



PARENT
HANDBOOK

BURCH MEMORIAL PRE-SCHOOL WONGA PARK

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Dear Parents,

Welcome to Burch Memorial Pre-School, Wonga Park. We are looking forward to getting to know you and hope that by working together, we may all have a happy and rewarding kindergarten year.

It is important that you are aware of the role of the kindergarten and the type of education environment that your child will be participating in. It is our hope that you will find the following information beneficial in helping you understand and take an active part in your child's education.

A Brief History

On the 9th May 1972, Keith and Elsie Burch and their three children; Trevor, Craig and Anne-Marie along with their nephew Wayne Kear, were killed in a tragic road accident one mile north of Lilydale. Their many friends in Wonga Park formed the Burch Family Remembrance Fund Committee to collect donations for a memorial for this well-loved family.

At the same time, the Wonga Park and District Residents Association had established a local need for a pre-school centre and it was decided to use the money raised to fund such a centre with Council and Government assistance.

On Saturday 29th June 1974, Mr Clarke, the Minister, opened the pre-school centre with a dedication service from the Church of Christ, Croydon. Over 200 people attended including relatives of the Burch family and local residents. The first children attended the centre on Monday 1st July 1974. The Shire President, Cr M Seymour, officially commissioned the building for the Shire of Lilydale on Saturday 24th August 1974.

At the beginning of 2005 the pre-school moved to new purpose-built premises, part of the Manningham Council's Integrated Community Facility, on the opposite side of Old Yarra Road. The special origins of this pre-school were honored by a Memorial Plaque and a new variety of camellia named KETCAM (the initials of the Burch family) by a family friend, which sported its first flower in 1977. The plaque has been relocated from the original building to the front entrance area of the new building and a new commemorative lemon tree has been planted. The original camellia remains in its special position at the old site, which is now part of the Wonga Park CFA administration building.

Burch Memorial Pre-School Philosophy

At Burch Memorial Preschool, we aim to always provide a happy, safe, emotionally and socially enriching environment that nurtures the development of the whole child. Our curriculum is based on sound principles of child development and education and encompasses all the interactions, routines, experiences (planned and spontaneous) and activities that occur on a day-to-day basis. In early 2020 Burch Memorial was rated by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority as EXCEEDING the National Standards. The National Quality Standard (NQS) upheld by the Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority, promotes continuous quality improvement. Ratings promote transparency and accountability and help parents assess the quality of education and care services available. We are pleased to have received our rating for each quality area and an overall rating of EXCEEDING in the National Quality Standards. This rating would not have been achieved without the combined effort and dedication of Burch Memorial's educators, assistants, committee-members and parents

We believe in the VEYLDF learning outcomes that:

- children have a strong sense of identity (Identity)
- children are connected with and contribute to their world (Community)
- children have a strong sense of wellbeing (Wellbeing)
- children are confident and involved learners (Learning)
- children are effective communicators (Communication).

The practice principles of the VEYLDF underpin our pedagogy and are used to help us achieve the learning outcomes.

We aim to provide:

- family-centred practice
- partnerships with professionals
- high expectations for every child
- equity and diversity
- respectful relationships and responsive engagement
- integrated teaching and learning approaches
- assessment for learning and development
- reflective practice.

Our welcoming, nurturing and supportive atmosphere promotes a sense of belonging in the children, families and staff that share our community. When children's experiences of relationships and places are positive, they develop an understanding of themselves as significant and respected. We aim to provide an environment that is inclusive and recognises, celebrates and builds on the diverse cultural backgrounds, languages, abilities and special needs of all children and their families. We value and respect families and work together to develop and maintain positive relationships and to share the experiences that shape children's learning and development, fostering their confidence, a sense of belonging and a love of learning.

We view creative play as the best medium for learning. Creativity is always encouraged and we aim to always provide a program that incorporates a balance of open-ended

learning experiences and intentional teaching that takes into account the various ways children learn. Our curriculum seeks to build a connection with and a sense of wonder in nature and concern for present and future sustainability through growing plants, using tank water, composting, minimising waste and using/recycling materials thoughtfully.

