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Information Handbook

Governing Council

The Preschool is managed jointly by the staff and the Governing Council – a committee made up of elected parents/caregivers and interested persons. The Governing Council is formed at our Annual General Meeting, held in February each year. The Council is responsible for the financial management and maintenance of the Preschool. The Governing Council arranges social and fundraising events to provide the funds necessary to keep the Preschool operating smoothly and provide resources for your children. It is also a great way to meet people, make new friends and have a say in how the Preschool is run. Meetings are held three times a term at the Preschool and are relaxed and informal. Parents are welcome to attend any meeting during the year; you don't have to be a council member. Please see a member of staff or a council member if you are interested.

Services Offered at Mawson Lakes Preschool

Preschool	For children in their eligible year
Early / Extended Entry	For children with specific additional needs (please see the Director if you think your child is eligible)
Preschool Support	DECD provides specialised help, free of charge from qualified Speech Pathologists, Psychologists, Social Workers and Disability Coordinators. If you have any queries or concerns regarding your child's development please see a staff member for a confidential referral
Bilingual Support	For children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds who have limited English (please see the Director if you think your child is eligible)
Emergency Care	Provided to families within the Preschool on an emergency basis
School Transition	The Preschool liaises closely with Mawson Lakes School and other local schools to provide a Transition Program that suits each individual child's needs. <i>(Please be aware that various schools have different policies / procedures for school age entry. The onus is on <u>parents</u> to check when your child will enter school before starting at Preschool)</i>
Health Screenings	Child and Youth Health provide a health screening for children aged 4.5 years and over. Screenings are usually held each term.

Daily Routine

Times are an indication only and may be subject to change

8 am - 8.30am	Staff preparation time Set up of inside and outside areas
8.30am	Children and families arrive Children participate in free play activities inside Staff free to talk to families/interact with children
9.30am	Group time – whole group settling songs/activities explanation of activities
10am	Free play - fruit time – children can eat their fruit any time during free play Staff may take small groups or work with individual children during this time
11.15pm	Lunch time begins <i>Staff supervise children while having their lunch. As children finish lunch they can engage in quiet inside activities</i>
12.30pm	Lunch time ends free play time - children have the choice of inside or outside activities - fruit time – children can eat their fruit any time during free play Staff may take small groups or work with individual children during this time
2pm	Pack up begins – inside and outside teams children help to pack away/clean tables pick up rubbish, tidy all areas etc relaxation on mat as clean up ends - lock shed/put chairs up
2.30pm	On mat for stories/songs/games End of day debrief
2.50pm	Farewells begin Begin to farewell children as parents arrive - staff say goodbye to children before they leave the mat
3.15pm	Tidy up of inside and outside area. Rubbish in bins Restocking of collage table as necessary New paints/glue made as necessary Kitchen/art prep area cleaned Tables reset for next day Work mounted for display

Educational Philosophy

Our vision at Mawson Lakes Preschool is for our children to become resilient, socially competent individuals with a passion for learning. Our vision is supported by the following values;

- Diversity
- Creativity
- Independence
- Curiosity
- Respect
- Caring
- Participation

Our vision and values are enacted through the following principles;

- Families are the first and most influential teachers of their children (*respect*)
- We respect the culture and social context of each family (*diversity, respect, caring, participation*)
- Our environment nurtures children's wellbeing and stimulates rich learning experiences (*caring, curiosity, independence, respect, participation, diversity*)
- Opportunities to engage in a range of social interactions and relationships with others assists children to develop their sense of belonging and identity (*diversity, independence, respect, caring*)
- A play based curriculum is the foundation of all learning at preschool, catering to the needs and interests of all children (*participation, creativity, curiosity, independence*)
- We acknowledge children learn in different ways and at an individual pace (*respect, caring, diversity, participation, curiosity, creativity, independence*)
- Learning should be fun! (*creativity, curiosity, participation, independence, caring*)

Children learn best when encouraged to explore their environment through play and first hand experiences. Children consolidate their learning by revisiting experiences and activities regularly, often in different situations and contexts. Children develop skills and competencies in different stages, building on subsequent new experiences, gaining confidence, skill and the readiness to move on to the next stage. Therefore the environment must cater for all levels of development, providing challenge, stimulation, creativity and success. At Mawson Lakes Preschool, we plan and implement a **play based** program to cater for the needs and interests of individual children, allow participation at a variety of levels, are socially and culturally inclusive, based on skills already learned and are fun!

