

PARENT HANDBOOK

MARGARET IVES COMMUNITY CHILDREN'S CENTRE



Interpreting and Translating Centre phone: 08 8226 1990; email itc@saugov.sa.gov.au; www.translate.sa.gov.au

HOURS OF OPERATION

Childcare Sessions

- Monday to Friday
7.30am – 6.00pm

Preschool sessions

(Only operational
during school terms)

- Monday to Friday
8.30am – 4pm

***Our centre is closed
on public holidays
and between
Christmas and the
New Year.***

WE PROVIDE:

- Full day care for children aged birth to school age.
- Jacaranda room for children under about 2.5 years.
- Bottlebrush room for children aged about 2 - 3.5 years.
- Preschool for children from about 3.5 - school age.
- Government funded sessional Preschool for children eligible to access Universal Access Preschool, during school terms.
- Emergency care if places are available.

This handbook is to provide parents and families with information about the Centre: our philosophy and objectives, education and care programs, and the management and policies of the Centre.

Margaret Ives Community Children's Centre was established in the mid-seventies and is named after an Early Childhood Educator who was the Director of St. Giles Creche in Norwood and a friend to many families in the community. Our Centre was built to accommodate the need for a larger childcare centre and preschool.

We are a community-based not-for-profit centre.

The Centre welcomes families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Bilingual staff can be arranged to assist children in settling into the Centre. This booklet can be translated into community languages if required.

Childcare places are offered according to availability and 'priority of access' guidelines set by the Government as a condition of our funding. These guidelines give a high priority to parents who are working, seeking employment, or studying / training for future employment.

Where a place is not immediately available, the child's name may be placed on a waiting list.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

An enrolment pack provides information for families about the Centre; and also seeks relevant information from families, including

emergency contact details, health information, immunisation status, dietary requirements etc. The Director is available any time to discuss policies and practices such as safety and hygiene, behaviour management, nutrition, the payment of fees, and communication procedures.

New parents and children are shown around the Centre and introduced to educators.

For families from non-English speaking backgrounds an interpreter may be arranged to assist with the enrolment process and to help children settle in.

Parents are encouraged to follow our transition process which is specific to each room (Fees are not charged for these times).

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DAILY OPERATIONS

On Arrival:

- Please sign your child in on the iPad and on the signing in sheet each time and write any extra information staff may require e.g. different phone number or pickup time for the day, name other adults picking up your child that day.
- Take your child to greet a staff member.
- Help your child to place their belongings in their locker

On Departure:

- Help your child to collect belongings.
- Take your child to farewell a staff member.
- Read about your child's day in their communication book or floor book.
- Remember to sign your child out both on the iPad and on the signing in sheet.

IMPORTANT

Please ensure that the front door and gate are closed behind you.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We encourage parents to participate in the Centre and be involved in their children's education and care:

The Governing Committee is made up of parents and staff representatives.

Our Committee develops and monitors our policies and practices to ensure a high standard of care.

Regular communication, by formal and informal means, promotes our partnership with parents.

Newsletters, posters, and notices are frequently distributed.

We have regular Working Bees, parent evenings, and social occasions.

Parent / teacher interviews are held in our preschool section although parents are able to talk informally with staff on a daily basis or may like to make an appointment for a longer discussion.

.Parents are welcome to visit or phone the Centre at any time.

GOVERNING COMMITTEE

The Centre is managed on a day to day basis by the Director, and overseen by the Governing Committee which is elected at the Annual General Meeting held in September each year. The Committee is made up of parents and staff and meets monthly. Parents are encouraged to be involved in the Committee, or Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) convened for particular purposes i.e. environment, activities, and finance etc.

We aim to ensure that each section of the Centre has a parent representative on the Governing Committee

The minutes of each meeting are displayed on the Governing Committee noticeboard in the foyer.

THE ROLE OF PARENT REPRESENTATIVES

Each section of the Centre has at least one parent representative on the Committee. Their photographs are displayed on the committee noticeboard in the foyer.

The parent representatives provide a means of communication between parents and the Committee independent of staff.

Parents can talk to the parent representatives about any issues, concerns or suggestions they do not wish to raise personally or directly with a staff member.

The parent representatives aim to make Governing Committee processes and decision-making more visible and accessible to parents.

ACCREDITATION / NQS

In May 2015 the Centre was reviewed under the National Quality Standards and we were pleased to receive the 'Exceeding National Quality Standard' in all seven Quality Areas. Our staff are always happy to discuss the standards with parents, but for further information visit the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority's website, www.acecqa.gov.au.

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SETTLING IN

Children may not only be very shy the first few days or weeks at the Centre, but also very tired. It is an emotional strain for children to adjust to their new environment- even if a child seems to be coping.

We request that you stay with and settle your child. Never leave without saying goodbye ... it may teach him/her to distrust you.

EXCURSIONS

Excursions and neighbourhood walks are an important part of providing experiences which extend the children's knowledge, interests and enjoyment.

On enrolment, parents sign a general consent for local walks which may be arranged spontaneously. Parents' written consent is obtained for all other excursions.

Parents are encouraged to join in when possible. The Centre encourages parents to follow our sunsafe policy by wearing hats when attending excursions or spending time with the children outside.

HEALTH

One of our most important goals is to provide a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health of the children and staff. As a general principle, children and

adults should not come to the Centre unless they are well and able to cope adequately with the normal daily routines and activities.

Parents should not bring a child to the Centre who has been unwell at home.