Staff ensure that their interactions with the children and their families are at all times ethical and of consistent high quality. The experience of responsive, respectful interactions with others strengthens a child's interest and skills as they become active participants in their community. Staff have a strong commitment to constantly challenge and update their skills and knowledge through ongoing professional development. We value a strong team approach showing trust, respect and support for each other.

Curriculum

Kindergarten is a fun and special time for your child. There are many exciting events that take place and a lot of learning as well. Kindergarten is different from other educational centres in that the program seems informal, yet it is very carefully planned. Educators plan a weekly program that is based on the interests and needs of the children within their group.

These programs take into account our belief that:

- every child is a unique individual, with unique rates of learning and development
- a child learns best through experiencing a situation
- a child learns best through play
- children are active learners and require a stimulating and challenging environment, where they are able to work towards their full potential of learning
- children need to feel good about themselves to enable them to have a desire to learn.

Kindergarten is a play based learning environment, but this play is carefully observed, guided and scaffolded to extend the children's skills and maximize their learning. Play is an essential part of a child's growth and development. Through structured and unstructured play, your child will develop personal skills, such as confidence, self-esteem, communication skills, tolerance, problem solving and co- operation. Through play, children learn to; experiment, create, express themselves and make sense of their world.

The activities we provide at kinder:

- offer children opportunities to explore, experiment, test their own ideas and pursue their own interests
- require children to listen and focus
- provide times of individual and group learning
- offer children opportunities to develop their decision-making skills and understand consequences of their behaviors and actions

- allow and encourage children to be themselves
- cater for the diverse needs and abilities of young children and allow each child to develop to his/her full potential.

These activities give each child a range of opportunities to acquire new skills and extend on previously learned skills, knowledge and values.

We include a wide range and variety of activities in the program, including:

- music
- literacy
- science
- environmental awareness
- dramatic play.
- movement and dance
- numeracy
- creative art
- physical activity

Each of these activities are carefully planned to meet individual needs and to challenge and extend the children. The activities are set up in a “child centered” learning environment, so that the children initiate, discover and experiment with their learning. The teacher acts as a facilitator to this by, extending, clarifying and reinforcing the learning taking place.

Many of the activities that we do at the kinder cannot be taken home (eg. blocks, puzzles, dramatic play) but there is still considerable learning occurring. This is very important for parents to understand and appreciate because a concentrated effort in one of these areas, achieves far more than that of a quick painting or pasting.

At kinder, we also value the importance of “doing” rather than the end product. For example, a child sitting at the collage table obtains more by way of motor skills, problem-solving skills, planning skills, creativity and social skills in “the doing” than in what is taken home at the end of the day. We can talk to the children about their work by asking, “Can you tell me about what you’re doing?” rather than saying “What is it?” We also encourage parents to communicate with the children in this way when on Parent Duty at the kinder. This gives the children the opportunity to describe what they have been doing rather than forcing them to label their work. Most often, the children are not concerned with how it looks, especially in sensory activities such as clay or play-dough. Here the children can simply enjoy the physical sensation of the medium without the need to actually achieve an end product.

Creativity is of prime importance and many of our activities are open-ended, allowing the children’s imagination to expand. Children are encouraged to experiment, explore and to work with the materials in a way that is most meaningful to them. Working this way allows each child to direct his/her own learning and therefore the learning is more appropriate and useful to each individual. Open-ended activities such as water play, sand, clay, box construction, etc. also allow children to succeed. When there is no right or wrong way to do something, the children have no fear of failure or “doing it wrong”. This quickly helps to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

This creativity and the children's confidence to explore and problem solve are very important in the early childhood setting. Children of this age have vivid imaginations and it is our responsibility to cherish this. Too often, a child's creativity is squashed to make way for the more formal school tasks of reading and writing. At kinder, we need to value our children's creativity as well as develop these other skills.

Our children are our future and therefore they need to have opportunities to develop a wide range of skills. Although kinder will prepare your child for school, it will also offer a GREAT deal more. At kinder, we help to develop the skills that the children will need for the rest of their lives.

Social skills are of high emphasis as the children learn to:

- function in a large group
- take turns
- show respect for others
- express skills of conciliation, mediation, negotiation etc.
- share
- be patient
- develop empathy and sympathy.

Children learn these skills and others most effectively through play, not by formalised instructions.

