



KINDERGARTEN & LIMITED HOURS CARE HANDBOOK



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Golden Plains Shire spans the Traditional lands of the Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Peoples.

Council acknowledges them as the Traditional Owners and Custodians and pays its respects to both Wadawurrung and Eastern Maar Elders past, present and emerging.

Council extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People who are part of Golden Plains Shire



Artwork: 'Wabdallah' by Shu Brown.

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WELCOME

Thank you for choosing a Golden Plains Shire Council Early Years' Service for your child.

In partnership with families, we aim to provide a safe, nurturing and happy environment that will enhance the early year's development of each child.

Our approach to education in the early years is based on sound traditions of early childhood philosophy and practice. Children are respected as competent and capable contributors in the learning process and educators work closely with families to ensure the best possible outcomes for each child.

Our educators have strong links with outside agencies which provide access to individualised support for both children and their families.

This handbook provides information for parents/guardians about how our services operate and details of our policies and procedures. Parents/guardians are encouraged to speak to educators or the Coordinator Kindergartens if you have any queries or seek more information regarding the operations of our services beyond what is covered in this handbook.



SERVICE ADDRESS & CONTACT DEALS

Bannockburn Kindergarten

Sessional Funded 3 & 4yo Kindergarten
Bannockburn Family Services Centre
2A Pope Street, Bannockburn, VIC, 3331
Postal Address: As above
Phone: 03 5220 7230
Email: earlyyears@gplains.vic.gov.au



Inverleigh Kindergarten

Sessional Funded 3 & 4yo Kindergarten and Occasional Care Program
Inverleigh Early Learning Centre
23 Dundas Street, Inverleigh, VIC, 3321
Postal Address: As above
Phone: 03 5265 1307
Email: earlyyears@gplains.vic.gov.au

Meredith Kindergarten

Sessional Funded 3 & 4yo Kindergarten
Meredith Community Learning HUB
4 Russell Street, Meredith, VIC, 3333
Postal Address: As above
Phone: 03 5220 7381
Email: earlyyears@gplains.vic.gov.au





Rokewood Kindergarten

Sessional Funded 3 & 4yo Kindergarten
31 Aitchison Street, Rokewood, VIC, 3330
Postal Address: As above
Phone: 03 5346 1276
Email: earlyyears@gplains.vic.gov.au

Teesdale Kindergarten

Sessional Funded 3 & 4yo Kindergarten
1107 Bannockburn-Shelford Road
(cnr Mercer St & Bridge St), Teesdale, VIC, 3328
Postal Address: As above
Phone: 03 5281 5488
Email: earlyyears@gplains.vic.gov.au



Approved Provider

Golden Plains Shire Council
2 Pope Street, Bannockburn, VIC, 3331
Phone: 5220 7111
Fax: 5220 7100
Email: enquiries@gplains.vic.gov.au
Provider Approval No: PR-00002235

Leadership team

Manager Children's Services
Heidi Preston: 5220 7153
Coordinator Kindergarten (EYM)
Bianca Meek: 5220 7205
Pedagogical Leader
Haylee Singleton: 5220 7115

GOLDEN PLAINS SHIRE CHILD SAFE COMMITMENT

Golden Plains Shire Council is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

Golden Plains Shire Council is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

Golden Plains Shire Council has robust human resources and recruitment practices for all educators and volunteers.

Golden Plains Shire Council is committed to regularly training and educating our educators and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies, procedures and training in place that support our leadership team, educators and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.



Children's Services Philosophy

Golden Plains Shire Council is committed to providing high quality children's services that are responsive to the needs of families and reflect the diverse communities in which the children live. Educators share their knowledge, provide a leadership role in the community and advocate on behalf of children's rights.

We foster a climate in which families are recognised as a child's first and most important educator. We recognize the critical importance of children, parents and educators as partners in a learning environment that promotes the wellbeing, education and development of all children.

Educators use reflective practice, feedback and a collaborative approach as a basis for continuous improvement in their teaching. Through thoughtful observations and documentation, evidence of individual children's learning is recorded.

We recognise that each child is unique and will be supported to develop to their full potential. Educators are responsive to the needs of individual children and provide environments that are rich in possibilities and enable children to think, problem solve, ponder, imagine and create.

Each Service has an individualised philosophy that guides the day-to-day practice of the Service. These philosophies have been developed by current staff and recent families of each service.

Our Vision

Our services will strive to provide high quality programs built from strong relationships with children and families.

We will ensure that input from all both children and families alike is taken into consideration when making decisions.

Families shall be offered a safe, supportive setting in which children and their families feel connected to their community.

Learning and Respectful relationships will be nurtured and enhanced through effective communication with children, families, colleagues and other professionals.

We will respect and embrace diversity and embed an awareness of the natural environment along with sustainable practices.



COMMITMENT

Our Kindergarten services are operated by Golden Plains Shire Council. Council recognises the critical importance of children, families and educators as partners in a learning environment that promotes the wellbeing, education and development of all children.

Golden Plains Shire Council is a registered Early Years Manager with the Department of Education (DE).

Early Years Management (EYM), provides leadership and management to funded Kindergarten and other complementary early year's services. This ensures expertise in operating high-quality early childhood education and care services. The foundation of EYM leadership is a deep understanding of current research about the early years, particularly in relation to effective practices and service models and engagement with relevant strategic issues and reform.

Golden Plains Shire Council works within the EYM policy Framework and acts in partnership with families, parent advisory groups and the Department of Education (DE).

Golden Plains Shire Council manages staff, enrolments, fees and quality improvement. Service staff work closely with a volunteer parent committee who support and advise service staff and focus on community engagement within their respective communities. In most instances the Volunteer Parent Committees remain incorporated bodies and on occasion work with Council staff to support with grant applications to further enhance program and facilities.

Policies

Parents/guardians are required to abide by the Child & Family Services Policies and Procedures. By enrolling your child in a Service, you agree to be bound by the Child & Family Services Policies and Procedures.

All policies are available in hard copy at each service or electronically at:

<https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/residents/my-family/young-family/early-years-resource-page>

Equity and Inclusion

We will ensure that all children are respected and have equal opportunity to access quality educational programs, in a nurturing environment regardless of their own or their family's backgrounds, gender or abilities.



THE NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK (NQF)

In December 2009 all Australian Governments, through the Council of Australian Governments (COAG), agreed to a partnership to establish a National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (National Quality Framework or NQF) for long day care, Preschool/Kindergarten, and family day care/outside school hours care services in Australia.

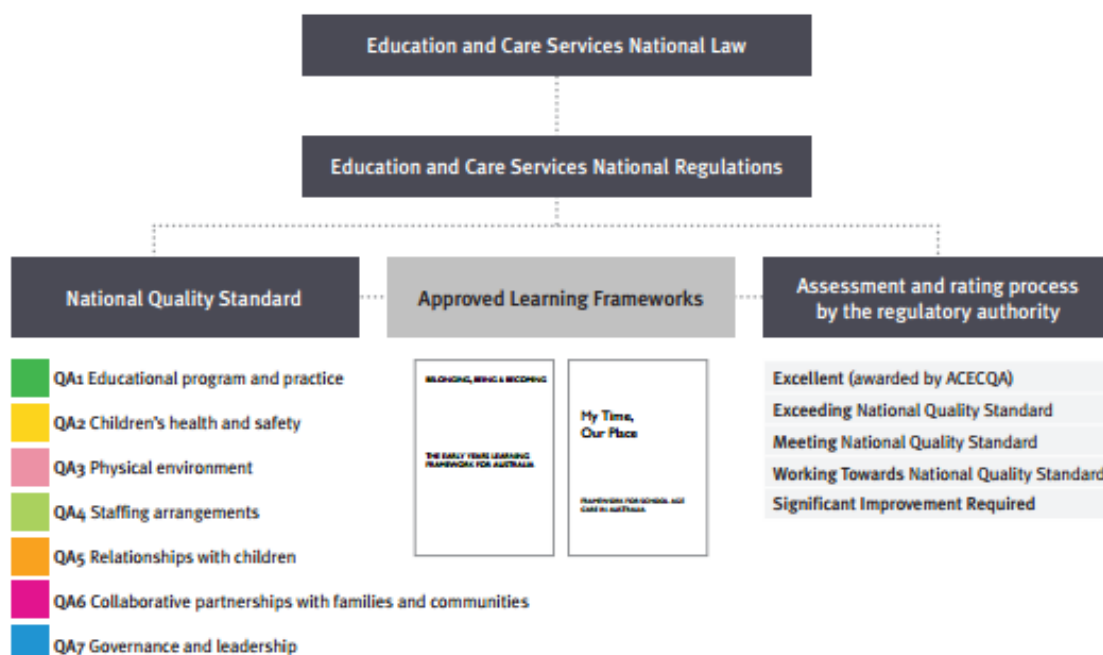
The NQF aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in children's education and care services through:

- The National Law and National Regulations
- The National Quality Standard
- An assessment and quality rating process
- A regulatory authority in each state and territory responsible for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services in their state or territory.
- A national body – ACECQA, which guides the implementation of the NQF and works with regulatory authorities.

