best Start, Best Life: Early Childhood Education That Works | Premier of Victoria](#)

DE provided a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy that enables children from eligible families to attend a kindergarten program free of charge in the two years before school. DE also provided Early Start Kindergarten funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, from a refugee or asylum seeker background or children known to Child Protection/Child First/Orange Door, to access 15 hours of kindergarten programs free of charge.

As part of DE funding guidelines and requirements, we are still required to collect this information from families for reporting purposes, even though Kindergarten programs are now free for all families.

2. Other charges

Other charges levied by Home Road Kindergarten may include:

- **Excursion/service event charge:** At times throughout the year an additional excursion(s) or event(s) may be arranged where it is considered relevant to the service's program and the children's interests. At this time any additional costs to families are taken into consideration before a decision is made (refer to *Excursions and Service Events Policy*).
- **Late collection charge:** The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the service (refer to Delivery and Collection of Children policy). It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to collect their child/ren promptly at the conclusion of a session. This charge will be set at a level determined by the Committee of Management. A late collection fee may be applied when:
 - The parents/guardians are between 15 and 30 minutes late in collecting their child. The fee will be based on \$10 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 for every 10 minutes, or part thereof, for the first 30 minutes from the conclusion of the session and then \$15 for every 10 minutes or part thereof, after that.

Please note, if the parents/guardians cannot be contacted and do not collect their child within one hour from the conclusion of the session, Child Protection, local police and DE may be contacted.

3. Fundraising

Not all service costs are covered by DE per capita and Free Kinder funding. Fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and communities to come together. The Committee of Management will ensure that fundraising income is kept separate from the service's operating budget and that families will be informed about expenditure of fundraising income.

4. Subsidies

4.1 Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy information is collected by DE for eligible children attending between 5 to 15 hours of three-year-old kindergarten (hours offered vary at each service) and 15 hours of four-year-old kindergarten free of charge. Eligibility conditions may change from time-to-time and must be checked in the most recent edition of the Kindergarten Funding Guide.

Your child is eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy:

- if your child identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- if your child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more).

or if your child holds or has a parent or guardian who holds, one of the following:

- a Commonwealth Health Care Card
- a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
- a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or White Card
- Refugee or Asylum Seeker visa (200-204, 786 or 866)
- Bridging visas for any of the above Refugee or Asylum Seeker visas

If your family or child has a humanitarian or refugee visa listed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection which is not included in the above list, your child may still be eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy.

Where a child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, no verification is required.

In all other instances, supporting documentation should be sighted by the service on acceptance of a place or on commencement in the program, however where there are delays, such as in obtaining health care cards for children in out-of-home care, the delay should not provide a barrier to the child accessing the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy.

4.2 Early Start Kindergarten funding

Early Start Kindergarten funding gives eligible children up to 15 hours of free kindergarten a week for two years before starting school.

To be eligible, the child must be three by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and meet one of the following criteria:

- be from a refugee or asylum seeker background
- identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- your family has had contact with Child Protection/Child First/Orange Door.

Children can also access free Four-Year-Old Kindergarten through the Early Start Kindergarten Extension Grant. Contact the service for further information.

5. Children turning three during the year of enrolment

Children can only commence the program when they have turned three (must be prior to 30 April in year of attendance).

Home Road Kindergarten Policies

A full copy of all Kindergarten policies are available in our Policy folder in the Kindergarten foyer for families to read, however, it must not be removed from the centre. The policies are also available for viewing on our website; [Parent resources — Home Road Kindergarten](#). We encourage all families to make themselves familiar with our policies and procedures as this is an important aspect of our centre operations and our collaborative partnership with families. Please do not hesitate to raise any questions or concerns with educators, staff or committee of management members. Parents are invited to attend committee meetings if they have a topic they wish to discuss. Minutes of committee meetings are available to parents upon request.

Code of Conduct Policy

Purpose

This policy provides a clear set of guidelines and procedures for Home Road Kindergarten to:

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

Policy statement

Values

Home Road Kindergarten:

- acknowledges the Boon Wurrung people of the Kulin Nation as the traditional owners and custodians of the land on which the kindergarten is located and pays respect to elders past and present
- is committed to being an inclusive learning environment that welcomes, supports and celebrates all children and families
- respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- values the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability
- has zero tolerance of discrimination
- maintains a duty of care (*refer to Definitions*) towards all children at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff and the members of our service's community
- is committed to supporting staff to act cohesively and ethically as a team and provide an environment that is conducive to children's learning and development
- provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- encourages relationships that are based on the principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness
- encourages both adults and children to identify and raise concerns through the appropriate channels to maintain a culture of reporting and pro-actively responding to concerns
- encourages volunteers, students, parents/guardians and visitors to support and participate in the program and activities of the service.