As the children do so, they:

- experience the world around them
- feel things (both physically and emotionally)
- see and hear things
- smell and touch things
- talk and are spoken to
- learn to play alone and with others
- learn to make things that they can keep and things that come apart
- begin to respond to an authority outside the home
- seek help from themselves and give help to others.

These skills are more important than the specific ability to; recite colours, write their names or tie their shoelaces.

In terms of literacy, we believe that an informal beginning eventually produces more skillful readers and writers, so the program includes many activities, which provide practice in the basic skills. The use of drawing and painting materials, experience books, dictated stories and letters, written names and other signs are all part of teaching literacy. At this early stage, one of the most important factors in the reading process is learning to enjoy and appreciate books. Therefore, stories, poems and discussions are part of each day.

Also, the most important thing is that the children come in and out of the centre smiling. It is very important that each child has fun whilst learning and therefore develops a love of learning. During the year, we continually make observations of the children that form the basis of our planning. We encourage all children to blossom in their different ways to become confident and caring individuals.

At the centre we value parent participation and expect that you will be involved in your child's pre-school experience throughout the year. You will be invited to attend morning/afternoon teas, events such as fathers' nights and mothers' day celebrations and other special functions when appropriate.

We also strongly encourage and expect parent participation in the program. We ask that each parent, (and/or grandparents and other special people in your child's life) **attend at least two kinder sessions each term as a parent helper**. The contribution you make while on duty is invaluable and very much appreciated – not only by the staff but by YOUR CHILD.

In addition to this involvement, parents are welcome to come along and share a hobby or special skill, to join in with their child and the other children in the program and to ask questions about the kinder program and their child's progress. It is very much a team effort between parents and staff to ensure that the children have the best opportunities to prepare them for their future.

Committee of Management

Management of the pre-school rests with the Committee of Management elected from the parents of the pre-school. The affairs of the pre-school are attended to by the Committee and staff in accordance with the rules and regulations as laid down under the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 and Education and Services National Law Act 2010.

The primary role of the Committee of Management is to ensure that the services provided are maintained in accordance with the regulations and that the centre operates on a balanced budget.

Clear policies and procedures have been developed to ensure everyone using the pre-school understands the operation of the centre.

Volunteering to be a committee member is a very positive and constructive way in which you can contribute to your child's experience at pre-school.

Starting Kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a very big step for your child and one that we wish to make as smooth as possible. Some children settle quickly while others take a little longer. It is important that the children have the opportunity to adjust gradually if this is at all possible. This can be achieved by a parent or other familiar adult staying until the child feels comfortable with staff and the new surroundings. A quiet, encouraging approach will help your child to become involved in play experiences.

You can help your child by keeping in mind the following points:

- Be prepared to stay at the session with your child if need be.
- Help your child understand that you will stay with him/her until he/she feels familiar with the people and surroundings, not indefinitely.
- If your child wishes, allow him/her to bring something of interest from home, which he/she can share with the staff.
- Each child separates happily from their parents in their own time.
- Work with the teacher in deciding when it is appropriate for you to leave.
- Always remember to say goodbye in a happy, casual manner. Never, ever leave without saying goodbye to your child – it breaks their trust in you – and even though you may think it is easier to do so now, in the long run you can be setting yourself up for quite severe problems.
- Say “I’m going now” (a statement) rather than “Can I go now?” (a question).
 - It may assist your child to settle in by starting them on an activity before you say goodbye and leave the pre-school.
 - It is helpful for both your child and the staff if the session can begin as quickly as possible.
- If you have any questions or concerns that need addressing with the staff, please do so after the completion of the session. It may even be more suitable to arrange a time to have this discussion while your child is not within earshot.
- Come right into the room at arrival and departure. It is important for us to greet each child on arrival and release them into your care on departure.

Introductory Sessions

At the commencement of each kinder year, an Introductory Sessions Timetable is implemented by the teacher. This timetable will be distributed to families on Orientation Day.

This introductory timetable is a brief 'settling-in' period aimed at giving the children the opportunity to settle into their new Kinder environment in a relaxed and happy manner. It is also a time for the children to meet and greet other children in their group and to familiarise themselves with the rules, routine and expectations of the program. The "settling-in" program also enables teachers to establish a warm, trusting and loving relationship with the children.