Curriculum

The program at Mawson Lakes Preschool is based on the curriculum document 'Belonging, Being and Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework'. It is a national document on which we base our programming, assessment and reporting. In Belonging, Being and Becoming there are five learning outcomes, designed to capture the integrated and complex learning development of children. These outcomes are;

Outcome 1 Children have a strong sense of identity

"I am who I am" - When children feel respected for who they are and have safe, supportive relationships they become motivated and successful learners.

Outcome 2 Children are connected with and contribute to their world

"I am a great friend" - Learning is cooperative – we learn from each other and with each other in a variety of environments. We want children to respect and be actively engaged in play situations and exploring their world.

Outcome 3 Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

"I am independent" - Wellbeing involves children's emotional and physical wellbeing. For children to build a solid emotional wellbeing, they need to be resilient. A strong sense of wellbeing allows children to take risks, make mistakes and be able to think for themselves. Physical wellbeing encompasses the physical skills needed to be able to learn and the ability to take responsibility for managing their own health, hygiene and safety.

Outcome 4 Children are confident and involved learners

"I am curious, inquisitive and eager to learn" - Learning is about taking a risk, investigating, experimenting, problem solving and discovering something new. In order to take risks, children need to feel confident in themselves and secure in their environment. When children feel confident they develop positive attitudes to learning, take responsibility, rise to the challenge and extend their thinking and knowledge.

Outcome 5 Children are effective communicators

"I can express myself" - Communication is central to all learning. In order to effectively communicate how they feel and what they think, children need to be engaged in and practise all forms of communication.

The outcomes are broad and observable. They acknowledge that children learn in a variety of ways and vary in their capabilities and pace of learning. Learning is not always predictable and linear and as such we plan with each child and the outcomes in mind. We use the Early Years Learning Framework to provide an environment which develops knowledge, skills and attitudes. The program provides structured and unstructured activities to meet individual needs. The staff team program on a fortnightly basis - usually with a particular focus or interest. Please take the time to look at our program on the notice board. The five learning outcomes provide us with key reference points against which each child's progress can be identified, documented and communicated to families. Information collected from families at enrolment help us to begin to develop child profiles. Data on children's learning and development is collected each term - eg during their first term at preschool to provide baseline data. Information is collected through appropriate assessment and includes fine and gross motor skills, phonological awareness, numeracy and cognitive skills. Goals are formulated from data collected, and children are grouped according to skills, interests and needs for small group work with staff. In Term 2 information is collected about each child's print concept knowledge while Term 3 is used to consolidate skills and follow up any additional needs. In Term 4 information is collected again to measure distance travelled. Information about children is regularly shared with families through incidental conversations and photo stories in portfolios. If needed or requested a more formal information sharing time is negotiated. In your child's second term at preschool you will be provided with a 'Formative Report' which contains information about how your child is progressing. Your child's learning portfolio containing samples of work and annotated photographs is available at all times for families to look at and can be taken home. On exit to school preschool staff complete a 'Summative Report', which is sent to your child's school.

Transition to School

Mawson Lakes Preschool collaborates closely with Mawson Lakes School and other local schools to ensure a smooth transition from preschool to school. Letters from the school are sent home informing parents of school visits for their child. School visits usually occur from week seven in the child's last term of preschool. A longer or shorter transition period to school can be arranged for your child if needed. All children at preschool have opportunities to become involved in the life of school. Preschool groups visit the library, playground and oval and sometimes join in school gatherings. At other times classes and the preschool will work collaboratively on various learning projects. During your child's transition staff from the preschool and school work together to place children in classes for the following term. Please see the Director if you have any concerns or questions regarding transition to school.

School Zoning and Enrolment

Due to the high numbers of children in the Mawson Lakes area Mawson Lakes School is zoned and will generally only accept enrolments from families living in Mawson Lakes. Preschools, including Mawson Lakes Preschool are not zoned, but priority for placement will be given to children in their eligible year who are not already attending another preschool and for whom this is their closest centre. Any offer of a place at Mawson Lakes Preschool does not guarantee enrolment into Mawson Lakes School. Families wanting to attend Mawson Lakes School will need to complete a separate enrolment at the school.

Emergency Plans

The Preschool has an emergency evacuation procedure. The procedure is displayed around the Preschool and is practiced each term. If you would like a copy please see a staff member. In case of an emergency such as a fire or bomb threat the children would be evacuated to the nominated safe area. In the case of high winds, earthquake or flood the children would be kept inside the Preschool. Staff will remain with the children until each child is collected by a parent or other nominated adult.