Scope

This policy applies to the approved provider, persons with management or control, nominated supervisor, persons in day-to-day charge, early childhood teachers, educators, other staff, students, volunteers, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Home Road Kindergarten, including during offsite excursions and activities.

Background and legislation

Background

Codes of conduct establish standards of behaviour to be followed and define how individuals are expected to behave towards each other, towards the children in their care, and towards other organisations and individuals in the community.

The approved provider, nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff have a duty of care to the children attending the service and must ensure ‘that every reasonable precaution is taken to protect children being educated and cared for by the service from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury’ (*National Law: Section 167*).

The *National Quality Standard* requires that all staff be respectful and ethical and that ‘professional standards guide practice, interactions and relationships’ (*National Quality Standard: 4.2 and 4.2.2*). Employers also have a legal responsibility to provide, as far as is practicable, a safe workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and harassment.

Child Safe Standard 11 requires services to develop policies and procedures to address all Child Safe Standards, including a Code of Conduct policy that sets out the expectations for behaviour and responsibilities of staff and volunteers.

A Code of Conduct should be informed by the service’s philosophy, beliefs and values, and based on ethical principles of mutual respect, equity and fairness. Consideration should be given to the Victorian Teaching Profession *Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics* and to the Early Childhood Australia’s *Code of Ethics* in developing the code of conduct.

The approved provider must ensure that the nominated supervisor, early childhood teachers, educators, other staff, contractors, volunteers, students on placement, parents/guardians, children and others attending the programs and activities of Home Road Kindergarten adhere to the expectations outlined in the Code of Conduct when communicating to and interacting with:

- children at the service and their parents and family members
- each other
- others in the community.

Legislation and standards

Relevant legislation and standards include but are not limited to:

- Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006 (Vic)
- Child Safe Standards (Vic)
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (Vic)
- Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005 (Vic)
- Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth)
- Early Childhood Australia’s Code of Ethics (2016)
- Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010: Sections 166, 167, 173, 174
- Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011: Regulations 83, 155, 156, 157, 168, 170, 171, 174, 175, 176
- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)
- Fair Work Regulations 2009 (Cth)
- National Quality Standard, Quality Area 4: Staffing Arrangements
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2007
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975
- Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)
- Victorian Institute of Teaching the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct
- Victorian Institute of Teaching the Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Ethics

The most current amendments to listed legislation can be found at:

- Victorian Legislation – Victorian Law Today: <http://www.legislation.vic.gov.au>
- Commonwealth Legislation – Federal Register of Legislation: www.legislation.gov.au

Definitions

The terms defined in this section relate specifically to this policy. For regularly used terms e.g. Approved provider, Nominated supervisor, Notifiable Complaints, Serious Incidents, Duty of Care, etc. refer to the Definitions file of the PolicyWorks catalogue.

Behaviour: the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others.

Bullying: Repeated verbal, physical, social or psychological behaviour that is harmful and involves the misuse of power by an individual or group towards one or more persons. Bullying occurs when one or more people deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another person, damage their property, reputation or social acceptance.

Ethical conduct: Behaviour which reflects values or a code of conduct.

Harassment: When someone is demeaning, derogatory or intimidating towards another person. Harassment includes:

- racial taunts
- taunts about sexual orientation or gender identity
- sexual harassment: unwelcome physical, verbal or written behaviour of a sexual nature
- repeated insulting remarks.

Investigator: A person/staff member assigned or organisation engaged with the responsibility of investigating suspected breaches of the Code of Conduct by the Approved provider

Physical attack: the direct or indirect application of force by a person to the body of, or to clothing or equipment worn by another person, where that application creates a risk to health and safety.

Respect: Demonstrating regard for the rights of individuals, for different values and points of views.

Sexual harassment: includes offensive gestures, leering, staring or suggestive comments about a person's physical appearance, inappropriate physical contact, unwanted invitations of a sexual manner, sexually orientated jokes, sending of obscene letters, notes, telephone texts or emails.