Children do need time and space to adapt to their new environment and our introductory sessions endeavour to make each child's beginnings at kinder a happy time.

Teacher's discretion will be used in determining whether or not the normal kinder session times will begin earlier than week three.

Changes to the introductory timetable will be based on the teacher's professional evaluation and observations of the children, during their first two weeks of the program. Parents will be notified of any changes by correspondence.

Session Times 2020:

3 Year Old

Green Group (\$515 per term)

Wednesday 9.15am – 12.45pm

Friday 9.15am – 12.45pm

Yellow Group (\$480 per term)

Monday 12.15pm – 3pm

Thursday 9.15am – 12.45pm

Afternoon Activity Group

Tuesday

12pm – 4pm (\$347 per term)

Wednesday

12.45pm – 4.15pm (\$303 per term)

2.15pm – 4.15pm (\$173 per term)

Playgroup (\$88.00 per term, one session only)

Monday 9.30am – 11.30am

Tuesday 9.30am – 11.30am

4 Year Old

Red Group (\$455 per term)

Monday 8.30am – 2.15pm

Tuesday 8.30am – 12pm

Thursday 8.30am – 2.15pm

Blue Group (\$455 per term)

Tuesday 12.30pm – 4pm

Wednesday 8.30am – 2.15pm

Friday 8.30am – 2.15pm

Thursday

2.15pm – 4:15pm (\$173 per term)

12.45pm – 4.15pm (\$303 per term)

What to Bring

Please bring along a suitable healthy snack for your child to eat during snack time. A list of foods recommended by the staff will be provided at the beginning of the kinder year to assist you in providing for your child. We are an Allergy Aware centre and therefore strongly urge you to refrain from sending along foods that contain nuts and nut products for the safety of all children in attendance. In our endeavor to keep waste to a minimum, we also encourage the children to bring along as much 'nude food' as possible in their lunch box-such as fruit and foods in containers, instead of packaging and gladwrap.

Each child will need a bag for transporting and storing personal belongings and kinder work.

All children should bring a change of clothes in their bag. To avoid confusion and loss, all clothing should be labelled with your child's name.

As part of the Kindergarten SunSmart Policy, families are expected to provide their child with a named, SunSmart hat (broad brimmed, legionnaire, or bucket style hats). Baseball caps and visors offer little protection to the cheeks, ears and neck and are therefore not permitted. Families are also asked to apply sunscreen to their child before the commencement of each session. An 'Authority for staff to administer sunscreen' form will be provided to families so that staff can support children in reapplication during each session. An alternative sunscreen may be provided if your child is sensitive to the sunscreen provided by the centre.

Parents please take special note – **KINDERGARTEN is a WAR TOY FREE ZONE** – no guns or war toys of any description or super-hero costumes. We also request that children do not bring toys to kinder as this often results in loss and breakage.

Your Junk is our Treasure

We would love to recycle your cardboard boxes, plastic containers and especially treasures such as buttons, ribbon, lace etc. Also, if you or someone you know has access to usable paper (i.e. blank on at least one side) these donations would be greatly appreciated. **PLEASE NOTE THAT WE DO NOT ACCEPT EGG CARTONS.**

Clothing

Kindergarten is filled with opportunities for play and children will be encouraged to explore a wide range of materials and activities including many messy activities. It is important that parents provide clothes for children that allow them to feel comfortable, move freely and can stand a little dirt.

Children are also encouraged to dress and undress by themselves. It is therefore important that parents avoid 'lace up' sneakers and boots, braces and belts, garments that button or zip at the back and any item of clothing that is beyond the children's ability to put on or take off by him/herself.

The kindergarten provides all smocks and protective clothing for messy activities. Pre-school uniforms can be purchased at the beginning of the year through the fundraising committee.

Attendance Register

It is a requirement of the Department of Education and Training (DET) that children be signed in and out of the kindergarten. A register is kept outside the main door where you must sign in and out and record the time. If you are not picking up your child, please record the name of the person who will be collecting him/her in the space provided. The nominated person must be over 18 years of age. Also to save any confusion, please let the teacher know of any changes.