Attendance at Preschool

To gain maximum benefit from the educational program at preschool it is important that your child attends preschool regularly. If your child will be absent for a session please let us know, by speaking to us beforehand or by phoning us at the preschool on 8359 1343. Regular attendance at preschool enables children to make and sustain friendships as well as setting good attendance patterns that will carry over into school. Also, the first three weeks of preschool are especially important for our staffing, as we are asked to provide attendance numbers for those weeks. We are then staffed on those attendances.

What to wear ...

While playing we are looking, listening, feeling, touching, manipulating, moving, thinking, experimenting, remembering, talking, asking questions, comparing, trying out ideas and expressing our feelings. It is therefore important for children to wear clothes that allow freedom of movement around our learning environment, and that they can manage themselves when going to the toilet. ***Please pack a spare set of clothes in your child's bag, just in case of accidents.*** Thongs are not appropriate footwear for preschool due to health and safety reasons. ***Encourage children to wear sandals, shoes or sneakers.*** In line with DECD policy Mawson Lakes Preschool encourages all children to be sun smart – by wearing a hat and using sunscreen.

Sun smart Policy

All children must wear a hat from September to May. Children will not be allowed to play outside without a hat during these times. A broad brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hat is recommended. (Baseball style caps are not allowed as they do not provide appropriate sun protection to the neck) Appropriate sun protective clothing is to be worn – no singlet or midriff tops are allowed. Please refer to our policy (included on our website for more details.)

Security of Children

In general children are brought and collected by their parents / caregivers. When this is not the case, please let staff know. There is a diary, called the 'Goodbye Book', on the bookshelf just inside the preschool entrance in which to record arrangements. When entering and leaving preschool children must be signed in and out by the collecting adult on the sheet provided. Children will not be released in the care of a minor (someone under 16years). Details of children attending the Preschool will not be released to any person or agency (other than DECD personnel) without prior consent from parents/caregivers. We ask you to be punctual in picking up children. This helps avoid upset and stress for your child and allows staff time to be able to prepare for the next session. A late fee of \$5.00 per 15minutes will be charged for late pickups

Please do not drop children off at the gate or leave them unattended when the doors are closed.

Site Behaviour Code

An important outcome of our program is that each child will develop as a happy, responsible and confident individual who can work with others as a member of a group. Our aim is for all children to be responsible for their own behaviour. As such we encourage children to make choices and manage the consequence of their choices – both positive and negative in a safe environment.

If needed, staff will withdraw children when they are at risk of hurting themselves or others, ensuring that an adult is with them all the time. Please take the time read our Site Behaviour code (which is on our website) and if you have any questions about the code or your child's behaviour, please see a staff member.

Snack Time

In promoting healthy eating practices we encourage children to bring a healthy snack to Preschool.

Ideas for snack include:

- All fresh and dried fruit
- Vegetables – ones that children can manage independently

Please don't send :

Any packaged foods, biscuits, cakes, custard, roll ups or any products containing nuts or egg.

At times other foods may be excluded due to children's health. Parents will be advised via the white board and newsletters of any exclusions.

Drinks

Cold, fresh water is always available at Preschool, so there is no need for children to bring drinks from home. ***Children need to bring a named plastic cup which is kept in their bag.***

Copies of all preschool policies are included at the end of this information book

Birthdays

We support and encourage participation in a range of cultural celebrations, including birthdays. We celebrate birthdays at preschool by singing Happy Birthday or other favourite songs/games of your child's choice. Please let us

know if your family does not celebrate birthdays, so we can respect your choice. Please do not send birthday cakes or other treats to Preschool, to keep our children with allergies safe.

Toys

We discourage children from bringing toys from home, as it is distressing if they get lost or broken. We do encourage children to bring items of interest for discussion and display, science experiments or items relevant to our program, for example books, posters or photographs.

Want to help ...

There are many ways parents can become involved at Preschool. Any help you can give is greatly appreciated. We always welcome ideas, activities, or simply an extra pair of hands.

You can :

- ★ stay and play with your child
- ★ come on an excursion with us
- ★ help with gardening, cooking, sewing, music, drama, general repairs/working bees
- ★ help support our fundraising events
- ★ save scraps / junk materials – we always need
 - boxes – all shapes and sizes/cardboard/foam trays
 - wood/shells/bottle tops
 - paper / wrapping paper / cards / pictures / calendars
 - ribbons / buttons / cotton reels / sparkly spangles
 - vinyl / leather / wool / sheepskin / material

Laundry Roster

Once or twice a year we will ask each family to take home some Preschool washing. Our roster changes every term. Families will be advised when it is their turn via a note in their child's information pocket.