The objectives of the NQF are to:

- Ensure the safety, health and wellbeing of children attending education and care services.
- Improve the educational and developmental outcomes for children attending education and care services.
- Promote continuous improvement in the provision of quality education and care services.
- Establish a system of national integration and shared responsibility between participating jurisdictions and the Commonwealth in the administration of the National Quality Framework.
- Improve public knowledge, and access to information, about the quality of education and care services.
- Reduce the regulatory and administrative burden for education and care services by enabling information to be shared between participating jurisdictions and the Commonwealth.

The National Quality Framework



KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATIONS

All registrations for Kindergarten and Inverleigh Limited Hours Care are managed online through MyWaitlist.

Please visit: <https://www.goldenplains.vic.gov.au/resident/child-and-family/kindergarten-and-limited-hours-care-waitlist> for further information and to make your waitlist application.

Whilst applications will be accepted at any time, in order for your child to be considered in round 1 offers it is recommended that enrolment applications are submitted prior to the last day of Term 2 in the year preceding attendance.

| Date | Activity |
|---|--|
| January | Registrations open |
| End of Term 2 (EOM June) | Registrations close for first round offers |
| July/August | First round offers |
| 7 days from date of offer | Acceptance of first round offers due |
| August (1 week from due date of Round 1 acceptance) | Second round offers |
| 7 days from date of offer | Acceptance of second round offers due |
| Ongoing | Subsequent offers on an individual basis |

All enquiries regarding Funded Kindergarten or Inverleigh Limited Hours Care can be made by contacting the Early Years Team on 5220 7230 or earlyyears@gplains.vic.gov.au.

ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY OF ACCESS CRITERIA

Eligibility

To enrol a child in a Funded Kindergarten program the following eligibility criterion will apply:

- A child must be aged three (3) by 30 April in the year that they attend kindergarten to be enrolled in a funded 3-year-old program or commence Early Start Kindergarten. Although the child can be enrolled from the commencement of the kindergarten year, they are unable to attend until they have turned 3 years of age; **or**
- A child must be aged four (4) by 30 April in the year that they attend kindergarten to be enrolled in a funded kindergarten program; **and**

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- Child must be able to meet the Immunisation requirements of the *'No Jab No Play'* legislation please refer to the [Acceptable Immunisation Documentation](#) and or [Grace Period](#) definitions which form part of this policy.

Table 3: Kindergarten and school starting ages

| Children born 1 May – 31 December: must enrol at school in the year they turn 6 | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Year child turns | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | | 3-Year-Old Kindergarten | 4-Year-Old Kindergarten | First year of school |
| Children born 1 January – 30 April: can enrol at school either in the year they turn 5 or 6 | | | | |
| Year child turns | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | 3-Year-Old Kindergarten* | 4-Year-Old Kindergarten | First year of school | Second Second year of school |
| OR | | 3-Year-Old Kindergarten | 4-Year-Old Kindergarten | First year of school |

Priority of access

The Approved provider must notify all families of the priority of access policy that applies when they enrol their child. In instances where more eligible children apply for a place at a kindergarten service than there are places available, services must:

- prioritise children based on the DE criteria listed below
- apply Local community context as listed in the following table.
- work with other local kindergarten services and the regional Department office to ensure all eligible children have access to a kindergarten place.

Waitlist applications for a Golden Plains Shire operated service will be assessed using the following:

- All applications will be assessed against the DE Priority of Access criteria.
- Local community context criteria will then be applied.
- Each application will be scored based on the De PoA criteria and local community context.
- Where two or more children have the same score the following action will be undertaken:
 - The unique identification number for each child will be entered into a random selection program where dependent on the number of places available it will select the identification numbers to be used for placement.

Please Note: Council reserves the right to consider factors such as group size, group dynamics and other special considerations when allocating places to families to act in the best interest of all children and families.

Priority 1: High Priority Children (DE PoA)

| | |
|---|---|
| Children at risk of abuse or neglect, including children in Out-of-Home Care | The child is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • eligible for ESK or AEL, and/or • family, carer or legal guardian identifies the child as known to Child Protection or in out-of-home care, and/or |
|---|---|

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| | |
|---|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • referred by one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Child Protection ▪ Child and family services (family services referral and support team, Child FIRST/integrated family services/Services Connect case worker) ▪ Maternal and Child Health nurse ▪ Out-of-Home Care provider |
| Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children | A child or his/her family member identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander |
| Asylum seeker and refugee children | <p>Child or family holds a visa or supporting documentation and information, including an ImmiCard, identifying the child and/or parents, carers or legal guardians as a refugee or asylum seeker and/or</p> <p>Referred as a refugee or asylum seeker by a CALD outreach worker.</p> |
| Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy | <p>A child or parent holds a Commonwealth Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card, Veteran's Affairs Card, or</p> <p>The child is identified on their birth certificate as one of a set of triplets, quadruplets or more.</p> |
| Children with additional needs, defined as children who: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • with an identified specific disability or developmental delay • who require additional assistance to fully participate in the kindergarten program • who require a combination of services which are individually planned | <p>The child:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • holds a Child Disability Health Care Card, and/or • has previously been approved for Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program, and/or • has been referred by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the National Disability Insurance Scheme ▪ Early Childhood Intervention Service ▪ Preschool Field Officer ▪ Maternal and Child Health nurse, |

Priority 2: Second year of Funded 4-year-old Kindergarten/Child with School Exemption (classified as HPC - DE POA but for the purpose of identification will be known as Priority 2)

| | |
|-----|---|
| 2.0 | Children enrolled and approved to attend a second year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten. |
| 2.1 | A child who turns 6 years old while attending their first year of funded 4-year-old kindergarten and who has been granted an exemption from school. |

Priority 3: Community Context (in order of Priority)

| | |
|-----|--|
| 3.0 | Child attended a 3-year-old funded kindergarten program on the same site as their first preference for 4-year-old funded kindergarten. |
| 3.1 | Is a sibling of a child enrolled in 4-year-old funded kindergarten program at the same service in the year of attendance. |

ENROLLING IN KINDERGARTEN

| | |
|-----|--|
| 3.2 | Parent/Guardian's residential address falls within the same suburb/township as the first preference kindergarten and/or is the closest funded kindergarten in proximity to the Parent/Guardian's residential address at the time of application. |
| 3.3 | |
| 3.4 | The parent/guardian works, studies, or has children attending formal or informal childcare for two or more days in the same community as the kindergarten or the child has a sibling attending the local Primary School. |

Note: DE's PoA guidelines are to ensure that kindergarten programs are available to those children who stand to benefit the most from attending early education. In mixed age groups, PoA guideline will equally prioritise three and four-year-old children that are considered high priority. Where programs for three- and four-year old children are provided separately, the PoA criteria will be applied separately for each age cohort.