This register is very important in case of an emergency, as it is our only record of who is present at any given time. For this reason also, time noted should be EXACT. Parents on duty and any siblings accompanying you should also be recorded in the 'visitor's register' located near the children's Attendance Register.

Medication Register

If your child requires medication to be administered during the course of a kinder session you must inform the staff prior to the session and enter the information relating to the type of medication, dose and time it is to be administered in the register. Staff can only administer prescription medicines that have been prescribed to the child and are in the original packaging and bear the child's name and dosage instructions.

Although the kinder does have a process in place for administering medication to children if required, it is encouraged that parents/guardians remain responsible for administering their own child's medication whenever possible. This may involve attending the kinder during session times or, if need be, keeping the child home from kinder whilst on medication.

If you have any questions relating to the use of medications in the centre, please ask to see a copy of the medication policy.

Medical Management Plans

If your child suffers from a medical condition such as asthma or an allergy, you must inform the staff and provide the centre with a copy of your medical management plan. If a prescription or non prescription medication is required to be administered as part of your child's plan, you will need to ensure all medication remains at the centre for the duration of the Kinder year. Your medical plan needs to be endorsed by a registered health practitioner and attached to your enrolment form.

Illness & Infectious Diseases

If your child were to be absent, please notify the kinder as soon as you are able. It is important for staff to be aware if children have been unwell and your child's absence may impact the day's program.

In the event of accident or illness at kindergarten, the following steps will be taken:

- Parents will be contacted and requested to take the child home.
- If a parent is unavailable, an emergency contact will be notified and asked to take the child home.
- Child will be made comfortable away from other children until the parent or emergency contact comes to pick them up.
- Child will be under constant supervision until taken home.
- If an injury is serious and the parent cannot be contacted, the child will be taken to hospital by ambulance. We suggest that you have appropriate ambulance cover in place.

Gastric infections are highly contagious, especially amongst the young. Should your child have an attack of vomiting or diarrhoea, please do not send them back to kinder until they have been well for at least 24 hours. Please familiarise yourself with the information about infectious diseases. You will find this in the foyer.

Immunisations

Victorian Government legislation requires all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service to provide evidence that their child is:

- fully immunised for their age **OR**
- on a vaccination catch-up program **OR**
- unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons.

'Conscientious objection' will not be an exemption.

Proof of your child's vaccination status must be provided for your child to attend Kinder.

Working Bee & Maintenance Levy

Parents are required to pay an annual maintenance levy to assist in the up-keep of the Pre-school. This maintenance levy is deducted from Term 4 fees if you have participated in a working bee or special projects, which families have been asked to assist with. Working bees and special projects are scheduled to improve the facilities available to the children and to promote a positive community within the Pre-school environment.

Fundraising Contribution

The Fundraising Contribution is \$15 per term and invoiced with term fees. This contribution has been introduced to raise much needed funds to assist with covering the costs of purchasing and replacing materials and equipment for our kinder, and in lieu of running multiple major fundraising events throughout the year, such as the Cadbury chocolate drive, Bunnings BBQ, etc. The Fundraising Contribution is non-refundable. From time to time, the centre may run small fundraising events that relate directly to the kindergarten programs, i.e. Mother's/Father's Day activities, Christmas/Easter raffles, Art on a Plate, etc.

Bushfire Risk – Notice to Take Emergency Action

Children's services and schools listed on the DET Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) will be closed when a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined in any Bureau of Meteorology district. Burch Memorial Preschool has been identified as being one of those at high bushfire risk and listed on the DET Bushfire At-Risk Register. Under Section 43A (notice to take emergency action) emergency action may be directed to Burch Memorial Preschool (as in the case of extreme or continued bushfire activity) resulting in the closure of the facility during the times that poses or is likely to pose a risk to health, welfare or safety of a child being cared for or educated.

Where possible, we will provide parents with up to four day's notice of a potential Code Red day closure via email and an SMS message. A Code Red day will be determined by the Emergency Management Commissioner no later than 1.00 pm the day before the potential closure.

When we are advised of the confirmation of the Code Red day we will provide you with advice before the end of the day. Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. This is to avoid confusion and help your family plan alternative care arrangements for your child.