Support: Work in a co-operative and positive manner.

Threat: a statement or behaviour that causes a person to believe they are in danger of being physically attacked.

Unreasonable behaviour: includes actions of individuals or a group and may involve using a system of work as a means of victimising, humiliating, undermining, or threatening.

Verbal harassment: includes name-calling, offensive language, putting people down.

Sources and related policies

Sources

- Early Childhood Australia, *Code of Ethics*: <http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/our-publications/eca-code-ethics/>
- United Nations, *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>
- United Nations, *Convention on The Rights of the Child*: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>
- Victoria Legal Aid: www.legalaid.vic.gov.au
- Victorian Institute of Teaching – The Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics: <http://www.vit.vic.edu.au>
- Commission for Children and Young People: www.ccyp.vic.gov.au

Service policies

- *Child Safe Environment*
- *Complaints and Grievances*
- *Delivery and Collection of Children*
- *Inclusion and Equity*
- *Information Communication Technology*
- *Interactions with Children*
- *Occupational Health and Safety*

- Privacy and Confidentiality
- Relaxation and Sleep
- Staffing
- Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Providing a safe environment for everyone attending the programs and activities of Home Road Kindergarten	√	√	√		
Providing a workplace that is free from unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and bullying where all persons attending are treated with dignity, courtesy and respect	√	√	√		
Ensuring racism within the service is identified, confronted and not tolerated	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that the children educated and cared for at Home Road Kindergarten are protected from harm and from any hazard likely to cause injury (<i>National Law: Section 167</i>)	√	√	√		
Providing guidance through leadership and by being a positive role model; putting children first, prioritising training and education and having a culture of continuous improvement	√	√			
Developing, updating and reviewing Code of Conduct for Home Road Kindergarten in collaboration with all stakeholders within the service (<i>refer to Attachments 1 and 3</i>)	√	√	√	√	
Ensuring that early childhood teachers/educators/other staff, students and parents/guardians are provided with a copy of this policy on employment, engagement or enrolment at the service and that the current codes of conduct are publicly available on the website and promoted to everyone including contractors and visitors	√	√			
Ensuring that codes of conduct are discussed at staff meetings to reinforce expectations	√	√			
Developing a culture of accountability within the service for complying with the code of conduct and responding when behavioural expectations are not adhered to	√	√	√	√	√
Providing an environment that encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another to the codes of conduct	√	√	√	√	√
Ensuring that parents/guardians of a child attending the service can enter the service premises at any time that the child is being educated and cared for (<i>Regulation 157</i>), except where this may pose a risk to the safety of children or staff, or conflict with any duty of care of the approved provider, nominated supervisor or early childhood teachers and educators under the <i>National Law: Section 167 & 171</i>	√	√			
Ensuring that contractors, volunteers, parent/guardians, students or visitors at the service are not placed in a situation where they are left alone with a child	√	√	√		
Ensuring all staff and volunteers receive relevant cultural training so they have an understanding of Aboriginal culture, and an appreciation for culturally sensitive issues	√	√			

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Respecting individual abilities, needs, cultural practices and beliefs in all interactions, both verbal and non-verbal. Paying particular attention to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disability and children from CALD backgrounds	√	√	√	√	√
Engaging in open, two-way communication with families and communities about the service's child safety approach and providing relevant and accessible information	√	√	√		
Ensuring all staff, contractors, volunteers and students do not consume or are under the influence of alcohol or be affected by drugs (<i>refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy</i>)	√	√			
Not consuming or being under the influence of alcohol or be affected by drugs (<i>refer to Tobacco, Alcohol and other Drugs Policy</i>)	√	√	√	√	√
Notifying DET within 24 hours of a serious incident (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or of a notifiable complaint being made (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) at the service (<i>National Law: Sections 174(2)(b) and 174(4), National Regulations: Regulations 175(2)(c) and 176(2)(b)</i>) via the NQAITS	√	√			
Referring notifiable complaints (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), grievances or complaints that are unable to be resolved appropriately and in a timely manner to the Grievances Subcommittee/investigator (<i>refer to Complaints and Grievances Policy</i>)	√	√			
Notifying Worksafe of any reportable incidents (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) that have occurred in the workplace	√	√			
Activating the <i>Complaints and Grievances Policy</i> on notification of a breach of the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>	√	√			
Taking appropriate disciplinary or legal action, or reviewing the terms of employment in the event of misconduct or a serious breach of the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>	√				
Contacting police in an emergency situation where it is believed that there is an immediate risk, such as when violence has been threatened or perpetrated or where sexual abuse or grooming is suspected as outlined in the <i>Child Safe Environment Policy</i> .	√	√	√	√	√
Reading the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i> (<i>refer to Attachment 1</i>) and signing the Code of Conduct Acknowledgement for staff (<i>refer to Attachment 2</i>) and that these are filed with individual staff records upon engagement in the service		√	√		
Adhering to the Code of Conduct at all times	√	√	√	√	√
Informing the approved provider in the event of a serious incident (<i>refer to Definitions</i>), of a notifiable complaint (<i>refer to Definitions</i>) or of a breach of the <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>		√	√		
Providing an environment that encourages positive interactions, supports constructive feedback and holds one another to the codes of conduct	√	√	√		
Ensuring that parents/guardians, students and volunteers sign the Code of Conduct Acknowledgement (<i>refer to Attachment 4</i>)	√	√		√	√
Ensuring educators include child safety information in the program and share with families	√	√	√		

