



*The best start for our children
For a better community*

Information Booklet

**Lovejoy Street Campus
South Mudgee Campus**



MUDGEE COMMUNITY PRESCHOOL

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PHILOSOPHY

We recognize the importance of early childhood education in establishing the foundations of life by supporting children's experiences of being, belonging and becoming.

BEING:

- We acknowledge early childhood as a unique time in life to inspire awe and wonder about the world
- We create a warm atmosphere where each child is nurtured, loved and valued
- We believe that children are capable and competent and learn best through consistent and trusting interrelationships with each other, their families, educators and the community
- We provide unhurried time to play in environments that are inspiring, challenging, interesting and beautiful
- We design programs that support each child's individual dispositions, abilities, interests, strengths and needs
- We encourage children to express themselves and their ideas through many languages such as drawing, painting, music and drama

BELONGING:

- We foster strong, inclusive and respectful relationships between staff, parents, children and the community that support the principles of anti-bias and social justice
- We recognize the Preschool's potential to strengthen the community by playing a significant role in providing leadership and advocacy for early childhood
- We recognize that the Wiradjuri people are the original owners of our land and endeavour to raise understanding of Aboriginal culture and history through respectful connections with local Aboriginal people

BECOMING:

- We are committed to life-long learning and continuous improvement
- We invest in passionate and highly motivated staff and a professional environment that encourages reflection, collegiality, teamwork and partnerships
- We aim to foster an active community that promotes a sustainable future for our shared world

We undertake to abide by the Australian Early Childhood Code of Ethics, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and to be guided by the principles and practices outlined in the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards.

WELCOME

OUR MISSION is to develop life-ready children with a sense of belonging to the community, culture and environment. We are guided by global best practice to focus on the development of the whole child and to create a loving and inspiring environment where each child can learn and grow through play. The values and practices developed over the last 60 years will inspire and guide us as we work for a sustainable future.

We want your child to enjoy their time at Mudgee Community Preschool and we look forward to working with you to support your child in being successful learners, confident and creative individuals and active and informed citizens.

Please take some time to read the following information to help you and your child become familiar with Mudgee Community Preschool. We welcome family and carer involvement in Preschool and are open to discussions about any ideas, suggestions, queries or concerns you may have. Please feel free to talk to the teachers, educators, the Preschool Director or to a board member.

A. NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The National Quality Framework was established on 1 January 2012 and sets out requirements for child care and early learning service providers. It aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

1. A National Quality Standard which sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care services, and promotes the safety, health and wellbeing of children. It includes seven quality areas:
 - o Educational program and practice
 - o Children's health and safety
 - o Physical environment
 - o Staffing arrangements
 - o Relationships with children
 - o Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
 - o Leadership and service management.
2. A national legislative framework consisting of the "Education and Care Services National Law" and "The Education and Care Services National Regulations".
3. A national quality rating and assessment process - Approved services are assessed and rated against the National Quality Standard. The aim is to promote continuous improvement in the quality of child care and early learning services.
 - o Mudgee Community Preschool was assessed and rated in 2014 and both our campuses currently have a rating of "Exceeding the National Quality Standards".
4. A national body called the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) - has been established to oversee the National Quality Framework, and to ensure the system is implemented consistently and effectively across all states and territories.



Information on the National Quality Framework, is available on the [ACECQA](http://www.acecqua.gov.au) website at www.acecqua.gov.au

B. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

- Mudgee Community Preschool is a community based, non-profit making organization and is registered as a co-operative.
- Mudgee Community Preschool operates 2 licensed Preschools: Mudgee Community Preschool – Lovejoy Street campus and Mudgee Community Preschool – South Mudgee Campus.
- One or both parents of all children attending the Preschools must be members of the co-operative. The annual membership fee is \$40 and is payable at the time of enrolment.
- Mudgee Community Preschool is governed by a voluntary Board of Management, comprising seven Directors who are elected early each year at the Annual General Meeting by members of the Mudgee Community Preschool.
- The Board of Management holds a Provider Approval granted under the Children Education and Care Services National Law (NSW). This approval authorizes the Board to operate the Preschool.
- Board Meetings are held once a month at Mudgee Community Preschool. Parents may contribute ideas/issues for discussion by contacting the Director or a member of the board.
- The Board is ultimately responsible for meeting the Preschool's legal obligations and ensuring its on-going viability.
- The Board is the employer of the staff who work for the Preschool.
- The Board is accountable to members of the Preschool co-operative and the NSW Department of Education and Communities.
- The Director of the Preschool is the Nominated Supervisor and has responsibility for the day-to-day management of

the Preschool. As Nominated Supervisor, the Director has a range of legal responsibilities under the Law and Regulations.