Early Start Kindergarten

There are 3 types of ESK funding:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ESK
- ESK grant for children from refugee and asylum seeker backgrounds
- ESK grant for children known to Child Protection.

In order to receive ESK funding, eligible children must be enrolled in a kindergarten program delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT).

All eligible 3-year-old children should continue to be enrolled in ESK during the ongoing rollout of 15 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and in services participating in Free Kinder. This guarantees that ESK eligible children can continue to access 15-hour kindergarten programs and allows the correct calculation of the service's SRF entitlement.

Applications for ESK should be completed with the consent of, and on behalf of, the family/carer and families should be made aware that they can only access the ESK grant for one year, and should be supported to decide which year to enrol based on the expected school starting year of the child.

Why Early Start Kindergarten is important:

Early Start Kindergarten provides your child access to a 15 hour per week kindergarten program for 2 years.

Accessing high quality early childhood education for 2 years has a substantial and positive impact on a child's cognitive, emotional and social skills (Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, 2018). Through play-based learning at kindergarten, your child will gain new or improved skills in a number of different areas, including:

- Learning how to become an effective learner
- Developing and extending their communication and language skills
- Building self-confidence and social skills
- Building understanding of identity and culture
- Learning to be creative through arts, dance and music
- Developing skills in literacy and numeracy

Research shows that 2 years of kindergarten also has a bigger impact on children's long term development and health compared with one year of kindergarten, which can lead to stronger academic outcomes at school (Fox and Geddes, 2016)

Refer to the Department of Education's website for up-to-date information: www.education.vic.gov.au

Second year of Funded Kindergarten and School Exemption

All children in Three-year-old kindergarten will be expected to transition to Four-Year Old Kindergarten in the following year. A funded second year of kindergarten will only be available for children in the four-year old program who meet the following criteria:

A second year of funded four-year-old kindergarten may be considered when a child shows delays in learning and development outcome areas in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework, and when:

- the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program.
- the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.

A second-year assessment process is carried out for each child by an early childhood teacher when a second year is being considered. This must be commenced early in term 2 during the funded 4-year-old Kindergarten year.

If a child will turn 6 before or while they are in their first or second year of funded kindergarten, parents, carers or legal guardians must get an exemption from starting school.

Limited Hours Care

Eligibility

To enrol a child in a childcare program the following eligibility criterion will apply:

- Child must be able to meet the Immunisation requirements of the '*No Jab No Play*' legislation please refer to the [Acceptable Immunisation Documentation](#) and or [Grace Period](#) definitions which form part of this policy.

Priority of access

To maintain service approval in relation to the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), services must comply with sections [194C and 194D](#) of the "*A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*". Although we have moved from Child Care Benefit to the Child Care Subsidy, Priority of Access guidelines for Child Care Services are still mandated by the [Child Care Benefit \(Eligibility of Child Care Services for Approval and Continues Approval\) DEetermination 2000](#).

Note: this POA differs from Funded Kindergarten services operated under State Government Legislation

When filling vacant places, a service must fill them according to the following priorities:

- Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test
- Priority 3 – any other child.

Within these main Priority categories, priority should also be given to children in:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- families which include a disabled person
- families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold or who or whose partner is on income support
- families from a non-English speaking background
- socially isolated families
- single parent families.

Note: Where a service is funded by an employer to provide childcare solely or primarily for the children of the employer's employees, the service may give priority to those children.

Requiring a child to vacate a place

Under the Priority of Access Guidelines, a childcare service may require a Priority 3 child only to vacate a place to make room for a higher priority child. The service can only do so if:

- the person liable for the payment of the childcare fees was notified when the child first entered care that the service followed this policy, and
- the service gives the person at least 14 days' notice of the requirement for the child to vacate the place.

INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD

For an education and care service to function, it is necessary to collect important information about your child. The DE requires our services to collect and provide data about every child to access benefits and for State Government funded programs.

ENROLMENT INFORMATION

Parents/carers need to ensure that the service has current information regarding home address, email address, telephone numbers for both home and mobile, emergency contact DEails, custody arrangements and medical information. If there is an emergency, it is vital that you or your nominated emergency person can be contacted.

CHILD IMMUNISATION REQUIREMENTS

From January 2016, legislation was passed by the Victorian Government which requires all children enrolling in Early Childhood Education and Care Services to provide an Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register.

It must show that a child:

- is up to date with vaccinations for their age OR
- is on a recognised vaccine catch-up schedule (evidence required) OR
- has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated (evidence required)

Parents and carers can print a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement from their myGov account or:



- Call the AIR on phone 1800 653 809
- Visit a Medicare or Centrelink office

If you are experiencing difficulties accessing vaccinations or required related documents, please contact the Bannockburn Family Services Centre as soon as possible.

CUSTODY ORDERS



It is a regulatory requirement that a copy of any relevant custody orders are provided to the educators and kept in the child's enrolment record.

COMMENCING KINDERGARTEN

ORIENTATION

Educators acknowledge that the orientation and service induction are the most important aspects of a parent/guardian and child's introduction to the service.

Educators make every effort to ensure the experience is positive and the information shared is useful. Each family's orientation to the service is quite unique and flexible to accommodate individual needs.

Educators will engage with parents/guardians to:

- Provide the opportunity for families and their children to visit the service before they commence to familiarise themselves with the service and meet educators to support a smooth transition.
- Ensure families and children feel welcome at the service and initiate good working relationships.
- Provide information on all aspects of the service to reduce stress on both families and their children.
- Ensure the settling-in process is suited to the needs of the child and their parent/guardian. The hours of a Kindergarten program are not compulsory, please consider this as your child is orientating to a new service.
- Ensure parents/guardians feel comfortable to contact the service and speak with familiar educators during the day if they wish to do so to check on their child.



SAFETY AT THE SERVICE

The personal safety and wellbeing of all children is of paramount consideration and importance.

Please be aware that service carparks become very busy during drop off and pick up times. Cars are to be parked in designated car parks only and children and babies should never be left in parked cars. Police may be notified if a child or baby is left unattended.

Please ensure any children in your care are supervised closely when proceeding through the carpark and be mindful to only let your own children through any service door/gate.

To protect the health of children, families, educators, and visitors, smoking and the use of vapes is not permitted within the grounds of, or within ten metres of, an entrance or the perimeter of our Early Years Services.



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE OF CHILDREN

Children must arrive and depart accompanied by a responsible person. This must be the parent/guardian or authorised person nominated by the parent/guardian on the enrolment form. Please advise your educator if another person is to collect your child. *(Note: Children who arrive via school bus such as at Rokewood Kindergarten are collected from the bus and signed in by service educators. Departmental approval is required before this process is permitted.)*

The parent/guardian or authorised person must sign each child in and out each day showing the arrival and departure time on the 'Attendance Record' in accordance with Department of Education and Training guidelines. The sign in sheet is a legal document and children must be signed in and out for each session with the actual drop off and pick up times recorded.

COMMENCING KINDERGARTEN

Children cannot be dropped off earlier or collected after the times stated for that program however you are welcome to drop off your child after the official start time or pick up earlier. This option is often taken up during the first weeks of the year as children adapt to the longer days or to meet appointments or family commitments.

LATE COLLECTION OF CHILDREN



If you are going to be late collecting your child, you must ring the Kindergarten as soon as possible.

If a parent/guardian or authorised person nominated by the parent/guardian does not arrive to collect the child from care, educators will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or authorised person by phone. If they cannot be reached, then educators will contact the emergency contact phone numbers as listed on the enrolment form. If the emergency contacts are unavailable, educators will contact the Coordinator Kindergartens, who is authorised to contact local Police and/or Child Protection to arrange temporary care of the child.

ABSENCES

The Service should be contacted as soon as possible if a child is to be absent for the day.

Educators must be informed of any intended holidays or if a child will not be attending for an extended period due to illness. Where at least 7 days' notice of an absence is provided, families will not be charged for missed Limited Hours Care sessions.

