



Grange Road Kindergarten Association Inc.

Parents Handbook

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Please refer to separate appendices available for:

- Kindergarten Session Times
- Kindergarten Fees
- Term Dates & Public Holidays

Welcome

The Grange Road Kindergarten committee and staff welcome you to Grange Road Kindergarten. We are very lucky to have so many wonderful choices for learning and development in the Bayside area for our young ones, and we are so glad you have chosen Grange Road Kindergarten. We are confident it will meet all of your requirements and more!

We have put this **Parents Handbook** together to complement our Introductory Handbook (handed out at the Open Day), our website and the support resources in the kinder foyer, to assist you throughout the next 12 months.

We hope that this kindergarten year will be beneficial and enjoyable for both you and your child/ren.

Our organisation is committed to child safety.

Many thanks to Annie White of Sandringham for her wonderful artwork that appears throughout the handbook.



Philosophy

Our kindergarten program has a premise of celebrating children's achievements. We strive to foster a joy of learning and equip children with necessary life skills.

We have an ongoing commitment to providing a high quality and innovative educational program for all children in a nurturing and respectful environment.

We value the partnership between staff, children and families and encourage family participation and input. We strongly believe that the kindergarten experience should be a fun, happy time for both children and their families.

Children make sense of their world through play based experiences which are meaningful to them. Our play based curriculum follows the children's interests but is not only restricted to that. Our teaching is intentional. We focus on processes, experience and discovery rather than use a formal approach.

We provide an environment:

- Where all children regardless of ability feel safe and secure and where they can put experiences into context.
- Where we respect that each child and family is unique and the importance for children to develop an understanding and respect for self and others. We put an emphasis on treating children equally and building resilience, confidence and assertiveness in each child.
- Where children are seen as capable, competent co-contributors and acknowledge them as active participants in their own learning. Children have a voice and the right to be heard.
- Where we promote the gradual building of autonomy and self efficiency in every child.
- Where children are appropriately challenged. We encourage children to take managed, calculated risks.
- Where the 3's and 4's share the yard for part of the program, giving younger children an opportunity to model their learning/behaviour on the older children and the older children an opportunity to demonstrate leadership qualities.
- Our emphasis on learning opportunities is equal between both indoor and outdoor time. Some groups may run an indoor/outdoor program, giving the children freedom to maximise their learning potential.
- We believe that snack time is an opportunity for social development. To promote and nurture this social interaction some groups may have a shared plate at their snack time.

All children have the right to the best we can offer in terms of their education and care. Our philosophy is evaluated annually to ensure it meets the needs of our community.

Teachers & Educators

We have a group of wonderful Teachers and Educators at Grange Road Kindergarten. Please find below a list of their names. Their photos and profiles can be found on the website and in the foyer of the Kindergarten.

Teachers

Kerstin Tapp – Nominated Supervisor
Delia Sims – Educational Leader
Sue Ross
Kathryn Oliver

Educators

Sharon Tropeano
Andrea MacVeigh
Jayne Munday
Kim Nhean
Andrea McLennan
Pam Patterson

Management at Grange Road Kindergarten

Management of Grange Road Kindergarten is overseen by a committee. The committee is elected by the parents at the Annual General Meeting, usually held in November of each year. If you would like to be involved, we encourage you to put your name down towards the end of the year. Please note that whilst the Committee is involved in the day-to-day management of the kindergarten, active and enthusiastic support from ALL PARENTS is necessary for the successful and smooth running of the kinder.

The kinder employs a part time administrator who manages the invoicing of fees and levies. The administrator is available by contacting the kinder directly by phone or email grkadmin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au.

Committee meetings are held monthly as per D.E.T. & E.L.A.A. guidelines (excluding January). The structure of the committee can be found on our website and dates of meetings on the noticeboard.

Licensed Kindergarten

Grange Road Kindergarten is registered as a Children's Services Centre Class 1 meeting the requirements of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (D.E.T.), the Children's Services Regulations 2009, the Children's Services Act 1996 and the policies and procedures of the service.

Extended Care

We offer Extended Care sessions at an additional cost (as available). The sessions are scheduled to enable your child to move in to or out of their kinder session seamlessly. All sessions will be fully supervised by some of our own wonderful Teachers and Educators. So the children may attend with some of their kinder friends and possibly even with their own Teacher or Educators.