- The NSW Department of Education and Communities is the regulatory authority responsible for licensing, accrediting and funding the Preschool. Assessment and Compliance Officers from the Department visit regularly to ensure we maintain our high standards of education and care.

Please speak to the office staff if you would like more details about board meetings or any aspect of the management of the Preschool

C. STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Our staff are employed on the basis of qualifications, experience, references, temperament and personality to help create a warm, inviting and cohesive learning environment.

Mudgee Community Preschool delivers such a high quality program because we have more, and better qualified staff than regulations require (each class is staffed by a University trained teacher and two TAFE trained educators), and also because we ensure that time is set aside for professional development, collaboration, planning and reflection. Children are grouped with the same classmates and the same team of staff every day that they attend Preschool so that they have consistency and can build strong relationships.

- Director

The Director is the **Nominated Supervisor and Educational Leader** of Mudgee Community Preschool. The Nominated Supervisor (together with the Approved Provider - the Board) has specific responsibilities to ensure compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations. The Director's role is a non-teaching, full-time leadership and management position. It involves the day-to-day management and coordination of the Preschool. The Director has to ensure that the educational program is delivered in accordance with the Early Years Learning Framework and that the appropriate supervision, support and guidance is available to all staff. The Director is also responsible for the safety and supervision of the children. The Director works in partnership with the staff, Board and families to achieve the Preschool's mission and purpose to provide an excellent educational and care program.

Educators who are attuned to children's thoughts and feelings, support the development of a strong sense of wellbeing. (Early Years Learning Framework)

- Educational Coordinator

The Educational Coordinator works in partnership with the Educational Leader and other staff to support the development, implementation and evaluation of an excellent educational program that is consistent with the Preschool philosophy and the requirements of the National Quality Framework.

- Office Administrator

The Office Administrator is based at the Lovejoy Street campus. She works with the Director to deal with administration and financial matters eg. the collection of fees. She also coordinates the waiting list and enrolments throughout the year.

- Teachers

The teachers all have university qualifications in early childhood education.

The Teacher is responsible for the educational curriculum and program for the children in her class. She works closely with the other educators as well as the parents of the children to develop, implement and evaluate the program.

- Educators

Each class is supported by an Educator and an Inclusion Support Educator. All educators have TAFE qualifications in Children's Services (Cert III or Diploma).

The required staff : child ratio is one adult per ten children. However, at Mudgee Community Preschool additional educators are employed to support the inclusion and participation of all children.

D. PRESCHOOL POLICIES

Mudgee Community Preschool Policies are developed to guide and support management, staff, children and families in the day-to-day delivery of our educational and care program. They are reviewed regularly and new policies are developed when necessary. Preschool staff are expected to follow Preschool policies and to ensure that parents also act in accordance with them. Staff cannot make exceptions for individuals unless the Director or Board authorizes them to do so on account of serious and unusual circumstances. However, we hope that you will feel comfortable enough with staff and board members to approach us with comments and questions about our policies and procedures, including complaints. Your involvement helps us to improve our service and may lead us to make changes when necessary. Copies of all policies are available at South Mudgee Campus and in the foyer at Lovejoy Street Campus. A list of our policies is included in Appendix 1.

E. FAMILY-PRESCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

TEACHING AND LEARNING

“Learning outcomes are most likely to be achieved when early childhood educators work in partnership with families. Educators recognise that families are children’s first and most influential teachers. They create a welcoming environment where all children and families are respected and actively encouraged to collaborate with educators about curriculum decisions in order to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful. Partnerships are based on the foundations of understanding each other’s expectations and attitudes, and build on the strength of each other’s knowledge. In genuine partnerships, families and early childhood educators:

- *value each other’s knowledge of each child*
- *value each other’s contributions to and roles in each child’s life*
- *trust each other*
- *communicate freely and respectfully with each other*
- *share insights and perspectives about each child*
- *engage in shared decision-making.*

Partnerships also involve educators, families and support professionals working together to explore the learning potential in every day events, routines and play so that children with additional needs are provided with daily opportunities to learn from active participation and engagement in these experiences in the home and in early childhood or specialist settings.” (Early Years Learning Framework, pg 12)

Your child’s teacher appreciates any information that can help her to understand your child better. Some information will be collected at the orientation interview including information about your child’s health, knowledge, interests, abilities, or any concerns you have about your child. During the year your child’s teacher will encourage your involvement and contribution through surveys, letters, emails etc. and brief informal chats. Teachers will also offer more formal parent-teacher meetings twice a year.