RIGHT OF ACCESS & CODE OF CONDUCT WHILE AT SERVICES

While children are at the service, parents/guardians have a right to request access unless access breaches court/family orders. This 'right of access' must be exercised in a polite, considerate manner respecting the privacy of the children, families and educators in the service. All visitors are expected to behave in a manner acceptable in the presence of children. Adults are to refrain from swearing, aggressive behaviour or inappropriate discipline of children. Such behaviours may result in persons asked to not attend the service and/or police/child protection may become involved. All families are asked to confirm adherence to Professional Behaviour Policy at enrolment.

SEPARATION FROM YOUR CHILD

When children first commence at the service, they may experience some separation anxiety. This typically decreases over time as a child becomes familiar with their new surroundings.

It is important, that parents/guardians deal positively with this anxiety in order for children to settle quickly and feel safe in the knowledge that their parents/guardians will return. Parents/guardians should say goodbye to their child confidently and reassure them that they will return. If parents/guardians 'sneak out' whilst their child is not watching, that may encourage mistrust and future departures may become difficult.

If you have any concerns about your child's settling-in process, please do not hesitate to speak with educators or the Coordinator Kindergartens.

COMMENCING KINDERGARTEN

WHAT TO BRING

Parents/guardians are required to provide the following items for their child:

- Complete change of clothes including socks, singlet, underwear and season-appropriate outerwear.
- A waterproof bag (e.g. plastic shopping bag/garbage bag) for wet/sandy clothes to be sent home in.
- Sun hat required (legionnaires or broad brimmed hat to provide maximum protection) as per sun smart policy.
- Warm coat, winter hat & boots/solid shoes for Terms 2 and 3.
- Named water bottle.
- A lunch box that consists of appropriate food for your session length. This may include morning tea, lunch and/or an afternoon snack. Feel free to put in additional snacks at first to ensure you have provided enough.
- Comfort item for rest/sleep time if required.
- Bottles (if required for Occasional care program) already made up and labelled.
- Nappies/wipes where applicable.



All items should be clearly named and kept in a named bag.

WHAT THE SERVICE PROVIDES

The Service will provide the following items whilst your child is in care:

- SPF 30+ sunscreen. If you require a particular brand, please provide this for your child's use.
- Drinking water.

APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

Clothing is an important factor in a child's learning experience.

Children should not be dressed in their 'good' clothes as activities and play will often be messy and 'good' clothes may restrict children's ability to be fully involved. Children should be provided with clothing and footwear that allows for comfort and safety in a variety of play including running and climbing. No thongs will be allowed as these are a safety hazard.

Clothing should be of a type which by its design or attachments do not present a choking hazard when playing and should be appropriate for the weather conditions, i.e. jumpers, coats, beanies/caps, gum boots or solid shoes for outdoors in winter; sun hat which protects face, neck and ears and clothing which protects shoulders from sun for summer. Singlet tops and summer dresses with shoestring straps are not appropriate unless a t-shirt is worn underneath. Slippers may be supplied for indoor use in winter.

Educators will have reasonable expectations of children's ability to dress themselves, depending on their individual development and assist, when necessary, by helping the child through the difficult steps in dressing.



COMMENCING KINDERGARTEN



MEALS/SNACKS

Services are committed to assisting in developing lifelong healthy eating habits by providing an eating environment that promotes the consumption of diverse, safe and highly nutritious foods. To support services' healthy eating practices we encourage you to limit 'discretionary' food items in your child's lunchbox.

Any special dietary restrictions including allergies and sensitivities are to be discussed with the educators at enrolment or when identified/diagnosed. Risk minimisation plans and strategies will be developed to ensure your child's safety whilst attending the service. Families may be asked to exclude particular food items to support the safety needs of children with food allergies.

Drinks:

The only drink your child requires is water. Include a water bottle in your child's lunchbox every day.

All food and drink containers provided by parents/guardians are to be clearly marked with the child's name. All food and drinks are to be stored appropriately, such as in an insulated lunchbox. Consider your child's ability to remove lids and open clasps, Velcro and zips when providing food in containers. While educators will be available to assist, children are encouraged to attempt mealtimes independently.

Educators will ensure that food/drinks offered to children in care or planned cooking experiences do not conflict with the wishes or with the health, cultural, or religious beliefs of parents/guardians.

SUN PROTECTION

All Golden Plains Shire Council Services follow Sun Smart procedures as recommended by the Cancer Council of Australia.

Services will require children and staff to wear hats which protect the face, neck and ears whenever they are outside (e.g. broad brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hats) and clothing that covers as much skin as possible.

Sufficient shaded areas will be provided within the outdoor play area.

Outdoor excursions and activities will be scheduled, whenever possible before 10am and after 3 pm (11am and 4 pm during day light saving time) unless they are predominantly conducted under shade.

During the months of high UV exposure, generally September to May, parents/guardians will be asked to apply sunscreen at the beginning of a session. Educators will support children to reapply sunscreen in accordance with our sun smart policy.



TOILETING AND NAPPY CHANGE

Toileting and nappy change procedures need to be followed in order to minimise the risk of infection to children and educators while at the same time respecting children's dignity and where possible children's privacy.

Families are encouraged to commence toilet training prior to commencement at kindergarten. It is preferred that children toilet training are provided with pull ups instead of nappies to encourage the development of independent skills.

COMMENCING KINDERGARTEN

SAFE SLEEPING/REST TIME

Where necessary services will provide a safe and nurturing environment in the provision of routine sleep and/or rest times for all children each day and will take into consideration their individual needs according to their chronological age, physical requirements, temperament and family routines.

Sleeping and rest arrangements are provided all day to suit individual needs. Children wake at their own leisure unless specified by parents/guardians and resume room activities when they are ready. Children can bring a favourite toy or blanket from home to help comfort them at this time. Music may be used to aid relaxation, and blinds pulled down to create a calm atmosphere.

All educators will have access to resources and professional development to ensure they understand the safe sleeping standards as outlined by SIDS and Kids.



SMILES 4 MILES – ORAL HEALTH PROGRAM



Smiles 4 Miles is an initiative of Dental Health Services Victoria (DHSV) which aims to improve the oral health of children and their families in high-risk areas across Victoria.

Tooth decay is Australia's most common health problem. Smiles 4 Miles assists our services to encourage and promote good oral health habits and healthy eating among children and families.

The program is based on the World Health Organisation's Health Promoting Schools Framework, an internationally recognised best practice approach.

TOYS AND POSSESSIONS

Families are encouraged to leave their children's own toys at home to avoid potential conflict and disappointment if the toy is mislaid or broken. Educators will not take responsibility for toys from home.



SPECIAL DAYS



While we understand how much parents/carers love a token from their children on a special day (Mother's/Father's Day, Christmas), we cannot guarantee every child will deliver a gift on these occasions.

Our philosophy encourages creativity, participation and perseverance but we cannot force or coerce children to complete artwork or gifts. Very young children may not have the ability to make gifts and other children may prefer to engage in other activities/experiences.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

The service values parent participation and involvement. Parents/guardians are actively encouraged to be part of the education and care environment. Educators recognise that families have much to offer the service and the children benefit greatly when parents/guardians or family members have involvement within the programs. Parent or family involvement may include being on the Parent Committee, attending family events, visiting the service to share a skill with the children etc. Please see educators to work out the best way to participate.

For those interested in participating during the hours children attend, a Volunteer Working with Children's Check is required. These are available online at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au or at your local post office.

VOLUNTEER PARENT COMMITTEE

The Volunteer Parent Committees in most of our services are an Incorporated Association that provide support and advice to the service staff. The main functions of the Committee are community engagement and support. Committees also often have pre-Determined equipment or additional programs they like to fundraise for. Golden Plains Shire Council works in partnership with each services Parent Committee, to ensure continuous improvement of service delivery. This involvement is appreciated and valued by Council, and we encourage you to consider this vital role. Nominations, including self-nominations, are taken at the Annual General Meeting held each year at each service.

