

# EARLY LEARNING



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**Parent Information Handbook**



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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley's Early Learning Centre. We are pleased that you have entrusted us with your child's care and learning prior to starting school. We have a wonderful Centre with talented and committed staff, and an environment where children have fun, learn and thrive. Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley's early learning centres has been operating since 1983.

Our Early Learning Centre has a 'Limited Hours Type 2 Licence' with the Department of Education and Training. We are regularly monitored and inspected by the Department to ensure compliance with our regulatory requirements.

This handbook aims to be a comprehensive guide to getting started with us, and as a useful reference for our policies and procedures. Full versions of all our policies are on our website ([www.theavenue.org.au](http://www.theavenue.org.au)). If there is anything in this handbook that is not clear, please feel free to ask any staff member for clarification or additional information.

Apart from Childcare, we also offer a wide range of educational, social and recreational activities at the Centre. Please refer to our website or grab a semester brochure to read. You are welcome to join any of our programs and/or activities. In addition, the noticeboards located in the reception area and near the entrance to the Early Learning Centre, often contain interesting information and notice of upcoming events.

**Approved Provider:** Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Inc.

**Approved Provider  
Responsible Person:** Melinda Brown

**Nominated Supervisor:** Sharon Di Sciascio

**Certified Supervisors:** Mary Walsh, Nikki Sharp, Sarah Gibson, Tanya Whalan, Yuka Ito

Please do not hesitate to contact us anytime regarding any concerns you may have or regarding the care of your child.

Thank you for the opportunity to care for your child. We trust you and your family will enjoy your time with us.

## ABOUT US

Neighbourhoods Houses are the heart of Victorian communities. They are volunteer-driven, local, not-for-profit organisations that deliver opportunities for networking, volunteering, skill development and training, enabling people of all abilities, backgrounds and ages to come together to meet, share and learn in a supportive environment. They enhance wellbeing by keeping people engaged, healthy and active. They care for Victoria's children and assist volunteers to give back to their communities.

The Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley is a vibrant and strong Neighbourhood House, providing training and skill development, volunteering opportunities, occasional child care, social gatherings, support groups, recreation and social classes, as well as providing safe, informal and inclusive spaces where people feel welcome. The integrated approach of the Avenue has enabled the needs and aspirations of individuals to be identified and met, usually within the suite of programs provided or in partnership with other local organisations and/or through referral.

The House is governed by a voluntary Committee of Management. Sub-committees relating to various areas of the House enable everyone to participate in the decision making processes. At present there are 45 sessional tutors, volunteers and over 1,500 participants per week. In addition, we provide childcare to approximately 100 families.

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Avenue Neighbourhood House operates on the community development model of practice that encourages community participation, develops partnerships and networks and works to address disadvantage and social exclusion/isolation thereby building stronger and more connected communities.

### Vision

Strong, Inclusive, Connected Community

### Values

- Trust
- Respect
- Integrity
- Creativity
- Diversity

## HOURS OF OPERATION

Our Early Learning Centre cares for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 6 years. You may leave your child for five (5) hours per day for a total of fifteen (15) hours per week (this is the maximum). Our hours of opening - during school terms are:

Tuesday to Friday 9:00 am - 3:00 pm (except public holidays)

Mondays from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm (except public holidays) we offer a specific program for three & four year olds which includes a Kinder music class.

## EARLY LEARNING STAFF

At Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley we are proud of the accomplishments and formal training of our caring team and their devotion to their roles. Our staff are highly qualified and come from a range of diverse backgrounds. We have an exceptionally low staff turnover rate, with many staff at the Centre having cared for full families of brothers and sisters, cousins and friends. This continuity of care adds to the family atmosphere at the Avenue, which our families consider an important part of their child's experience.

All our Childcare staff are actively encouraged to participate in further education and training and in-service and other professional development activities, thus ensuring our staff stay at the forefront of early childhood education. In addition every Childcare staff member has undertaken certified first aid training as well as anaphylaxis training and asthma management training.

Our childcare centre is staffed according to the prescribed Department of Education - Children Services Regulations regulations in regards to qualifications and staff to child ratios. As required by law, all staff hold a current Working With Children Checks.

## Students and Volunteers

The Centre is committed to helping with the training of student child care workers, accepting students from high schools, TAFE and other tertiary training organisations. Having students at the Centre enhances the program by providing more individual attention for the children, and through the introduction of varied ideas and activities provided for the children. All students work with, and are supervised by, Avenue Neighbourhood House staff at all times. All students and volunteers are required to hold a Working with Children Check.