Places are limited and on a 'first in, first served' basis. Enrolments can only be made through our Extended Care Enrolment Officer (not available through Council).

Our Program

Programming is your Teacher's plan of learning for the session. It is a series of activities and themes to support your child's learning and development based on the Early Years Learning Framework. We will work with you to learn more about your child and create a program that builds on their interests and abilities.

Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) describes the principles, practices, and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. It is part of the Australian Government's National Quality Framework for early childhood education and care.

The framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning, and recognises the importance of communication and language and social and emotional development. Through implementing the EYLF in their programming, the Teachers are helping your child to develop:

- a strong sense of identity.
- connections with their world.
- a strong sense of wellbeing.
- confidence and involvement in their learning.
- effective communication skills.
- play-based learning.

Programming at Grange Road Kindergarten involves play-based learning. Young children use play to explore the world around them and learn to understand it. Through play they also develop communication, social, emotional and physical skills that are essential to their development.

Most families probably already use play-based learning at home. For example, playing with building blocks helps a child to build their spatial awareness, plus develop maths and fine motor skills. It's an important ingredient to inspire a love of learning in young children.

Some Starting Tips

Getting started

There's so much to think about when your child is first enrolled in Kindergarten – what to pack, how to dress them, how drop-off and pick-up runs will fit into your daily routine and what the expectations are for you as a parent. We realise it can be a bit daunting, so please use this book as a tool or ask any one of our friendly staff.

The best way to prepare your child for Kindergarten is to talk positively about the experience, however don't make it a 'big deal' as this can overwhelm small children. It is the start of an amazing journey, one of endless growth and development for them. If you are positive they are more likely to be happy about the experience, particularly early on.

Preparing for Kindergarten

You can help prepare your child for Kindergarten. Below is a list of things that you might like to practise at home which may be useful for your child starting Kindergarten. Please note: there is no expectation that your child will have mastered any of these, so please don't stress!

- talking to other people about familiar objects and events
- answering and asking simple questions
- making needs known
- following simple instructions
- using books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- using the toilet independently
- saying own name
- adapting to unfamiliar settings and new experiences
- finishing a task, and tidying up afterwards
- playing cooperatively with other children - sharing and taking turns
- putting on and taking off jumpers, shoes, socks independently

Some of the things you can do to encourage confidence include:

- Providing play dates with other children
- Talking to your child about what to expect
- Coming up with a goodbye ritual – practice this before your child starts
- Reading to your child every day e.g. starting pre-school books are great
- Encouraging your child to be independent i.e. time by themselves
- Having some practise runs to the Kindergarten

Note: there are lots more ideas on the website!

What to Expect before your start

It is an exciting time to be starting Kindergarten and we all look forward to meeting you! On the first day of kindergarten you will actually stay with your child and is only a short session. You will need to provide us with some important information, which may take some time (apologies in advance for all the paperwork!). We have recently implemented Caremonkey as our point of data collection. Please make sure that you bring along the following just in case there is an issue which we need to follow up.

- Doctor's details – name, address, phone number
- Emergency contacts – name and address of three people willing to pick up your child if you are not available
- Immunisation details including date (from health centre book)
- Ambulance subscription number and Medicare number
- Current health care card (if applicable)
- List of those you give permission to collect your child and their contact details

Note: you won't need to bring snacks on day one as your Educator will explain how this works during your first session (usually only an hour or so) but you might like to bring a drink bottle with water and hat for this day. Its a great way for your child to familiarise themselves with their new environment.

Please note: It is your responsibility to ensure that Grange Road Kindergarten has your current address and home, work and mobile phone numbers on record. These details should be updated in Care monkey at as soon as they are known.

What to Expect in the First Few Weeks

The first few weeks, when leaving your child with us, can be tough for both parents and children, so it's natural to feel a bit anxious about this big change to the family routine. The staff will do everything to help your child settle in quickly. Before you know it they'll have made new friends and be running in without even a wave goodbye (that hurts too!).

When leaving for Kinder drop off, avoid rushing, leave home on time and allow time to say goodbye. At first, you may stay a while to ensure your child feels secure, but once they have settled in, a short and reassuring goodbye encourages independence. Confirm the time you will pick up your child and arrive in plenty of time to collect them.