OUR PROGRAMS



Our services accommodate children within Funded Sessional Kindergarten and Occasional Care programs.

Funded Sessional 3yo Kindergarten

Our 3-year-old Funded Kindergarten programs offer 15 hours of kindergarten to all children in the two years before school.

Once children commence in a 3-year-old funded sessional kindergarten program it is expected that they will move to a 4-year-old funded sessional kindergarten program the following year, therefore it is important to consider your child's starting age at enrolment.

This program is led by Early Childhood Teachers and may be provided through a variety of models with each service model determined annually dependant on enrolment demand.

Funded Sessional 4yo Kindergarten

Our 4 year-old Funded Kindergarten programs offer 15 hours of Kindergarten to all children in their year before school. This program is led by Early Childhood Teachers and may be provided through a variety of models with each service model determined annually dependant on enrolment demand.

Under certain circumstances there is a capacity for a second year of Funded Kindergarten which is dependent on an individual child's developmental needs. Please speak with the Coordinator Kindergarten or individual service Teacher if you feel this is appropriate for your child.

Limited Hours Care

A Limited Hours Care program managed by Golden Plains Shire Council currently operates from the Inverleigh Kindergarten. This program offers a care and education program for children from the age of 6 weeks to 6 years of age and runs each Friday of the school term. Limited Hours Care offers places to children on both a regular and casual basis.

Bush Kinder

Several services participate in a Bush Kinder program. The program aims to increase children's understanding of the natural environment, promote sustainability practices, aid physical development, and support wellbeing.

We are fortunate to be able to run a Bush Kinder and Nature Play Program for our Funded Kindergarten groups during Terms 2 and 3 at native bush lands and park spaces that surround the kindergartens.

Due to the increased supervision required for children in this setting, this program is not possible without parent/guardian help and is limited to the times of the year that provide less risk from natural predators in the environment.



THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM



2025 Kindergarten Timetable

Please note: this timetable is subject to change due to State and Federal funding and operational requirements of the services. This includes the addition and cancellation of groups as well as a possible change to group numbers.

| Bannockburn | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Group | Places | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Integrated 3 & 4 | 25 | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) | - | - | - |
| 3yo Group A | 11 | - | - | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) | - |
| 3yo Group B | 11 | - | - | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) | - | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) |
| 3yo Group C | 11 | - | - | - | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) | 8:15am-3:45pm (7.5 hours) |
| 4yo Group A | 14 | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - | - | - |
| 4yo Group B | 11 | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - | - | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) |
| 4yo Group C | 11 | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) |
| 4yo Group D | 22 | - | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - |

| Inverleigh | | | | | | |
|------------|--------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--------|
| Group | Places | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| 3yo Group | 33 | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - | - | - |
| 4yo Group | 33 | - | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - |

| Meredith | | | | | | |
|------------------|--------|--------|---------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Group | Places | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Integrated 3 & 4 | 22 | - | - | 9am-2pm (3 hours) | 9am-2pm (3 hours) | 9am-2pm (3 hours) |

| Rokewood Kindergarten | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------|--------|----------------------|-----------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Group | Places | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| Integrated 3 & 4 | 22 | - | 9am-2pm (3 hours) | - | 9am-2pm (3 hours) | 9am-2pm (3 hours) |

| Teesdale | | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Group | Places | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| 3yo Group A | 15 | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - | - |
| 3yo Group B | 15 | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - |
| 3yo Group C | 15 | - | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - |
| 4yo Group (2x7.5hrs) | 33 | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) | - | - | - | 8:30am-4:00pm (7.5 hours) |

These session times are current as November 2024. Should enrolment numbers change in a program, management reserves the right to change program models during the year. This may result in an increase or decrease of days/hours within the program. In either case families will be informed individually with at least 4 weeks' notice.

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

Our Kindergarten services will be closed on the following days:

- School Holidays.
- Gazetted Public Holidays.
- Staff professional development days - the service will be closed for up to three staff professional development activities annually. Families will be advised in advance about these closure date(s).
- Session times may occasionally change to accommodate special events and celebrations. Families will be advised in advance of these changes.

Term Dates and Public Holidays

| | Term Starts | Term Finishes |
|------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Term One | 30 January 2025 | 4 April 2025 |
| Term Two | 22 April 2025 | 4 July 2025 |
| Term Three | 21 July 2025 | 19 September 2025 |
| Term Four | 6 October 2025 | 19 December 2025 |

**Please refer to your enrolment confirmation paperwork for DEails of your child's actual start date*

#Families will be informed early term 4 of the final session for the year

| Holiday | Date | Holiday | Date |
|----------------|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| New Year's Day | Wed, 01 January 2025 | King's Birthday | Mon, 9 June 2025 |
| Australia Day | Mon, 27 January 2025 | AFL Grand Final | Friday before AFL Grand Final - TBA |
| Labour Day | Mon, 10 March 2025 | Melbourne Cup Day | Tue, 4 November 2025 |
| Good Friday | Fri, 18 April 2025 | Christmas Closure | From 19 December 2025 |
| Easter Monday | Mon, 21 April 2025 | | |
| ANZAC Day | Fri, 25 April 2025 | | |

OUR STAFF

Qualified Educators

All educators and staff of Golden Plains Shire are employed in accordance with either the Early Education Employees Agreement 2016 or the current Golden Plains Shire Council Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

Golden Plains Shire Council engages all educators in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2014 and maintain mandated educator/child ratios for qualified and overall educator/child ratios for the full time the service operates.

To ensure consistency of care and minimal disruption to children where possible, we use a regular pool of casual relief educators to cover permanent educators on leave.

In the event that a Kindergarten Teacher can only be relieved by a Diploma qualified educator, the service will operate an activities group. An activities group is the continued operation of the current program, which is set by the Kindergarten Teacher, in accordance with DE guidelines.

All staff are required to attend approved professional development sessions each year in order to contribute to the continuing improvement of the service. This is in addition to the requirement for staff to maintain: First Aid, Cardio-Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Accreditation, and attend Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management training.

All staff are required to have a current Police Check, Working with Children Check/Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration (VIT) and to complete both annual Child Protection Awareness and OH&S workplace training.



Student Placements & Volunteers

Students from various training institutions undertake placements at the services throughout the year.

Students and volunteers work closely with staff and families at the service and are fully supervised at all times. Students do not count in educator/child ratios. They are required to have a Police Check and a Working with Children Check (WWCC) before commencing at the service. Students are also welcomed into our service from secondary school work experience programs. All students follow a Code of Conduct and are required to adhere to our privacy and confidentiality policies.

PROGRAM PLANNING AND DELIVERY

We pride ourselves on offering high quality learning experiences for children delivered in a safe and engaging environment.

Supervision

All children at the service are supervised actively and attentively within sight and hearing of educators at all times. Staffing requirements ensure that adequate numbers of educators are engaged at all times and educators modify children's access to rooms and outdoor areas dependant on times of day to ensure quality supervision at all times.

Educators at all services work to a ratio of at least one educator per 11 children (over the age of 3 years). For children under the age of 3 years in Occasional Care the ratio is at least one educator per 4 children.

Involvement of Parents/Guardians

The service is committed to provide each child with a program that meets their individual needs and their social, cultural and family backgrounds. The programs will complement the service's philosophy and broad goals and will be based on current practices outlined in the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Educators will engage and consult with parents/guardians to:

- Learn about the child and family's background.
- Determine the child's developmental needs and any identified additional needs.
- Identify individual children's interests before their planning cycle.
- Plan for changes in the child's development over time.
- Share information with each other about the child's progress, relationships with peers and interests and concerns to ensure a continuity of care between home and care.
- Share ideas or raise issues they may have about the program provided and work together to solve these.

Excursions/Incursions/Bush Kinder

Our Services are committed to providing a varied and interesting program that meets the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), with as many first-hand learning opportunities as possible.