## WHY CHOOSE AVENUE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSE @ ELEY EARLY LEARNING CENTRE?

- Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley's Early Learn Centre is a community-based, not-for-profit child care centre. Our not-for-profit status means that all fees paid by parents go directly to providing the best possible care in employing highly qualified, professional staff. We are proud of our centre and hope you will be too. At the Avenue, our philosophy reflects the partnership between families and staff in providing care and learning opportunities for the children of our centre.
- We believe in play based learning as children learn most effectively when they actively engage in their surrounding environment and are having fun. Therefore we value and support a program which facilitates meaningful and stimulating experiences where children can thrive.
- We aim to cultivate and nurture children's innate sense of wonder and curiosity about the world around them. Through their play, we encourage children to ask why, to investigate, problem solve, reflect, make friends, negotiate and, most of all, celebrate their uniquely special individuality.
- We draw upon aspects of life at home to cater for varying needs, cultural backgrounds and family structures. Staff communicate with each other, parents and children to work together as a team to provide the appropriate resources to meet the special needs of all children.
- We provide an environment, which is safe, supportive and caring; where the children form secure attachments with care givers. This facilitates the development of positive self-esteem, where children learn to value their own and each other's strengths and weaknesses. With this confidence the children are able to participate fully in the outdoor and indoor program, which aims to promote each child's development to their full potential.
- As Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley is a community-based centre, we encourage parents to play a large part in the management and decision making in order to meet the needs of the community, which we serve. We welcome the participation of parents and other community members in our program. We like to draw on their knowledge, skills and interests to extend the children's awareness of the world around them.
- The Centre provides an education program that is
  - based on two approved learning frameworks 'Belonging, Being, Becoming - The Early Years Learning Framework' (EYLF) for Australia, and 'Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework' (VEYLDF) for Victoria.
  - delivered in accordance with the two frameworks.

- based on developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child and group of children.
- takes into account the individuality of each child.
- open-ended experiences for the children to explore at their own level and pace.
- contributes to the following outcomes
- children have a strong sense of identity.
- children are connected with and contribute to his or her world.
- children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- children are confident and involved learners.
- children are effective communicators.

## **Objectives of the Early Learning Centre**

- To provide quality care for each child.
- To provide a wide range of stimulating learning experiences, where children may grow as individuals.
- To encourage each child in the development of physical, intellectual, social and emotional skills.
- To provide a happy, warm and caring environment, which supports family values and enhances relationships among staff, parents/carers and children.
- To foster good communication at all levels throughout the Centre.
- To develop a staff team committed to the achievement of these goals through communication, planning and professional development.
- To provide a safe and healthy environment.
- To contribute generally to the maintenance and improvement of Early learning standards in the industry, through activities such as the training of students in the Centre.
- To be a self supporting non profit Centre.

## ENROLMENT PROCEDURE

The Early Learning Centre will only allow a child to commence care if all appropriate enrolment forms have been fully completed, which include an immunisation history statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (or an Immunisation Status Certificate from a doctor or local council immunisation service) that shows your child's immunisations are up to date for their age, and any required anaphylaxis/asthma plans and lawful authority orders.

In the case of siblings, each child must have a separate enrolment form completed.

### **Authorised person/s to collect child**

The Children Services Regulations require all Centres to keep records of lawful authority, contact and residence arrangements for children. During enrolment you will be asked to fill in an authorisation statement in regards to lawful authority and contact relating to your child. All sections of the enrolment form must be completed prior to enrolment, as staff will not permit a child to leave the Centre without the appropriate written authorisation from you. Persons unknown to staff will be questioned on their arrival, and lawful authority forms checked. If the person collecting your child is not listed, he or she will be unable to leave the Centre with your child, and we will notify you by phone.

On occasion a parent or authorised person may attend to collect a child while under the influence of a drug or alcohol, or present in such a manner as to suggest his or her ability to safely collect a child is impaired. Childcare staff have a duty of care to the children in their care and to ensure their safety is paramount must comply with their obligations under state or territory child protection laws. In circumstances where the collection of a child poses a potential risk to a child's safety that cannot be addressed by alternative means, the Director of Childcare and/or Approved Provider Responsible Person will contact Police or Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection and advice sought as to how to proceed.

### **Court orders**

So we can ensure the safety of your child at all times, at the time of enrolment or if a court order arises, parents/guardians must provide the Director of Childcare with photo identification of a person or persons not authorised to collect or have access to the child due to Family Court orders, family violence-related orders, child protection orders and bail orders. Court orders must be copied and kept in the relevant child's records so steps can be taken to ensure compliance. As court orders can be varied, revoked or extended from time to time, parents/guardians are required to ensure this information and a revised copy of the order is provided to the Director of Childcare for the relevant child's records.

### **Your child's records**

We ask you to ensure your child's records are kept up to date by communicating any changes to your child's pertinent information to our Early Learning Director.

If you have a change in any of the following please let us know:

- your child's diet
- allergies/asthma
- change of address , phone or email
- immunisations (please provide updated approved Immunisation History Statement)
- change of work/study address/phone
- change to emergency contacts

We ask you to keep us informed of any changes throughout the year as we need to be able to know your child's needs and be able to contact you throughout the day if the need arises.

### **Procedure for places available**

While priority for early learning places is given to participants of House activities, enrolment in a course does not necessarily guarantee a place. It is essential that social and recreation participants or students studying courses speak with early learning staff to book a place prior to enrolling.

When enrolling your child into the Centre the following will be followed:

- Our Early Learning Director will determine vacancies.
- An appointment will be made for your family to look through the Centre.
- You will receive a Handbook with information on policies and procedures at the Centre.
- You will be asked to complete the enrolment form and to also supply all required documents such as Immunisation History Statement/Court orders/Asthma and Anaphylaxis plans etc
- A start date will be discussed and set for your child to begin care.