It is helpful for the teachers to know about major family difficulties or changes, as these often affect children’s behavior at Preschool. Teachers and other educators enjoy catching up with you on a daily basis but we encourage you to make an appointment for any matter that may take more than a few minutes and that is confidential.

We believe it is important for parents to know about their child’s experiences at Preschool. Documentation about your child’s progress and program is available to you in a variety of formats. For example, teachers may create portfolios for each child containing examples and photographs of their work and play and you are invited to look at these and to contribute to them at any time. There is also documentation displayed on the walls in the classroom and in the hallways – please take time to look at these. Some teachers also prepare weekly journals and send emails to give you further insight into your child’s time at Preschool. Please feel free to speak to your child’s teacher for more information.

National Quality Standards

1.1.2 Each child’s current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program.

1.3.3 Families are informed about the program and their child’s progress

ENROLMENT INFORMATION DETAILS

It is essential that we have up-to-date information in case of an emergency. It is important that you notify the office staff and your child’s teacher of any changes to enrolment information including: address, health, telephone number, contact details, family changes etc. Ask the teacher at any time if you would like to check any details on the enrolment form. It is essential that we have copies of your child’s birth certificate and immunization status. We are also required to have certified copies of any court orders relating to the child.

PARENTS/CARERS AT PRESCHOOL

Parents/carers are welcome to visit Preschool at any time while their child is attending. It is helpful if you can give the teacher advance notice of a visit as she may then plan accordingly. Visiting parents may bring siblings to Preschool as long as they are supervised closely by the parents as much Preschool equipment, both inside and outside, is unsafe for very young children. Grandparents or other people chosen by parents are also welcome to visit the Preschool.

COMMUNICATION - NEWSLETTERS, EMAILS, WEBSITE, FACEBOOK AND NOTICEBOARDS

We like to keep you up to date with Preschool and community events and information. In keeping with our Environment and Sustainability Policy, newsletters and other correspondence will generally be emailed to families unless otherwise requested. Paper copies of all newsletters will also be available in each classroom and at the office. Please check the notice boards at the front door and outside the classrooms on a regular basis. Please also check your child’s individual “pocket” for correspondence and artwork.

The Preschool also has a Facebook Page. This and our website www.mudgeecommunityPreschool.com.au) is updated regularly. Mudgee Community Preschool contact details are on the 1st page of this booklet should you wish to communicate with us.

- **PRESCHOOL SOCIAL CLUB**

The Preschool Social Club works with us to raise funds for new equipment, to organize social events for families, and to support special projects. The Preschool Social Club meets at the Preschool (Lovejoy Street campus) twice during the school term. All parents and carers are encouraged to attend – the meetings are informal and provide an opportunity to meet other Preschool parents. Dates for Preschool Social Club meetings will be advised in Preschool newsletters and on the notice boards.

- **WORKING BEES**

Occasionally we ask parents and families for support with working bees in the garden, for equipment maintenance etc. We would appreciate your support at these events – they provide a great opportunity to contribute to the Preschool and to get together with other parents.

- **CELEBRATIONS**

We love celebrating children's birthdays and other special occasions (such as the birth of a new child, a family wedding, loss of first tooth, visiting relatives, learning to whistle, first time of writing etc) at Preschool. We also welcome the opportunity to celebrate and to learn about any other cultural or religious festivals that may be important to families - please let us know of celebrations that are important to your child and family. Teachers often help children celebrate Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day (or "Special Ladies or Men in our lives") by making cards etc. Christmas and Easter are also celebrated in different ways in each class. We acknowledge that not all families may wish to share in these celebrations so please talk to your child's teacher about any sensitive matters in this regard.

- **PARENTS LIBRARY**

We have an extensive range of books related to early childhood and different aspects of parenting. Parents are welcome to borrow from the Parents Library situated in the Lovejoy Street Campus foyer. Please remove the card at the back of the book and give it to the office. If you want a book on a particular topic and cannot find it in our Library, speak to your child's teacher or the Director. If you happen to come across a book/website/resource etc. that you think would be a valuable resource for our library please let the Director know. A list of all resources in our Parent's Library is available at the office.