Toilet Rolls and Tissues

To help keep costs down we ask each family to bring in a roll of toilet paper and a box of tissues each term. This saves the Preschool hundreds of dollars each year!

End of Term Cleanup

Each term we have a general stock take and clean up in and around the centre. A roster will go out on the notice board asking for help to wash toys, tables and chairs, repair equipment, take home mending/washing, do some gardening, strip walls of children's work, re shelve books etc. Please lend a hand if you can.

Lost Property

We have a lost property box which is always outside on the verandah. Please check it regularly. Any items left at the end of term will be donated to charity.

Absence from Preschool

If your child is unwell please keep them home. If your child contracts something contagious, please let us know so we can inform other Preschool families of symptoms etc. If your child has a chronic illness, specific health needs (asthma etc.) or allergies please see a staff member as they will need a specific health care plan. Children do not need to be immunised before enrolling at a preschool. However, if they are not immunised, they may be excluded from attending during outbreaks of some infectious diseases.

Medication Policy

Staff are not permitted to administer any medication without a signed Health Support Plan from a medical practitioner. All medications brought to the preschool must be in the original bottle/container/packet and have an administering sticker. Medication must not be out of date. Parents are responsible for the maintenance of a current Health Support Plan and for the maintenance and cleaning of any equipment brought into the Preschool.

Please talk to the staff if you think your child will need a Health Care Plan.

Injuries and Sickness at Preschool

If your child becomes ill at preschool a staff member will contact you to collect your child from preschool. Staff are able to provide first aid for minor injuries when needed. Head injuries are treated cautiously – parents are informed immediately so they can decide a course of action (eg come and pick up your child/staff monitor child)

Borrowing Library

At Mawson Lakes Preschool we have a Children's borrowing library. We encourage all the children to borrow books during their time at kindergarten. The borrowing library is located on the verandah.

To borrow a book you will need to :

- Write the book title and date borrowed on your child's borrowing card (filed alphabetically by surname)
- When returning books enter the date returned on your child's borrowing card

At the end of each term we have a general stock take. Any books that are lost or damaged will incur a \$15.00 replacement fee

Please let us know if any of our books' content concerns you– eg violence/sexism/causes bad dreams.

Keeping in Touch ...

Every family has an information pocket where you will find items such as newsletters, book club information, fundraising notes, receipts, excursion details etc. Please make sure you check your pocket regularly.

Other information will be displayed on the notice boards around the Preschool, including our Preschool program, which is usually changed fortnightly. Please check the notice boards regularly for information and programming details.

Please ask staff for information about your child's progress and share any relevant information with us. We appreciate your unique knowledge of your child, as it helps us gain an understanding of your child's skills, abilities and interests, and assists us with our programming for your child. We record information about children's learning through photographs, written observations, work samples, and child questionnaires and invite you to look at your child's portfolio regularly with your child. Please remember that all children are individual and that some children's interests and skills are harder to record on paper, but just as valuable!

Surveys are also sent out at various times during the year. We ask that you take the time to write down your thoughts and comments as we use your feedback to improve the services at Preschool. Staff are always available to talk with parents/caregivers about any aspect of the curriculum, children's progress, suggestions or concerns.

Do you have a problem ...

We hope the time you and your family spend at Mawson Lakes Preschool is an enjoyable experience. Yet there may be times when you have concerns or issues you want to raise with staff or the Governing Council. In line with DECD policy our Preschool has a "Parents Concerns and Complaints Policy" which outlines the appropriate procedures to follow. If you do ever have a concern, please do not hesitate to speak to the Director or the Chairperson of our Governing Council. A copy of this policy is on our website.

- Please observe the 'no smoking' zone of the Preschool and School.
- Please observe road safety requirements of the School, to keep all children safe. Parents are asked to park on Garden Terrace or Light Common to drop off or pick up their child. There is no parking in the School's northern car park (closest to the preschool) while the other car park has limited spaces
- Copies of all preschool policies are attached as an appendix to this information book and within two policy folders located on the shelf just inside our entrance and on the parent information table.

We aim for parents to become partners in their child's learning, becoming involved in the life of the Preschool as much as possible.