### **PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Privacy and confidentiality is of paramount importance in our Early Learning Centre. All of the information provided to us by you, such as addresses, phone numbers, and custody information, is seen and recorded only by our Director of Childcare and the staff directly responsible for the care of your child. At no time will information be given out without your consent, and any individual meetings that take place between you and our staff will be undertaken with the highest degree of professionalism. We are required to comply with the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988 and The Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014 (Vic)

## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is a single, means-tested subsidy from the Australian Government paid directly to providers to be passed on to families as a fee reduction. Basic requirements must be satisfied to be eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy.

Visit <https://www.education.gov.au/child-care-subsidy-1> for eligibility requirements.

To register, contact Department of Human Services (DHS) by phoning 13 61 50 or visit website link above.

Families are responsible for providing their child's and the registered parents Customer Reference Number (CRN) and dates of birth. The Child Care Subsidy cannot be applied to accounts until a successful enrolment is made with DHS. If you are not registered, you will not receive any subsidy.

Once your enrolment and place has been confirmed by Childcare Accounts, a successful link has been made with DHS, the registered parent is required to approve each child's booking pattern via their myGov account prior to any Child Care Subsidy being applied.

## FEES

*These are the fees for the calendar year - 2020 and these may change during the year. We are a registered Centre with the Department of Education and Training and registered for the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).*

Occasional Care					
	1hr	2 hrs	3hrs	4hrs	5hrs
Per Child	\$ 11.00	\$ 22.00	\$ 33.00	\$ 44.00	\$ 55.00

3 & 4 yr kinder group	
Per Child	\$ 550 *

(above fees are based on a 10 week term)

**Payment of Accounts** Payment of a full term's fees in advance is preferred.

You will be advised what your payable fee is after taking into account any application of the Government Child Care Subsidy at your child's initial enrolment.

- At the commencement of each year.
- At any change of enrolment.
- Whenever fees are amended at the Centre.
- Whenever your Child Care Subsidy changes.

The Government Child Care Subsidy is paid direct to the Centre and will be offset against the Centre's fees.

You will be provided with a statement each fortnight which will indicate what fees you have been charged for care and what payments have been made. Statements will be on the sign in table or handed to you.

### **Bus Transport Fees**

Avenue Neighbourhood House has been providing a bus service to and from local kindergartens for almost 7 years. The service has been made possible via the use of our community bus and the appointment of an additional childcare worker to accompany children to and from kinder.

Historically, the cost of this service has been absorbed by the House and Childcare families have only borne a very minimum cost - a Gold Coin Donation.

Unfortunately due to rising cost, transport fees will need to increase slightly and will need to be more formalised. From 1 March 2020, the cost of transporting a child to Kinder will be \$2 per trip. This means that if your child is being dropped off and picked up from kinder, the total cost will be \$4.

Bus Transport fees will be invoiced and provided as part of your statement each fortnight.

### **Procedure for Payment of Fees**

All fees are to be paid as specified below, unless alternative arrangements are approved by the House Manager.

For regular continuous bookings, fees must be paid either a term in advance or on a fortnightly basis.

For one-off/occasional care bookings, upfront payment of fees is required on the day.

Options for payment of fees include:

- Direct Debit.
- EFTPOS (for debit or credit cards).
- Cheque.

### **Late Fees**

This fee applies to people who are late collecting a child or children from Early Learning. The current rate is as follows:

- \$2.50 for the first 5 minutes parents/carers are late.
- \$1.00 for each minute after the first 5 minutes.

Parents/carers will be given a verbal warning in the first instance. In addition, Department of Education registration conditions clearly stipulate that Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Inc. is licenced to mind children for one five-hour period in any one day.

If a parent/carer has a concern with this issue they may speak directly to the Director of Childcare or the Manager.

### **Non-Payment of fees**

Failure to pay fees in the time stipulated, or if the outstanding amount reaches \$300 will result in the following action by the House:

- A emailed reminder from the Director of Childcare requesting payment within five (5) business days from the date of the email.

If no payment is received within the five (5) business day extension period, or no satisfactory payment arrangement made between the parent(s) and the House, the parent(s) will be sent a formal letter (sent Registered Mail) advising them that their child or children may not be permitted to continue childcare at the Centre until such time as the outstanding fees are paid in full.

However, we recognise that for some families in our community the financial cost of care can be a barrier to accessing our service. Anyone experiencing financial difficulty is encouraged to discuss the matter with the House Manager.

In the case of ongoing financial difficulty, a fee payment schedule may be an option, but any such arrangement must be agreed to by the House Manager.

The details of any resulting arrangement will be put in writing and signed by the parent(s) of the child/children and the House Manager on behalf of ANH@E.

Any discussions and subsequent financial arrangement regarding payment of fees will be strictly confidential.

The House reserves the right to take whatever collection action it deems necessary for fees that remain unpaid after the email reminders and formal letter, and where a suitable payment arrangement has not been negotiated.