Excursions and incursions are an important means of providing opportunities to learn in the wider community and to extend aspects of the program. Where possible, these programs will be provided at the service to allow maximum child involvement and minimal travel for children. Written parent permission must be provided before children can attend excursions outside the local vicinity and/or involving travel by vehicle. A small fee may be charged to cover the costs such as transport or entrance fees. A risk assessment will be undertaken before an excursion is organised. Parents/guardians will be advised of relevant findings of the assessment in the excursion permission forms.

Excursions are a great way for parents/guardians to be involved in the service and to share their child's experiences and learning. Parents/guardians interested in volunteering must hold one of the following:

- a) Working with Children Check (Employee)
- b) Working with Children Check (Volunteer)
- c) Victorian Institute of Teaching Registration

For more information on how to apply for a Working with Children Check go to:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/>



FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

Further information regarding Fees can be found in the separate Fee Information document provided upon enrolment.

Kindergarten Programs

The Victorian Government has committed \$9 billion to expand kindergarten programs across the state.

This means that:

- From 2023, Free Kinder will be available for all Victorian three and four-year-old children at participating services in both standalone (sessional) services and long day care (childcare) settings – a saving of up to \$2,500 per child, every year.
- Over the next decade, Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will transition to 'Pre-Prep' – increasing to a universal 30-hour a week program of play-based learning for every four-year-old child in Victoria.
- 50 Victorian government-owned and affordable childcare centres will be established. These centres will be built in areas that have unmet demand and will make it easier for families to access childcare. The first of the centres will be available in 2025.

Having Free Kinder supports every Victorian child to get the best start in life no matter where they live. It is strongly encouraged that all children attend kinder programs for two years before school as a crucial part of their educational journey.

These major new initiatives are in addition to the roll-out of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten across the state. The Victorian Government is investing \$5 billion over the decade to deliver 15 hours per week of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten for every child.

All Golden Plains Shire Kindergarten services are participating in the FREE kindergarten scheme.

Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten Grants enable eligible children to access a kindergarten program for up to 15 hours per week delivered by a qualified early childhood teacher in the two years before school. The Early Start Kindergarten grant supports an eligible child to access kindergarten for free or at a low-cost.

Your child is eligible for Early Start Kindergarten if they are aged three (3) by 30 April in the year they will be attending a Kindergarten program, and:

- Your child is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, or
- Your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred by them to Child FIRST).

Child Care Subsidy (Inverleigh Limited Hours Care)

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is an Australian Government benefit that assists eligible families with the cost of childcare at an approved service.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to register for CCS through their MyGov account.

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child. These include:

- The age of the child (must be 13 years or under and not attending secondary school)
- The child meets immunisation requirements.
- The individual or their partner meets the residency requirements.

FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

In addition, to be eligible for Child Care Subsidy the individual must be liable to pay for care provided, the care must be delivered in Australia by an approved childcare provider, and not be part of a compulsory education program.

Approved care is childcare provided for work-related purposes, including training & studying, maternity leave, sick leave or voluntary work; and the work-related purpose must have occurred at some time during the week in which the approved care was accessed. Approved care is provided by individuals registered with the Department of Human Services and may include care by kindergarten staff.

The amount payable is set by the Australian Government.

Further DEails are available at: www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy

All invoices are forwarded to a child's primary contact via email. Invoices can also be emailed to a child's secondary contact on request. Please ensure that your contact DEails are up to date at all times.

Please refer to the Golden Plains Shire Council Early Years Kindergarten Fee Policy for more information relating to fees.

Financial Hardship

If your family is experiencing financial hardship, you should contact the Coordinator Kindergarten as soon as possible to arrange an alternative payment plan. In some cases, financial assistance can be sought for cases of hardship. The financial circumstances of every family in our care will be dealt with in a strictly confidential manner.

Eligible families attending Meredith Kindergarten have access to a Family Hardship Fund. This fund is provided by Meredith Kindergarten INC and managed by Golden Plains Shire Council, please speak to the Coordinator Kindergartens to discuss.

Outstanding Fees

Where your fees are overdue and you have not been in contact with the Coordinator Kindergarten to arrange assistance or a payment plan, we may commence debt recovery and or cease the placement.

Please refer to the Golden Plains Shire Council Early Years Kindergarten Debt Collection policy for more information relating to outstanding fees.

Termination of Care

Limited Hours Care requires at least 7 days' notice of your intention to terminate care. If you do not give the required 7 days (1 weeks) notice of cancellation you will be charged for your normal booking for 7 days from the date this cancellation of care form is received.

If you are charged for any Limited Hours Care sessions after your last day of attendance, these sessions are not eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS), so you will be charged the full daily rate for these sessions. CCS is not payable for any sessions after your child's last day of care.

Please refer to the Golden Plains Shire Council Early Years Kindergarten Fee Policy for more information.



COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

General Communications

Communication with families will be open, extensive and respectful of, and sensitive to, cultural or other differences.

Communication will predominantly occur through educators and parent interactions at the start and end of each day. The service will regularly distribute newsletters to families and share photographs and reflections through the Storypark platform.

Parent/guardians will be invited to meet with educators annually across all programs. Outside this parents/guardian can contact the service/educators at any time to arrange a meeting regarding their child's development and/or needs. Please do not hesitate to ask to speak to staff, often drop off and collection times are busy and only enable essential communication exchange.

In addition, program folders and/or visual diaries will be available for families to view. These may vary slightly from service to service. These program documents are the result of educator observations, programming and planning contributions and incorporate the learning experiences and interests of children in accordance with the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework.

The service regularly communicates with families via email and SMS. To ensure the updates sent out go to the correct contacts please ensure you update email and mobile phone numbers as necessary.

Regular messages are sent out informing families of upcoming events and service closures.

Statements for Fee Payment (invoices) will be emailed to the primary guardian as nominated on your child's enrolment form.

Feedback/Suggestions

Feedback and suggestions are welcomed. Please speak to educators or contact the Coordinator Kindergarten. A formal survey is conducted annually.

Concerns/complaints

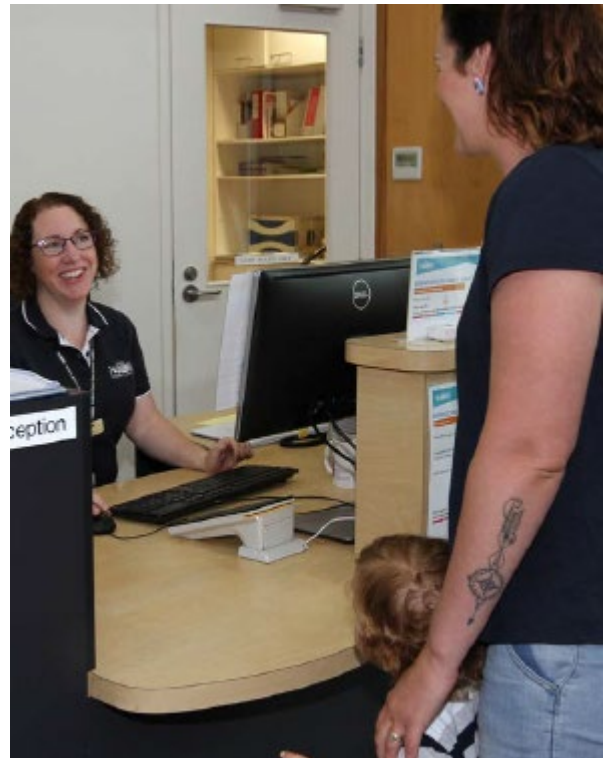
Any concerns, complaints or grievances are taken seriously by our educators and management and will be treated confidentially and respectfully.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to promptly raise any concern or grievance directly with service educators, the Nominated Supervisor or the Coordinator Kindergartens, in an attempt to resolve the matter before it is deemed a complaint or grievance. This can be done either verbally or in writing.

All complaints and grievances at the Service shall be dealt with in accordance with the Child & Family Services Complaints and Grievances Policy. This policy is available on either the Golden Plains Shire Council website or can be viewed at the Service.

Communication (preferably in writing) raising any concerns relating to the management or operation of the service should be addressed to the Coordinator Kindergartens as soon as practicable.