Our Kindergarten staff are more than happy to help you with any questions you may have. If you are anxious at any time please do not hesitate to call. However we do ask that these calls are kept to a minimum so our staff can be solely focussed on the children. At the end of each day please do not hesitate to talk to one of our staff or

read through their observations to get a feel for how well your child is adapting to the changes.

Staggered Starts

Staggered starts are made over the first few weeks of the new year for the 3 year old groups and the first week for the 4 year old groups to give each child more one-on-one contact with the staff (and vice versa), and so that children can familiarise themselves with the environment & routines. Please note, your staggered start enrolment correspondence (sent in November the previous year) will outline the details of your child's specific staggered start.

What Your Child Needs to Bring

- A bag that the child can carry & access with all the things they need.
- A sun-safe hat which covers your child's face, neck and ears.
- Clothing should be comfortable and suitable for active and sometimes messy activities (easily washed!). Please consider the weather. We do provide smocks for painting, and children may enjoy water play, sand pit and so on.
- Spare change of clothes (when involved with hands-on play-based learning, your child may get a little messy!)
- Change of underwear (in case of accidents)
- Water bottle with a lid.
- Any medications – please give these to your Teacher to manage directly.
- Look for easy fasteners and encourage your child to dress themselves, so they can manage things like taking jumpers on and off.
- From September to April, when UV levels are high, please apply the first application of sunscreen to your child. We have sunscreen on site for top ups but we prefer that your child arrives with sunscreen already applied.
- **Please ensure everything is labelled clearly with your child's name.**

Healthy Lunch & Snacks

We believe in healthy eating and drinking. All children are strongly encouraged to drink **only** water with healthy food. All children will be required to bring along a small snack such as fruit, vegetables, dips, dry biscuits and/or a sandwich.

On full day sessions or a combined kinder and Extended Care session, a substantial lunch plus a snack is required, with a small snack for the shorter days.

PLEASE NOTE

1. We request that foods containing nuts and nut products are not brought to kindergarten due to allergy issues.

2. Grange Road Kindergarten requests that children do not bring packaged foods. The Kindergarten believes it is important that children are self sufficient and can open their own snacks. If packaging is required e.g. squeeze yoghurts and cheese sticks, Grange Road Kindergarten requests that 'character' advertising/packaging is left at home and that the packaging is removed or loosened so the children can open it themselves.

What Will Your Child do at Kinder

Your child will have many great new experiences at Kinder and learn an array of things that will help them prepare for school and life in general:

- How to get along with others.
- Be polite, fair and well mannered.
- Show respect and care for others.
- Appreciate working as a team to get things done.
- Share things like toys and experiences.
- Balance own needs, rights and responsibilities.
- Play fair by following the rules and taking turns.
- Resolve conflicts in a peaceful and constructive way.
- Explore new things and ideas.
- Plan ahead by asking questions and anticipate future events.
- Use new words that may be learnt from others, experiences, books and pictures.
- Express oneself through words, art and music.
- Identify and express one's feelings.
- Develop and show self control.
- Listen to stories, directions and others.
- Be aware of differences, colour, shapes, sizes and sounds.
- Care for self and belongings.
- Go to the toilet unassisted, hang up their own clothes, put away toys and materials after use.
- Promote physical and social activity through play.

Grange Road Kindergarten does not focus on teaching children to read or write. We believe that confidence, creativity, social awareness and self esteem needs to be nurtured first and foremost. With these skills firmly developed, your child will move onto reading & writing once school years commence.

Families Participation

“Parent participation in early childhood education is widely recognised in research as crucial to positive lifelong outcomes for children. Currently, many Victorian parents are engaged in strong and active partnerships with kindergartens and other community-based early children’s services.” D.E.T.

You have an important role to play at Grange Road Kindergarten. During the term, you will be asked to participate in kindergarten duty. This involves assistance during morning/afternoon tea and helping children during the kindergarten session. This is an excellent opportunity to share a kindergarten session with your child. Duty Rosters are put up in the foyer for you to nominate a date that suits you.

Working Bees

Whilst the kindergarten employs a cleaner to do the cleaning each night and a gardener to regularly maintain the garden, there is no person employed to maintain the building and its facilities. For this reason we generally conduct four working bees during the year, usually held on weekends. It is appreciated if each family attend at least one working bee.

The Family Involvement Levy, charged with term one fees, is refunded after attending the full duration of two recognised activities, for example one working bee and participation in organisation of one fundraising event. The levy is credited with the term 4 fees. In the event you cannot attend the two of the involvement activities your levy will be donated back to the Kindergarten.