### **Variations to days**

From time to time your family's Childcare needs may change, either temporarily or permanently, and therefore, we understand that you need a flexible Childcare service that is responsive to your family's changing needs. With your assistance, the Director of Childcare can co-ordinate the changing needs of families to better respond to individual requests for additional

care, and to enable permanent changes to bookings to take place smoothly within the Centre.

You will understand that due to our high utilisation of Childcare places we cannot always accommodate all requests; however, we have a commitment to providing you with a flexible and responsive service, so you can be confident that we make every effort to do so.

To assist us in responding to your and other families' needs, please direct any notification of temporary or permanent cancellation of care, requests for additional care or forthcoming changes to your child's attendances to the Director of Childcare as early as possible.

### **Absences**

To ensure accurate child/staff ratios and to give parents/carers on the Early Learning waiting list the offer of a place, it is imperative that we are given 24 hours' notice if a child is going to miss a session. If no notice is given that a child will not be attending Early Learning, it is expected that we will receive full payment for that session.

If less than 24 hours' notice is given that a child will not be attending Early Learning, half fees for that session may be charged, depending on the circumstances. If a child is ill on the morning they are due to attend, parents/guardians are asked to ring before 9:00am using the after-hours answering machine service, and they will not be charged for that session.

### **Toy levy**

It is expected that all families will pay an annual toy and maintenance levy fee that will be set by the Committee of Management. For families who access the service mid-year, a pro rata levy will apply.

An \$8 per term toy levy is added to the above fees to help maintain and replace toys and books for the children's use.

### **Cancelling care**

Should you require to cancel your child's care, two weeks notice must be given during which time normal fees will apply. Failing this, a cancellation fee equivalent to the cost of two weeks care will be charged to your final account. Should your child be absent on their last day of care full fee will apply.

If your child does not attend the Centre for more than two consecutive weeks without any notice to the Director of Childcare, then your booking will be automatically cancelled, and your child's place will be offered to another family on our waiting list.

## **DELIVERY AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN**

The Early Learning Centre will ensure that all children on arrivals are left in the direct care of a staff member and that no child leaves the service with an unauthorised person as per the child's enrolment form.

Each morning and afternoon staff will ensure that arrivals and departures to and from the Centre are not only safe and secure for the children, but also a valuable means of exchanging information. Our staff will endeavour to be available and responsive to parents and children's needs at these times. Arrivals and departures, and greetings and farewells, are an important part of the child's routine. Through creating an environment of trust and support, our staff ensure that the transition from home to Centre, and Centre to home, is at all times a pleasant and positive experience for you and your child.

### **Arrivals Procedure:**

For arrivals we ask that parents/guardians or your nominated representative

- accompany the child into the Centre.
- ensure that the attendance folder is signed on arrival, this is a Department of Education and Training requirement. The folder is located in the entrance area of the Early Learning Centre.
- leave your child in the direct care of a staff member.
- feel welcome to spend time with your child upon arrival to the centre.
- exchange information regarding your child's night if relevant, and any other pertinent information that will assist staff in the care and education of your child.
- keep goodbyes brief for children, and notify staff if your child's arrival time is going to be varied dramatically at any time.

### **Departures Procedure:**

For departures we ask that parents/guardians or your nominated representative

- inform staff that you are taking your child home and sign out the child in the attendance folder located in the entrance area of the Early Learning Centre.
- staff will communicate with you on your child's day and inform you of any pertinent information.

**In addition to the above procedures we wish to draw your attention to the following:**

- Only nominated person/s listed on your child's enrolment form will be authorized to collect your child from the Centre.
- If a person other than those nominated on the enrolment form is collecting your child, please notify staff of the name and address of

that person. That person must be over the age of 18 and provide identification on arrival e.g Driver's Licence.

- Children will not be allowed to leave the building with an unauthorised person.
- Legal custody and access arrangements must be recorded on your child's enrolment form at the time of enrolment with a photocopy of the court orders attached in order for the Centre to comply with legal arrangements.

#### **What to bring each session**

- Morning and or afternoon tea - a piece of fruit.
- If staying over lunch, please bring a packed lunch.
- Bottles/formula if needed.
- Dummy, a favourite toy or other comforter if needed.
- Nappies, extra underpants for those being toilet trained, spare clothes and wipes.
- A named hat from Spring through to Autumn (terms one & four).
- A named drink bottle.
- If your child is in nappies, please provide a packet of wipes at the beginning of each term.

**Please ensure that all of your child's belongings are clearly labelled.**

Please encourage your child to leave their toys at home as children can become distressed if their belongings go missing or are played with by others. Donations of pre-loved toys, books, cards, puzzles etc in good condition would be greatly appreciated.

### **First day, what to expect**

On your child's first day at the Centre, staff will do their best to gently integrate him/her into the activities. It is important to fill in the "comments" section on the sign-in sheet if necessary. Initially both you and your child may find a shorter stay (1 or 2 hours) helps. New parents are encouraged to stay for a short time to help settle the child. Please do not hesitate to phone the Centre if you feel anxious. Remember, it may take several sessions for your child to feel at home at the Centre.