If a child becomes unwell at the Centre staff will inform parents and isolate the child from other children if appropriate, until parents can arrange pick-up. Children must be picked up within half an hour of the phone call being made. The child will be cared for by staff according to the parent's or doctor's instructions. Refer to the Policy for the Management of Unwell Children for further details.

Please inform staff by phone if your child has an infectious illness so that other parents can be notified of the illness. This will be done by placing a notice at the entry - children's names are not revealed.

We follow the Government's Exclusion Policy Guidelines which are reproduced for your information.

IMMUNISATION

We encourage full immunisation of all children. It is important for all healthy children to be immunised in order to protect children who are chronically ill or who have immunosuppressed conditions.

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On enrolment, a child's immunisation status is recorded. Parents are asked to inform staff of recent immunisations so that records are kept up to date. (Refer also to Immunisation Policy)

ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY

The Centre has formulated a detailed policy which includes procedures to minimise risks to children and adults. Permanent staff have senior first aid qualifications. Evacuation procedures are displayed prominently in the Centre and are regularly reviewed. Fire drills are held each term.

It is important that contact parent telephone numbers and emergency contacts are kept up-to date.

SUNSMART POLICY

Suitable hats that shade the face, back of the neck and ears are to be worn at all times. Margaret Ives hats are available for \$10. Sunscreen (SPF30+) should be applied by parents before arrival and is re-applied by staff as required. We encourage staff and parents to model SunSmart behaviour.

MEDICATIONS

Medications must be entrusted to a staff member and dosage information written on the medication form in your child's room. Unless written authority is given by a medical practitioner, medication will not be administered.

Do not leave any medication in your child's bag or locker.

Please refer to Medication Policy for details regarding prescribed and non-prescribed medications, and forms to be signed by parent and doctor for long term conditions such as Asthma.

CHILD PROTECTION

MICCC requires all staff to have training in *Child Safe Environments* (Mandatory Reporting) and the Child Protection Curriculum. The Centre encourages the use of assertive behaviours by all children. From teaching babies to say "Stop" right through to talking about 'being safe' with the preschool children, it is implemented in all programs. Please refer to the Centre's Child Protection policy and resources on protective behaviours.

NUTRITION

The Centre is responsible for providing a safe, healthy, caring and nurturing environment for children. We aim not only to provide adequate nutrition but also to promote the establishment of good food habits early in life. We offer regular meals and snacks choosing culturally-diverse foods recommended to provide a balanced diet. The weekly menu is displayed in the foyer.

Parents of children with special dietary needs are asked to provide written details and medical

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LIBRARY

The Centre has a small library for children and parents. Children and parents are welcome to borrow at any time.

BORROWING PROCEDURE...

Staff will explain the borrowing system to interested parents who can then borrow whenever they wish.

Topics in the Parent library include – Pregnancy and Baby Care, Raising Children, Personal Development, Cooking and Craft, Behaviour Problems, Divorce and Separation, Grief and Loss, Families.

confirmation (from a Doctor) of their child's requirements, to be updated regularly.

The Centre discourages food being brought into the Centre except for fruit or food which has been negotiated with the cook or staff for special dietary needs.

STUDENTS

The Centre regularly has Early Childhood University and TAFE students. As part of their student placements they are required to observe and plan for children. If you do not wish for your child to be observed, please let staff know. Children are not identified as part of this process and all information gained will be kept confidential.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR PARENTS

We encourage parents to build strong relationships and maintain good communication with the staff *who care for their children. If parents have a concern in relation to their experiences at the Centre, they should raise their concerns initially with the staff member involved or their Primary Carer. If this is not possible* or the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, the concern should be taken up with the Director or with a *Governing Committee representative.* (Committee members including parent reps are listed in the foyer). (Refer also to Grievance Policy in

Policy Folder or on our website – www.margaretives.com.au)

POLICIES

Policies are written to ensure consistent quality practice. The Governing Committee, Staff and parent community are invited to review the policies on a regular basis.

The Policy Folder can be viewed at the front desk and also online at www.margaretives.com.au

OBJECTIVES

To provide a high-quality early childhood service which meets the needs of the children and their families.

To work in partnership with parents/guardians.

To complement and support families in their child-rearing role.

To acknowledge and reflect our multicultural society.

For children, staff and parents to be safe and happy while in the Centre.

To strive for continuous improvement in service and performance.

For children

To provide a rich, safe and caring environment that meets each child's individual needs and interests including good nutrition and adequate rest.

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To provide a balanced curriculum which fosters the development of life skills and competencies.

For children to develop self-esteem, and pride in their cultural heritage.

For children to be stimulated and challenged and to learn through exploration and discovery.

For children to be given choices which foster independence, self-confidence, and a sense of responsibility for themselves, others, and the environment.

To acknowledge that children learn through play and to promote opportunities for uninterrupted play.

For Parents

For parents to feel welcome and at ease in the Centre and have good rapport with staff.

For parents to have access to information about the Centre via written policies and programs as well as through discussion.

For parents to be involved in management of the Centre at whatever level they feel comfortable.

To respect parents' ideas and values and encourage them to be involved in their children's education through regular discussion and evaluation of the program.

To keep parents informed of changes in current practice and policy.

To have an educative and supportive role for parents.

For Staff

To have safe, satisfying and productive employment.

To have opportunities for personal and professional development.

To be acknowledged and respected for their individual strengths, rights, needs and cultural values.

To be involved in planning, evaluation and decision-making in the Centre.

To be informed about current and future directions in children's services.

For further information please visit the Centre's website at

www.margaretives.com.au

Or email:

director@margaretives.com.au