Social Activities

The kindergarten has social functions throughout each year, including such things as picnics in the park, morning teas and trivia/auction nights. Your group representative may also organise social activities with other parents in your group. Join in and meet other members of the kindergarten community!

Keeping You Updated with General Information

Grange Road Kindergarten has a number of ways to keep you updated. We ask that all parents take the time to read the noticeboards at the kindergarten; check out our website and read your kinder e-Newsletter's. We also use Caremonkey and e-mails to communicate with our families. Each year we also conduct a parent survey. It is a great time to let us know your thoughts; however we do encourage

you to talk with the Committee or staff at anytime throughout the year in regards to how we can improve in general. Please remember this is your Kindergarten!

Open Communication

We understand that you are always keen to obtain feedback regarding your child/ren attending Kindergarten. This feedback is invaluable for you to not only support your child's development but also to give 'peace of mind' with the kindergarten for the first time. We believe it is important for you to have access to the Kindergarten during operating hours and to be able to speak with Teachers and Educators about issues affecting your child/ren. Please find below the opportunities that we encourage you to utilise:

- Three Year Olds: Formal parent/teacher meetings will be scheduled during the year and on a needs basis.
- Four Year Olds: Formal parent/teacher meetings will be scheduled mid-year.
- Informal meetings can be scheduled at any time by arranging this directly with your teacher.
- Informal chats at the end of the sessions are very welcome. Please note, the beginning of sessions are an important time to settle your child into the session so we ask that only important information be shared at this time.
- We encourage you to inform the Teachers, prior to the session starting, of anything that may affect your child's learning experience such as a late evening, celebrations such as birthdays or potential issues such as a death in the family, so they may better support you and your child.

Reflections

In the foyer of the kinder we encourage you to take the time to read our reflections folder and the daily reflections board. This is a wonderful tool to enable you to see what the children have been exploring and learning about and allows you to pick up further conversations at home about these topics.

Policies and Procedures Manual

The Kindergarten has a Policies and Procedures Manual that is continually updated and located in the foyer library at the Kindergarten. These policies are also located on our kinder website for your convenience. Please read anytime.

Other Important Information

Medication

It is really important that our staff are fully briefed on any potential medical conditions your child may have i.e. asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes etc.

Management Plans (if applicable) must be completed prior to the child being left at the Kindergarten, so please speak with your child's Teacher to arrange this.

In the event that staff are required to administer medication to a child, you are required to:

- Give written permission (details to be recorded).
- Provide medication in the original container bearing the original label.

Please take note of the Kindergarten's policy on illness, as a child requiring medication may in some cases be too ill to attend kindergarten.

Arrival and Departure

At the beginning of each session each child must be signed in to the Daily Attendance Book. Please remember to enter the name of the person collecting your child at the end of the session. (If there is a new person collecting your child please be sure to sign the relevant permission slip to give our Teachers permission to release your child into someone else's' care). The Duty Parent (and any sibling that stays) must also sign in at the bottom of the Daily Attendance book. Please bring your child into the relevant Kindergarten room, encourage your child to put their drink bottle and snack/lunch on the relevant trolley, put their bag away and ensure that staff are aware of their arrival. Please remember to pack a separate snack for Extended Care.

At the end of the session your child should be picked up from inside the Kinder room and must be signed-out in the Daily Attendance Book. This process is a legal requirement to provide the staff with an accurate record of the children in their care, which is of vital importance should an evacuation be necessary. Please ensure, as leaving, that you notify an Educator and that only the child/ren in your care are exiting the grounds with you.

If you are unable to pick up your child as planned, you must make alternative arrangements and should notify the Teacher of the change. Please do not expect the Teachers & Educator to mediate between parties. It is a requirement that staff are not to facilitate collection arrangements for children. The Kindergarten has an Authority for Collection form that must be completed if your child is to be collected by a person not previously nominated on your child's Kindergarten record (e.g. in the case of a play date).

Birthdays

We love to celebrate these! Every child's birthday is made special, and you can help by arranging to be on duty that day. We also offer party treats for all children if requested at a small cost to you.

War Toys

We request that no war toys are to come to Kindergarten.