Consistency and predictability are two key ingredients for smooth arrivals and departures. Below are some other ways you can help,

#### **Saying goodbye**

- Take time to see your child settled comfortably.
- Let your child know whether you intend to stay or go. Do this by sitting with them when you are staying, and giving a clear goodbye when you are leaving.
- Establish some arrival routines e.g. sign in together, put belongings away, greet staff.
- Tell your child when you will be back. Connect the time to an activity/ "I'll be back to pick you up right after....."
- Say goodbye with a kiss, a hug and a wave. When you've said goodbye...GO! Be firm and friendly.

#### **When you return**

- Set aside the problems of the day and concentrate on being with your child for a while and give them your full attention.
- Maintain a predictable pick-up schedule.
- Say goodbye to staff and other children.
- When you've said goodbye be on your way!

#### **Late pick-ups**

If children are collected after 3:00pm the Centre will impose a late fee (refer to page 12). The parent/guardian will be required to fill out a late notice and you will be billed accordingly. If by 3:15pm parents have failed to notify the Centre of when the child/ren will be picked up, the Centre will phone the emergency contact/s to collect the child/ren. If the child/ren is picked up by an emergency contact, a note will be placed on the inside of the foyer door notifying the parents as to the whereabouts of the child/ren. If parents or emergency contacts are uncontactable the Director of Childcare and/or Approved Provider Responsible Person will contact Police or Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection and advice sought as to how to proceed.

## **NUTRITION, FOOD AND BEVERAGES, DIETARY NEEDS**

The Centre promotes a healthy lifestyle, including the positive impact healthy eating has on each child's learning and development.

### **The Early Learning Centre**

- recognises children as active participants in their own learning. Children are encouraged to make meaningful decisions about elements of their own education and care.
- incorporates progressive meal times into the educational program that allows children to choose to eat when they are hungry, rather than according to a timetable. Children gather in small groups to enjoy morning and afternoon tea time and lunch, without interrupting the needs and play of others. This also encourages

quieter, more social and meaningful interactions at these times and allows for a smoother flow throughout the day. Children can make decisions based on their own needs, and can be supported to access food and water throughout the day.

### **Special Diets and Allergies (*refer also to Anaphylaxis policy*)**

Parents need to inform staff if their child has any special diets and/or allergies.

### **Special Occasions/Birthdays**

A birthday is a special occasion so please feel free to send a cake. We may have children with dietary intolerances and allergies so please discuss options with staff. If you are unable to come along, you may like to give your camera to a staff member and we will help capture your child's special day.

### **Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea**

- Adequate time is allowed for eating.
- Tables and chairs are appropriate height for children.
- We provide a calm, relaxed environment.
- Children eat as a group - meals are a social occasion.

### **Supervision During Meals**

- Staff sit with the children at lunch time and interact, providing assistance to children and conversation.
- Morning and afternoon tea are progressive and a staff member supervises and interacts with children, offering assistance when required.
- Children and staff are required sit while eating.

## CHILD HEALTH POLICY

To maintain the health of the children at the Centre, staff and parents must work together to maintain the highest hygiene standards. Children suffering from heavy colds or infections must stay at home to avoid the risk to other children. Children on antibiotics need to stay at home for at least 24 hours from the time of the initial dose.

If your child becomes ill, or is injured while at the Centre, staff will endeavour to contact you immediately. If a parent is not available staff will then try to contact the person/s nominated by you on your enrolment form. Medical assistance will be sought if deemed necessary by the Centre Director.

### Illness

The well being of each child is the highest priority in the Centre. Whilst staff will do what they can to minimize cross-infection, to prevent illness occurring, children who are noticeably unwell must not attend the Centre.

Slight sniffles and coughs are unavoidable and, provided your child is well enough to join in with group activities, they may attend. Please use common sense to gauge whether they are well enough to attend. Children who are miserable and tired are better off and more comfortable at home.

We cannot accept children into our care if they have an infectious illness and must follow Department of Health guidelines as to when they may be accepted back into care. A copy of the infectious diseases timetable is on the notice board in the entrance to the Early Learning Centre.

Should children become unwell while in our care we will make them as comfortable as possible while we contact you. Should both parents be out of reach we will then contact the emergency numbers you have listed.

Parents/guardians are asked to play an active role in minimising the spread of illnesses in the Centre by ensuring that Centre staff are notified when their child is ill, or diagnosed as having an infectious disease, and by keeping the child at home until they are well, and all periods of exclusion are adhered to.

Consideration regarding all such health matters will contribute immensely to maintaining a healthy environment for all of the children and adults within the Centre.

## Immunisation

In accordance with “No Jab, No Play” legislation, families must provide evidence that the child they are enrolling is fully immunised for their age, on a vaccination catch-up program or unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons. To comply with the legislation, families must provide an approved immunisation certificate before care can commence. An Immunisations History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register can be used. An Immunisation Status Certificate from a medical doctor or a local council immunisation service can also be used if it meets requirements. Our Early Learning Director will assist you with how to obtain the required documentation and assess it once it has been received to ensure immunisations are up to date before care can commence.

This is a directive from the State Government of Victoria for further details please visit:

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/immunisation/vaccination-children/no-jab-no-play>

Please attach a copy of your child’s immunisation schedule to your enrolment form.

## Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a term used to describe a severe allergic reaction. It is the most severe form of an allergic reaction and is life threatening. We ask that if your child has anaphylactic reactions, that you and your child’s doctor complete an Anaphylaxis Action Plan for the Centre, prior to enrolment or as soon as a diagnosis is made. By signing the Anaphylaxis Action Plan you are authorising staff to administer your child’s EpiPen according to the plan. Your child’s individual needs will be discussed with all staff.

The Centre will

- ensure a copy of the child’s anaphylaxis action plan is visible and known to staff in the service.
- follow the child’s anaphylaxis action plan in the event of an allergic reaction.
- in the situation where a child who has not been diagnosed as allergic, but who appears to be having an anaphylactic reaction:
  - call an ambulance immediately by dialling 000.
  - commence first aid measures.
  - contact the parent/guardian.
  - contact the person to be notified in the event of illness if the parent/guardian cannot be contacted.

A full copy of our Anaphylaxis Policy is on our website.

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## Administering First Aid

Although every care is taken to prevent accidents, they do occur. All staff at the Avenue hold current first-aid certificates and first aid will be administered as necessary by staff that hold a current first aid certificate.

Located in the Centre is an incident, injury and trauma record book. This book is used to record all of the relevant information surrounding any incident, injury and trauma that may have affected a child whilst participating in our programs. Included in this record is a report of the nature of the incident, injury or trauma, which is then dated and signed by the attending staff member.

On arrival at the Centre, the parent/guardian will be told of the nature of the incident concerning their child. Alternatively a staff member may the parent/guardian ring during the day to notify of the incident, injury or trauma. A child's safety and wellbeing is of prime concern and we plan our environment carefully and with safety in mind. In addition to this, all Early Learning Centre staff hold a current First Aid qualification to ensure the safety and well-being of children, whilst in our care.

## Medical conditions and administering medication

Early Learning staff will

- follow any relevant information provided by parents/guardians regarding their child's medical condition.
- be aware of individual requirements of children with specific medical conditions.
- administer medications as required, in accordance with the Administering Medication Procedure outlined below.
- monitor signs and symptoms of specific medical conditions and communicate any concerns to the Early Learning Director (Nominated Supervisor).
- adequately supervise all children, including those with specific medical conditions.
- ensure opportunities for the child with a specific medical condition to participate in any activity, exercise or excursion that is appropriate and in accordance with their risk minimisation plan.

Parents/guardians are responsible for

- informing the Centre of their child's medical condition/s, if any, and informing the Centre of any specific requirements that their child may have in relation to their medical condition.
- developing a risk minimisation plan for the medical condition with the Early Learning Director (Nominated Supervisor).

- providing a medical management plan signed by a medical practitioner, either on enrolment or immediately upon diagnosis of an ongoing
- medical condition. This medical management plan must include a current photo of the child and must clearly outline procedures to be followed by educators/staff in the event of an incident relating to the child's specific health care needs.
- notifying the staff of any changes to the status of their child's medical condition and providing a new medical management plan in accordance with these changes.
- informing the staff of any issues that impact on the implementation of this policy by the Centre.

### **Practice**

Early Learning Centre staff will administer medication to a child when

- written parental permission has been given with specific details provided on the medication sheet. Information to administer medication must be explicit e.g "1:00pm", "before outside play", "after food". Information such as "as required", "when necessary", "if coughing persists" is not acceptable.
- medication must be brought in the original container and be within the use-by-date and bear the original label and child's full name.
- a medical condition is ongoing e.g. eczema and a medical management plan signed by the treating medical practitioner is provided to the Centre.

### **Procedure**

- On arrival, parent/guardian is required to hand medication directly to staff and fill in the medication form. Medication must not be left in the child bag.
- Staff will not administer beyond the dose or age range on the medication container, except on written medical advice.
- On departure, parents are required to collect medication belonging to their child and sign confirmation of administered medication. Staff will not place any medication in the children's bags.

### **Head Lice**

Head lice can cause concern and frustration for some parents, early learning staff and children. The Code of Practice below is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Centre's community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner.

Whilst parents have the main responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, our Centre's community will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

It is the expectation of parents/carers and families attending this Centre that you will:

- regularly inspect your child's hair for head lice at home, and use the recommended conditioner/combing detection method when head lice are suspected and then treat them if necessary.
- not allow your child to attend the centre with untreated head lice and keep your child at home if head lice are present (in accordance with Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009). It should be noted that children may be treated one evening and return to the Centre the next day and that the presence of eggs in the hair is not cause for exclusion. Parents/guardians need to be aware that one treatment is not sufficient to manage the problem. If a child re-attends the Centre with live head lice the Centre may again exclude the child until the live insects have been removed.)
- collect your child as soon as possible if head lice are identified and you have been notified. Your child can return to care once effective treatment of the head lice has commenced.
- support the recommendation by the Department of Health that if your child has long hair, you tie it back if this is at all possible.
- notify parents/carers of your child's friends so they can check their children and treat if necessary.
- maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.
- act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the Centre and broader community around issues of head lice.