- Grievances/Complaints in writing should be addressed to:



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Bianca Meek

Coordinator Kindergartens

Golden Plains Shire Council

PO Box 111, Bannockburn VIC 3331

- Alternatively, complaints can be made directly to:

Children's Services Advisor

Department of Education and Training (DE)

109 Armstrong St Nth, Ballarat VIC 3350

PH: 03 4334 0589

On receiving a complaint, the service will make an assessment as to whether the complaint is a general or notifiable complaint. A general complaint can relate to any aspects of the service but is relatively minor in nature and should be able to be resolved easily. A notifiable complaint is more serious and may relate to a breach of the Act or Regulation or allege that the health, safety and or wellbeing of a child in care has been compromised.

In the case of a notifiable complaint, the service will immediately refer the complaint to DE and advise the complainant of the referral. Council as an Early Years Education and Care Provider is also bound by Education and Care Regulations with Department of Education Quality and Assessment and Rating Division (QARD) our regulator. All notifiable complaints received are reported to DE as part of our formal reporting process. In these instances, DE QARD team will carry out independent investigations and likely make contact with the complainant. We will advise individuals when DE notifications are made. Families may contact DE directly to raise any concerns.

In the case of a general complaint, the service will:

- Take all concerns, complaints and grievances seriously and treat all involved with respect.
- Determine, in consultation with the complainant, whether the matter can be easily resolved. In many cases, it is possible to rectify a problem immediately if the coordinator becomes aware that some dissatisfaction exists.
- Advise the complainant if the concern, complaint or grievance appears to be the result of a misunderstanding.
- Agree with the complainant on the action to be taken.
- Attempt to resolve the concern, complaint or grievance as quickly and confidentially as possible, without resorting to formal procedures unless absolutely essential.
- Refer the matter for more formal resolution if the concern, complaint or grievance cannot be resolved, at the local level, simply and quickly and within one week.
- Carry out or oversee any further investigations needed prior to a formal meeting while maintaining confidentiality as far as is practicable.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

General

The service believes that respect for confidentiality is a key element in promoting and maintaining the trust of all involved in the integrity of the service. All educators are required to maintain the strictest confidentiality with respect to all aspects of service operations. All information, issues and incidents relating to children and families will only be recorded and/or discussed in accordance with the relevant government legislations and those of staff in accordance with the practices of Golden Plains Shire Council.



Certain information is covered under the Privacy Principles of relevant Federal and State Legislation and Golden Plains Shire's Standard Operating Procedures on Information Privacy and Freedom of Information. This includes but is not restricted to:

- Information relating to children and families.
- Information relating to staff and staffing issues.
- Specific information regarding the financial and operational aspects of the service.
- All confidential discussions either formal or informal.

There is an expectation that parents/guardians as users of the service will respect and adhere to the principles expressed in the Service's Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Collection of information

Golden Plains Shire Council is strongly committed to protecting your privacy. All personal information collected shall only be used by Council's Early Years Services in the planning and provision of appropriate services to your child (ren). Personal information collected, including payment details, will only be disclosed to persons in connection with early years services and will not be disclosed to any external party without your consent, unless required to do so by law. You have the right to access your personal information and make any necessary corrections. If you have any queries or wish to gain access to amend your information, please contact Council's Early Years Team on 03 5220 7230.

Council will comply with Privacy Policy and the Information Privacy Principles as set out in Schedule 1 of the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 and the Health Records Act 2001 in relation to the use, storage and disclosure of information. If you have any queries regarding this Privacy Statement, please contact the Privacy Officer in writing to enquiries@tplains.vic.gov.au or by mail: PO Box 111, Bannockburn 3331.

Protection of information

Council considers that the responsible handling of personal information is a key aspect of democratic governance and is strongly committed to protecting an individual's right to privacy. Personal information collected from both staff and users of the service and recorded by the Golden Plains Shire Council will be safeguarded in accordance with State and Commonwealth Information Privacy legislation and the Statutory Information Privacy Principles.

Council has in place a standard operating procedure that sets out the requirements for the management and handling of personal information. If you have any queries regarding this procedure, please contact Golden Plains Shire on 03 5220 7111.

Photos

Photos of children's experiences may be displayed in rooms and the foyer, in program planning books and promotional displays. Families not wishing their child's photos to be taken and used as part of service displays and individual child portfolios must ensure they have informed educators and recorded so on enrolment forms.

Parental responsibility: Photos of children other than your own should not be shared amongst families or uploaded to social media. Respect for individuals should be maintained at all times.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

CUSTODY/INTERVENTION ORDERS

Management will inform appropriate staff when a child is subject to an intervention or custody order and the details of the order. This information will be held on the child's personal file and in a nominated place within the child's room.

Children will not be released from the service except to a parent/guardian or authorised person nominated by the parent/guardian on the child's enrolment form.

- If a person is delegated to pick up a child who is not nominated on the child's enrolment form educators will ring the parent/guardian before the child is released. Two educators will need to speak with a parent/guardian and complete an adjustment of enrolment form over the phone if necessary.
- If a person is delegated to pick up a child who is approved by the parent/guardian, but not known to the educators, photo ID will be required.
- If a person arrives who is not approved by the parent/guardian to pick up the child and is on site without parental/guardian authorisation, the police may if necessary be called.

CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

Children's Services educators will endeavour to protect children who access the service from all forms of abuse or neglect. If educators suspect that a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, he or she will contact Child FIRST if the impact of the abuse/neglect on the child is considered to be low and there is no immediate safety concerns; or Child Protection if there is a serious concern about the immediate safety, stability or development of the child.

Service educators will attend annual professional development sessions to ensure they have a comprehensive understanding of their responsibilities in this area and an understanding of the common signs and indicators of abuse and neglect. All staff will treat any protection issues with respect and confidentiality.



DEVELOPMENT AND BEHAVIOUR

Assessing Children's Development

Educational records are maintained on each child. These records provide the basis to assess children's development and progress. If educators have concerns about a child's level of development, parents/guardians will be contacted and informed about the concerns. There are a number of services available to provide support to child, families and educators. Relevant referral forms and agency contact details are available from the service. Your child's educators are an excellent source of information if you have any concerns about your child's development.

Funded Kindergarten/Transition to School Statements

Transition statements will be prepared for each child attending the 4yo Kindergarten program. These statements are provided to the child's nominated Primary School and provide staff at the schools with an introduction to and some information about each child. An important aspect of a transition statement is the parent contribution; parents/guardians will be invited to provide input to this document during term 4 of their child's year before school.

Encouraging Positive Behaviour

Children in care will be encouraged and supported by educators to exhibit positive behaviour. Educators will:

- Model positive behaviour that displays respect and empathy when interacting with colleagues and children.
- Provide children with a consistent approach, appropriate choices and clearly set limits.
- Respond to inappropriate or unfair behaviour by encouraging positive behaviour and indicating to the children that they should treat other children and educators with respect and fairness.
- Using simple words and explanations to ensure children understand what is expected.
- Encourage positive behaviour to support children to recognise and respect the rights of others.
- Focusing on each child's strengths and verbally reinforcing positive behaviour.
- Seek support from colleagues and the Coordinator Kindergartens.

Management of Unacceptable Behaviours of Children

If the safety of a child is at risk, by another child's continued behaviour, the service may involve support agencies to assist with behaviour support strategies. Individual parents/guardians will be involved in discussions with educators to reach a solution. Children have a right to have the opportunity to develop to their full potential. Individuals will be respected for their current developmental ability to engage with others on their kindergarten journey.

Ongoing participation in the program will be reliant on the families support in order to access assistance from support agencies. In some circumstances reduced hours of attendance may form part of the child's support plan.



POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN CARE

Families are required to inform staff of ANY medical or health condition pertaining to their child. Some medical and health conditions may require staff to attend training prior to a child attending.