Dogs

We understand animals are an important part of every family. We ask that dogs that accompany you on your walk to kindergarten for pick up or drop off are secured to the chains provided around the trees in the Staff Carpark.

In the Event of Illness

Please keep your child at home if he/she is feeling unwell or shows any sign of infection i.e. heavy cold (green mucus is a good indication), diarrhoea in last 48 hours, vomiting in last 48 hours, high temperature or infectious disease. Please phone the staff to inform them of the reason your child will not be attending. A list of infectious diseases and their incubation period is on display in the entrance. Please refer to this or direct queries to staff. If a child becomes ill whilst at Kindergarten, staff will attend to the needs of the child and contact you to collect them.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

These procedures are in the policy manual in the foyer. Practice evacuations, lock downs or lock outs take place each term for all groups.

Scooters, Bikes and Prams

It is a wonderful way to come to Kindergarten and we strongly encourage physical activity at all times. We do ask that scooters, bikes and prams are kept along the fence line as you enter the front gate on the right and not in the main area outside the front doors. With the volume of children and adults entering and exiting the building it is important that this remains a clear thoroughfare.

Withdrawing from the Kinder

If you decide to leave Grange Road Kindergarten during the year, you must give the staff and the enrolment officers 4 weeks' notice in writing. Pro rata fees will be refunded only if your child is replaced. Please note that there are no replacements made in term 4.

Our Security

30 minutes after the session has commenced the front door is locked. Entry to the Kindergarten is by invited admission only, and any person wishing to enter the premises must ring the bell and identify themselves to staff.

If you are present at the Kindergarten during a session time, please do not admit any one to the kindergarten unless the Educators are aware of their arrival. The door is opened at the end of the session for you to collect your child/ren.

Carpark

Please be advised that parking on the Kindergarten grounds including the carpark, is not permitted. The carpark is reserved for Teachers/Educators only. We ask that you do not use this area for drop offs and pick ups. Please note: the area is used for general access to the Kindergarten by children and parents and as such it can be very dangerous to have cars moving in and out of this area. Your support and care with this is greatly appreciated. Should an unauthorised vehicle be parked in this area it may be wheel clamped or towed.

Late Pick Up Policy

This comes into effect 15 minutes after the end of a session. If a child has not been collected by this time, the staff will ring you. If there is no response they will ring the Emergency Caregivers listed on your child's Enrolment Record. If the child has not been picked up 20 minutes after the end of the session the Teachers will contact Child FIRST and engage the help of the police to locate the parents/guardians and/or the Emergency caregivers listed in the Enrolment Record. The Educator will also notify D.E.T. as soon as practicable. A late collection fee of \$15 for every 15 minutes may be applied.

Recycling

We appreciate you bringing in your bits & pieces and have many uses for things like:

- Paper, Cardboard & cartons (no egg cartons please)
- Lace, wool material & buttons
- Soft wood
- Corks & Plastic lids
- Small boxes
- Books

(Please note: we cannot use matchboxes, cigarette boxes, detergent bottles or toilet rolls – thank you.)

Excursions and Incursions

During the year, we are lucky enough to offer an extensive array of excursions and incursions (visits from special groups) to further support the educational program for your child. Every three year old group will have one incursion per term, whilst four year olds will receive at least one incursion and one excursion each term, all inclusive in your fees. The children love these events and for some children it is their first experience of concerts, puppet shows etc. The looks on their faces are priceless! Some examples from previous years are:

- Melbourne Symphony Orchestra
- A water safety session at a local swimming pool
- Farm Visits
- Puppet shows
- Dancing
- African Drumming

Note: depending on the group, Term One excursions and incursions may be deferred to another Term.

Feedback

Parents/Guardians who have concerns or feedback regarding Grange Road Kindergarten can choose to deal with these in one of the following ways:

By directly approaching the Teacher or Educator

By approaching the President or a committee member

By writing to the Committee of Management or the Grievances Investigator (if making a complaint)

By contacting the D.E.T. adviser

In all cases we take your concerns and feedback seriously and will ensure a timely and thorough response is made. Please note, a survey is conducted each year for all parents/guardians of children attending the Kindergarten. This is also a valuable time to give feedback.

More Information

We understand it can be a bit daunting when starting at a new Kindergarten, particularly for the first time, or moving into a new area/country. We hope to make this transition easy. We encourage you to jump on our website, speak to any one of our staff or Committee or email us. We will be only too happy to help.