To support parents/carers and the broader Centre community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management the Centre will:

- distribute up-to-date information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents/guardians and staff at the beginning of every year and more frequently if required (available from website <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/headlice/>) .
- notify the parents/carers of a child as soon head lice are identified.
- include information and updates in the Centre's newsletters.
- include annual head egg/lice updates for staff in-service programs.
- provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising or blaming families who are finding it hard to control head lice.

- follow the recommendations of the Exclusion Policy of the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the Centre rests with the Early Learning Director or staff member in charge.
- only exclude children from the centre with untreated head lice.
- accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced.
- encourage children to learn about head lice to help reduce stigma or bullying.
- be aware of real difficulties some parents may have and seek extra support if required.
- review the head lice policy bi-annually and seek endorsement from the Committee of Management.
- act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with the staff of the Centre, families and broader centre community around issues of head lice.
- seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

There is no requirement for the Centre to undertake head-lice inspection programs unless the Committee of Management and Centre community choose to implement an inspection program.

The Department of Health recommends that a child is treated every two to three days when head lice are a recurring problem.

## **CHILD SAFE STANDARDS**

Victorian Child Safe Standards came into effect for education and training providers on 1 January 2017. The Early Learning Centre is committed to providing and maintaining a safe environment for all children, including children with a disability and promoting cultural safety of Aboriginal children and children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds. The Centre has zero tolerance to child abuse as this has serious effects on the health, safety, wellbeing and livelihood of children.

Our Child Safety Policy and Child Safety Code of Conduct is on our website <http://theavenue.org.au/childcare-policies>

## MANDATORY REPORTING AND REPORTABLE CONDUCT

A mandatory reporter applies to all adults. Anyone who believes on reasonable grounds that a child or young person is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse, must report their concerns to Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Child Protection or Victoria Police.

The Centre has processes in place for reporting suspected child abuse that are appropriate, clear and robust. Reports are strictly confidential.

## BEHAVIOUR AND GUIDANCE

Early Learning staff will use appropriate strategies to guide children to recognise, manage and reflect on their behaviours and express their emotions in positive, non-threatening and productive ways. All children will be supported to learn and develop in a secure and empowering environment.

Our guidance of children's behaviour will

- have due regard to appropriate age and stage expectations and individual temperaments, and will be positive and supportive.
- not include subjection to psychological abuse.
- not permit frightening methods of control and discipline to be used (timeout).
- not be associated with food (never is a child or infant to be 'force fed', or refused food as a form of discipline), rest, toilet training or isolation.
- ensure that a proper tone of voice is used at all times. Voices must not be raised nor abusive at any time and at all times be managed with respect.
- encourage children to express themselves and their opinions.
- allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
- offer positive guidance and encouragement towards acceptable behaviour.
- have regard to the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.
- be warm, responsive and to develop trusting relationships with children that promote a sense of security, confidence and inclusion.
- support each child to develop responsive relationships, and to work and learn in collaboration with others.

- be positive and use respectful strategies to assist children to manage their own behaviour, and to respond appropriately to conflict and the behaviour of others.

## SLEEP AND REST

The Centre will follow procedures based on current research and recommended evidence-based principles and guidelines. Red Nose (formerly SIDS and Kids) is considered the recognised national authority on safe sleeping practices for infants and children.

At orientation staff will inform parents or caregivers of the current recommended Red Nose safe sleeping recommendations and ANH@E sleep and rest policy and procedures.

Sleep/Relaxation times are an essential part of the day for all of the children in the centre. Some of the children use this time to sleep, others to play quietly in a peaceful and relaxing environment.

Your child's sleep routine at the Centre is developed with your help, to compliment your home routine. Any requests you may have, such as limiting sleep times or additional relaxation times, will be actively, and happily, followed through by our staff.

Your child is welcome to bring along any security items, such as a dummy, bottle, blanket or special toy. All bedding linen is supplied by ANH@E.

At ANH@E your child will never be forced to sleep, but encouraged to either relax by reading or to play quietly on a mattress. Our playrooms and indoor/outdoor program is always set up with quiet activities for children who do not require a formal sleep or relaxation time.

An infant's individual sleep pattern at home is used for the basis of establishing a sleep routine at our Centre. On enrolment, our staff will enquire about your child's sleep routine, and discuss with you how your child's individual needs can be accommodated within the playroom's routine.

If a family's beliefs and requests are in conflict with current recommended evidence-based guidelines, the Nominated Supervisor at ANH@E will need to determine if there are exceptional circumstances that allow for alternate practices. For example, with some rare medical conditions, it may be necessary for an infant to sleep on his or her stomach or side, which is contrary to Red Nose recommendations. It is expected that in this scenario the service would only endorse the practice, with the written support of the infant's medical practitioner. The service may also consider undertaking a risk assessment and implementing risk minimisation plans for the infant.

In other circumstances, the Nominated Supervisor and early learning staff would not be expected to endorse practices requested by a family, if they differ with Red Nose recommendations. For example, a parent may request the service wrap or swaddle their baby while they are sleeping. However, according to Red Nose recommendations, this practice should be discontinued when a baby starts showing signs that they can begin to roll (usually around four to six months of age, but sometimes earlier). The Nominated Supervisor and early learning staff will refer to the procedures within this policy if parents/family make requests that are contrary to the safety of the child. Child safety will always be the first priority.