Anaphylaxis & Asthma

Educators are required to undertake First Aid training that includes: special training on preventative measures to minimise the risk of an anaphylactic reaction and recognise and respond to Asthma.

Parents/guardians of children diagnosed with Asthma and/or Anaphylaxis are required to provide a written Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan completed by a registered medical practitioner. Educators will work with families to prepare a risk minimisation plan for affected children.

Exclusions

Children excluded from the service during an outbreak of a notifiable disease can return to the service after the exclusion period has expired in accordance with the health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations. On some occasions a medical clearance certificate may be requested.



Illness

Children, teachers and other educators who are unwell should stay home from education and care services. Even if they do not have a condition that requires exclusion, the individual needs of ill children are difficult to attend to in a group environment.

Services should be notified if your child will be absent due to illness. Informing educators of the type of illness allows them to assess information that needs to be communicated to other families. Information about the illness is the only thing shared, family identity remains confidential in these circumstances.

Accident/Injury

For serious injuries, professional medical attention will be sought immediately. Parent/guardians will be contacted when possible.

An ambulance may be called if there is any doubt about how serious the injuries are. Parents/guardians are responsible for costs associated with the attendance or transportation via Ambulance Victoria. Please consider if Ambulance Membership is a viable option or whether your Private Health Insurance covers such situations. Emergency transportation from our rural communities is expensive without appropriate cover.

Medication

All prescription medication must have been prescribed for the child. Educators will not administer any prescription medication that has been prescribed for one child/adult to any other child.

Educators will document each administration of medicine/ointment. Medication will be stored in accordance with label directions and in a place inaccessible to children.

All medications to be administered **must be recorded on arrival by the parent** in the Medication Records form. All medication must be in the original container, bearing the original label, and/or a dispensary label stating the medication name, strength, date of



prescription, child's name, dosage and times to be administered, and the expiry date of medication. In the case of creams or ointments, the child's name, and the amount and time of application must be stated on the tube or bottle.

The first dose of a newly prescribed medication must be administered by the parent/guardian or medical professional prior to his/her arrival at the service so that a child's reaction can be observed.

Vitamins

It is preferred that vitamins are administered at home unless required under medical instruction. When vitamins are required to be administered at the service, all of the above procedures will be adhered to.

Emergency & Evacuation



An up-to-date emergency management plan is located at each service. Staff will lead emergency drills each term and seek support from emergency services to provide relevant education to children to understand critical response should an emergency arise. In the event of an evacuation children will be moved (in the first instance) to evacuation point A as identified on the plan. Families will be contacted at the earliest convenience.

Council may use an SMS alert to inform you/keep you updated in cases of emergency. Please ensure you keep us updated with the best mobile phone number to deliver this message to.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

- Throughout the Handbook, the word **“services”** is used with regards to all Kindergarten Services operated by Golden Plains Shire Council: Bannockburn Kindergarten, Rokewood Kindergarten, Meredith Kindergarten, Teesdale Children’s Centre and Inverleigh Kindergarten (including Occasional Care).
- **“Bannockburn Family Services Centre”** refers to the facility at 2A Pope Street, Bannockburn where the Bannockburn Kindergarten and our Early Years Coordination unit is based.
- **“We”** refers to Golden Plains Shire Council.
- **“You”** refers to families enrolled in an Early Year’s service.
- **“Educators”** refers to qualified Early Childhood Educators including teachers, and assistants.

Appendix A – List of communicable diseases

Communicable diseases



Minimum period of exclusion from schools and children's services centres for infectious diseases cases and contacts

The following table indicates the minimum period of exclusion from schools and children's service centres required for infectious diseases cases and contacts as prescribed under Regulations 13 and 14 of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 – Schedule 6. In this Schedule 'medical certificate' means a certificate of a registered medical practitioner.

| Conditions | Exclusion of cases | Exclusion of contacts |
|--|---|--|
| Amoebiasis (<i>Entamoeba histolytica</i>) | Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased | Not excluded |
| Campylobacter | Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased | Not excluded |
| Chicken pox | Exclude until fully recovered or for at least 5 days after the eruption first appears. Note that some remaining scabs are not a reason for continued exclusion | Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded |
| Conjunctivitis | Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased | Not excluded |
| Diarrhoea | Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased or until medical certificate of recovery is produced | Not excluded |
| Diphtheria | Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least two negative throat swabs, the first not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics and the other 48 hours later | Exclude family/household contacts until cleared to return by the Secretary |
| Haemophilus type b (Hib) | Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received | Not excluded |
| Hand, Foot and Mouth disease | Until all blisters have dried | Not excluded |
| Hepatitis A | Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness | Not excluded |
| Herpes ('cold sores') | Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible | Not excluded |
| Human immuno-deficiency virus infection (HIV/AIDS) | Exclusion is not necessary unless the child has a secondary infection | Not excluded |
| Impetigo | Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing | Not excluded |
| Influenza and influenza like illnesses | Exclude until well | Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary |
| Leprosy | Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary | Not excluded |
| Measles | Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash | Immunised contacts not excluded. Unimmunised contacts should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case. If unimmunised contacts are vaccinated within 72 hours of their first contact with the first case they may return to school |
| Meningitis (bacteria) | Exclude until well | Not excluded |
| Meningococcal infection | Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed | Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy |
| Mumps | Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner) | Not excluded |
| Poliomyelitis | Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Re-admit after receiving medical certificate of recovery | Not excluded |
| Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (head lice) | Re-admit the day after appropriate treatment has commenced | Not excluded |
| Rubella (german measles) | Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash | Not excluded |
| Salmonella, Shigella | Exclude until diarrhoea ceases | Not excluded |
| Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) | Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is produced | Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary |
| Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever) | Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well | Not excluded |
| Trachoma | Re-admit the day after appropriate treatment has commenced | Not excluded |
| Tuberculosis | Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious | Not excluded |
| Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever) | Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary | Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary |
| Verotoxin producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> (VTEC) | Exclude if required by the Secretary and only for the period specified by the Secretary | Not excluded |
| Whooping cough | Exclude the child for 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment | Exclude unimmunised household contacts aged less than 7 years and close child care contacts for 14 days after the last exposure to infection or until they have taken 5 days of a 10 day course of antibiotics |
| Worms (Intestinal) | Exclude if diarrhoea present | Not excluded |

Exclusion of cases and contacts is NOT required for Cytomegalovirus Infection, Glandular fever (mononucleosis), Hepatitis B or C, Hookworm, Cytomegalovirus Infection, Molluscum contagiosum, or, Parvovirus (erythema infectiosum fifth disease).

Appendix B - Golden Plains Shire Council Children's Services Policies

All policies are available by visiting: [Early Years Resource Page | Golden Plains Shire Council](#)

- Acceptance and Refusal Authorisation
- Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations
- Administration of First Aid
- Administration of Medication
- Anaphylaxis
- Asthma Management
- Child Safe Environment
- Complaints and Grievances
- Curriculum Development
- Dealing with Infectious Diseases
- Dealing with Medical Conditions
- Delivery and Collection of Children
- Determining Responsible Person
- Diabetes
- Emergency and Evacuation
- Enrolment and Orientation
- Environmental Sustainability
- Epilepsy
- Excursions and Service Events
- Fees
- Food Safety Policy
- Governance and Management of the Service
- Hygiene
- Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness
- Inclusion and Equity
- Information and Communication Technology
- Interactions with Children
- Interactions with Children
- Nutrition and Active Play (including Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements)
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Participation of Volunteers and Students
- Privacy and Confidentiality (including Confidentiality of Records)
- Professional Behaviour
- Professional Behaviour
- Relaxation and Sleep
- Road Safety and Safe Transport
- Staff Health and Wellbeing
- Staffing (Qualifications, Supervision and Working with Children Checks/Criminal History Record Checks)
- Sun Protection
- Supervision of Children
- Tobacco Policy
- Water Safety



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🌐 goldenplains.vic.gov.au

CUSTOMER SERVICE HOURS
Bannockburn Customer Service Centre
8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

The Well, Smythesdale
8.30am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

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