RESPONSIBILITIES	Approved provider and persons with management or control	Nominated supervisor and persons in day-to-day charge	Early childhood teachers, educators and all other staff	Parents/guardians	Contractors, volunteers and students
Understanding and accepting that serious breaches of this code will be deemed misconduct and may lead to disciplinary or legal action, or a review of their employment		√	√	√	√
Being attentive to signs of harm and facilitating child-friendly ways for children to communicate and raise their concerns	√	√	√		√
Reporting and acting on any concerns or observed breaches of this <i>Code of Conduct Policy</i>		√	√	√	√
Ensuring duties are performed in a professional, safe and satisfactory manner at all times.	√	√	√		√
BOLD tick √ indicates legislation requirement					

Code of conduct for parents/guardians, students, volunteers, contractors and visitors

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

- respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- acknowledges the vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander 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 *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 my 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, Persons with Management or Control, Nominated Supervisor, staff and others

In my relationships with the Approved Provider, Persons with Management or Control, 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 early childhood 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*.

Privacy statement

We believe your privacy is important. Home Road Kindergarten has developed a *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* that illustrates how we collect, use, disclose, manage and transfer personal information, including health information. This policy is available on our website.

To ensure ongoing funding and licensing, our service is required to comply with the requirements of privacy legislation in relation to the collection and use of personal information. If we need to collect health information, our procedures are subject to the *Health Records Act 2001*. The Child Information and Family Violence Information Sharing Scheme allows Early Childhood Services to freely request and share relevant information with Information Sharing Entities to support a child or group of children's wellbeing and safety when the threshold test has been met.

Purpose for which information is collected

The reasons for which we generally collect personal information are given in the table below.

Personal information and health information collected in relation to:	Primary purpose for which information will be used:
Children and parents/guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable us to provide for the education and care of the child attending the service To manage and administer the service as required
The members of the Committee of Management if the Approved Provider is an organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the management of the service To comply with relevant legislation requirements
Job applicants, employees, contractors, volunteers and students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assess and (if necessary) to engage employees, contractors, volunteers or students To administer the individual's employment, contracts or placement of students and volunteers

Please note that under relevant privacy legislation, other uses and disclosures of personal information may be permitted, as set out in that legislation.

Disclosure of personal information, including health information

Some personal information, including health information, held about an individual may be disclosed to:

- government departments or agencies, as part of our legal and funding obligations
- local government authorities, for planning purposes
- organisations providing services related to employee entitlements and employment
- insurance providers, in relation to specific claims or for obtaining cover
- law enforcement agencies
- health organisations and/or families in circumstances where the person requires urgent medical assistance and is incapable of giving permission
- anyone to whom the individual authorises us to disclose information
- information sharing entities to support a child or a group of children's wellbeing and safety.

Laws that require us to collect specific information

The *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*, *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic)* and employment-related laws and agreements require us to collect specific information about individuals from time-to-time. Failure to provide the required information could affect:

- a child's enrolment at the service
- a person's employment with the service
- the ability to function as an incorporated association.

Access to information

Individuals about whom we hold personal, sensitive or health information are able to gain access to this information in accordance with applicable legislation. The procedure for doing this is set out in our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, which is available on our website or by request.