## **TOILET TRAINING**

In full consultation with parents, the Centre will begin the toilet training process when appropriate for each individual child. This will be carried out in a positive and encouraging manner. Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress. Children will be offered frequent opportunities for toileting, particularly after meals and before sleeps.

## **SUN PROTECTION POLICY**

The Centre is committed to ensuring that all children in their care are protected, where possible, from skin damage caused by the UV rays of the sun. The Centre follows the principles of SunSmart (Cancer Council Victoria) by using a combination of sun protection measures of clothing, brimmed hats, sunscreen, shade and sunglasses (optional). These are followed for all outdoor experiences during the sun protection times whenever UV levels are three or higher (usually from mid-August to the end of April in Victoria) as the health and safety of children is paramount.

- To assist with the implementation of this policy, educators and children are encouraged to access the local sun protection times via the SunSmart widget on the service's website, the free SunSmart app or at [sunsmart.com.au](http://sunsmart.com.au).
- The sun protection measures listed are used for all outdoor activities during the daily local sun protection times. (The sun protection times are a forecast from the Bureau of Meteorology for the time of day UV levels are forecast to reach 3 or higher. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types. In Victoria, UV levels regularly reach 3 or higher from mid-August to the end of April.)
- ANH@E sun protection practices consider the special needs of infants. Babies under 12 months are kept out of direct sun when UV levels are 3 and above. Physical protection such as shade, clothing and broad-brimmed hats are the best sun protection measures. If babies are kept out of the sun or well protected from UV radiation by clothing, hats and

shade, then sunscreen need only be used occasionally on very small areas of a baby's skin. The widespread use of sunscreen on babies under 6 months old is not recommended.

- Parents/carers will be asked to sign a permission form giving their permission for staff to apply sunscreen to their child when appropriate.
- SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum water-resistant non-allergenic sunscreen will be provided by Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley Inc. for staff and children's use as required.
- If sunscreen has been supplied by the family for their child then the sunscreen needs to be clearly named and dated and staff will only apply that sunscreen to that child.
- Staff will apply sunscreen to the children should the UV index be 3 or above.
- Staff will ensure each child has been sun screened 20 minutes before going outside and sunscreen is to be re-applied every two hours or as per directed on bottle (Australian Government Therapeutics Goods Administration (TGA) - Australian regulatory guidelines for sunscreens:
- Staff will encourage children to apply their own sunscreen under supervision.
- Families must provide sun-hats for their children. They are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears such as legionnaire, broad brimmed or bucket hats. Caps are not suitable.
- families are requested to dress children in sun protective clothing that covers as much skin as possible (e.g no singlet tops). Children are to wear sleeved tops that cover their shoulders and top of their arms, and/or loose fitting clothing that covers as much skin as possible. Tops with elbow length sleeves, and if possible, collars and knee length or longer style shorts and skirts are best.
- Staff will ensure all children are dressed appropriately for the weather outside each day. An attendance without a sun-hat and/or dressed inappropriately will result in the child's play being restricted to areas out of the sun.
- Staff will check the UV index levels on a daily basis online and will record this in the daily UV rating book.
- On days where the UV index level is 3 or above, children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activity. The availability of shade will be considered when planning outdoor activities. Staff will also be flexible and make reasonable judgement/s taking into consideration the UV level.
- Our staff further supports the Cancer Council SunSmart principles by being good models for the children, and by personally following sensible SunSmart practices and this policy.

- The Committee of Management will ensure there are a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the Early Learning grounds.
- Learning about skin and ways to protect skin from the sun will be incorporated into programmed activities.
- This policy will be reinforced in a positive way through parent/carer newsletters, notice boards and meetings.
- Staff and parents/carers will be provided with educational material on sun protection.

## **COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES PROCEDURE**

Should you have an issue regarding your child, with provision of care, or with any of our Early Learning procedures and policies, please see the Early Learning Director in the first instance. If the issue is not resolved to your satisfaction, please see the House Manager.

The Centre will investigate all complaints and grievances fairly and document in a timely manner. Complaints or grievances may be received from anyone who comes in contact with the Centre including parents/guardians, volunteers, students, members of the local community and other agencies. Our full Complaints Policy and procedure is on our website <http://theavenue.org.au/childcare-policies>

## **LOCAL KINDERGARTEN BUS RUNS**

If you are experiencing difficulties in picking up or dropping off your child to Kinder we can help. Avenue Neighbourhood House @ Eley provides a pick up / drop off service to local kindergartens. Please refer to page 12 for bus transport fees. To be eligible for this service your child must be booked in for occasional care before or after kinder. A qualified staff member accompanies all children in the bus and escorts them safely in to or out of kinder.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Once a year the children are photographed by professional photographers. The photos may be purchased through the photographic company and make great gifts. The photographers we use are experienced in working with children and special care is taken to ensure your child looks their best on the day. Parents will have advance notice of the date. Children who do not normally attend on the photo day may come in with their parents to have their photos taken.

Occasionally we will take photos for the centre. Full details are explained on the enrolment form.

## **NOTES**