Communicating with Parents

The kindergarten uses two apps for communication; FlexiBuzz and Kindyhub. Downloading these apps and signing up to receive important reminders and notices as well as updates on what has been happening during sessions is a great way to stay informed. Please always check near the sign in book and in your child's pigeonhole for any other reminders or notices. Burch Memorial Pre-school also has a Facebook Page which is used as another form of communication to provide reminders.

Parent/Teacher interviews can be arranged at your convenience. Please don't hesitate to approach staff with any of your questions or concerns.

Newsletters

Newsletters are circulated to families via email at the start and end of each term to keep you informed about the program, special dates and other Kinder news as required. The Committee of Management will also email parents regarding important news or changes that are a result of committee meetings.

Birthdays

Children's birthdays can be celebrated at kindergarten. Parents may send along items (enough for each child in the group), if they wish. If your child's birthday is not on a kindergarten day, we will celebrate on the nearest session. We also ask if you are giving out party invitations to please place them in each child's pigeon holes located in the foyer.

Kinder Duty

A volunteer help roster is organised for each term. Families are welcome to volunteer for duty as often as they would like. However, we ask that each parent, (and/or grandparents and other special people in your child's life) volunteer to **attend at least two kinder sessions each term as a parent helper**. The contribution you make while on duty is invaluable and very much appreciated – not only by the staff but by YOUR CHILD. This will give you a chance to observe your child within the group and discuss your child's progress with the teacher.

Duties include, assisting in the playroom with the children, assisting the children at snack time, washing the dishes and some cleaning. A more detailed kinder duty list is displayed in the kitchen area of the facility.

We do appreciate your help on these days and rely on you to help keep the kindergarten sessions operating smoothly. Your child will also enjoy sharing part of a kinder session with you.

When helping out at kinder for any reason, parents need to sign the visitor's register for insurance purposes, both on arrival and departure.

Custodial Issues

If there is a custody dispute between parents of a child and there is any kind of legal documentation regarding the matter, it needs to be made available to the teacher. (This information will be treated with the strictest of confidence). The kindergarten staff has no legal right to prevent a non-custodial parent from taking a child from the kinder if there is no legal documentation available. This information needs to be attached to our enrolment records.

Excursion Policy

Excursions and off-site events will occur only as an extension of the program that is currently running for the children. Consent forms must be signed and returned or your child will be unable to attend. Parents will be encouraged to participate, however, we request that toddlers do not accompany supervising adults unless the teacher states otherwise.

Late Pickup Policy

If a child has not been collected after 10 minutes from the end of session, the teacher will:

- telephone the child's parent or guardian at home or work
- telephone an emergency contact.

No child will be given into the care of any person other than the parents/guardians and the persons listed as an emergency contact. Should you be unavoidably delayed, please ring the kindergarten as soon as possible so that staff can reassure your child.

Additional Information for Parents of Children in the 4 Year Old Program

Kinder Year Deferments

Parents will be asked to attend a confidential meeting if concerns arise for a child's readiness for 4 year old kindergarten at the end of term 1. This gives parents the chance to defer their child's 4 year old kinder place for the following year.

As professionals, it is the responsibility of the Staff to inform parents of their options regarding the "deferment process". Warning signs of cognitive delay, social interaction delays, behaviour warning signs, gross motor delays, fine motor delays and communication and speech warning signs are closely monitored and observed during the first term.

Laundry Duty

A laundry duty roster will also be displayed in the foyer. Each group will be allocated laundry duty alternate terms. Please look out for your allocated laundry week to collect at the end of the week. Again, your help is greatly appreciated.

Show and Tell

From the beginning of term 2, the children will enjoy special "show and tell" time. This is an opportunity for the children to bring in one special item to show and tell about with their friends. The aim is to develop confidence and language whilst nurturing the development of listening and concentration skills.

Library

From the beginning of term 2, the children will also have the opportunity to borrow special library books from the kinder. We encourage parents to purchase a kinder library bag to ensure that our kinder books are well protected from any damage. The aim of library is to encourage the children's decision-making skills, language and confidence as well as develop picture-word association. It is also a lovely experience for parents to read to their children.

We hope your time at Burch Memorial Pre-School is happy, rewarding and memorable and we look forward to working with you throughout the year.