- **CONFIDENTIALITY: Privacy Collection Statement (policy: Confidentiality)**

Mudgee Community Preschool requires personal information from families to provide appropriate and responsive care for their children. This information needs to be maintained and managed in a private and confidential manner as an individual right and as a basis for building partnerships. Mudgee Community Preschool is committed to maintaining privacy and confidentiality in regard to all our families and staff. Please see the Privacy Collection Statement at the back of this booklet for circumstances in which information may be shared.

- **COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK (policy: Complaints and Feedback)**

Our Preschool values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets regulations and the needs of enrolled children and their families. We encourage open communication through opportunities to respond and give feedback on the program. A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a complaint and have this managed appropriately with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement. Complaint and feedback forms are available on our website, in each classroom and at the office.

- **SOCIAL MEDIA (policy: Social Media - Facebook)**

Mudgee Community Preschool has an open Facebook Page which we invite families to join. Families are requested to be mindful of the reputation and good standing of Mudgee Community Preschool and to refrain from making defamatory comments about the Preschool on Social Media. We welcome any feedback through the appropriate channels (see Complaints & Feedback). Families are also requested to respect others right to privacy by not uploading any footage or photographs taken of other children in the Preschool community.

F. GENERAL INFORMATION

• HOURS OF OPERATION 2019

Campus	LOVEJOY STREET		SOUTH MUDGEES	
Option	3 days (Mon/Tues/Weds)	2 days (Thursday/ Friday)	2 days (Monday/ Tuesday)	3 days (Weds/Thurs/Fri)
Daily hours	9.00am – 3.00pm	8.00am – 3.30pm	8.00am – 3.30pm	9.00am – 3.00pm
Extended Hours	8.30am – 9.00am 3.00pm – 4.30pm	3.30pm – 4.30pm	None	None
Office hours	8.30am – 4.00pm	8.30am – 4.00pm		

• FEES INFORMATION (Fees policy)

- Fees are set by the Board and are reviewed regularly and are subject to change at any time.
- All fees are to be paid at least 2 weeks in advance;
- Parents may make alternative payment arrangements with the Director or Office Administrator if they are experiencing financial hardship and are unable to pay the fees.
- Parents may arrange with the Office Administrator to pay fees each term or on a weekly/fortnightly basis.
- Fees are to be paid at the Lovejoy Street Office – no fees will be accepted at the South Mudgee Campus.
- Direct debit, Eftpos and Internet banking payment options are available. All credit card and eftpos transaction carry a charge.
- Centrelink deductions can be arranged through the Preschool office.
- Invoices and receipts will be emailed unless otherwise requested.

Overdue Fees - Late payment of fees may increase fee levels for all families. It is therefore Preschool policy that children may be excluded from Preschool if fees are more than four weeks overdue and that all outstanding fees will be collected. Preschool will pursue outstanding fees through court proceedings if necessary. If you are having a problem with payment of fees, please discuss this matter with the Office Administrator or the Director. We are usually able to come to some arrangement. The Preschool issues reminder notices when time permits. However, this is not always possible. It is your responsibility to ensure that your fees are up to date.

Affordability Assistance - We offer a fee reduction to families who are:

- Health Care card or Pension card holders (please present card to office staff)
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander; or
- Who have a child with a diagnosed disability

It is important to notify us of your status at the time of enrolment or if, at any stage, there are changes.

Absences - Full fees are charged during periods of absence. In the event of unavoidable, continued absence (eg. due to hospitalisation), please discuss your situation with the office staff. Notice of absence should be given to the Preschool.

Holidays - No payment of fees is to be made for Public Holidays, pupil free days or school holidays.

Leaving Preschool - The Preschool must be given 2 weeks' notice if a child will no longer be attending Preschool. Fees are payable up to and including the day of notification or the last day of attendance, whichever is the latest.

Receipts - In the event of disputes about outstanding fees, you must produce fee receipts as evidence of payment.

ANY ENQUIRIES about fees or eligibility for reductions should be addressed to the office staff at the Lovejoy Street campus.

• EXTENDED HOURS (not available at South Mudgee Campus)

Extended hours are available at the Lovejoy Street campus only.

Parents must apply for their child to have extended hours as there are limited spots (20 children only) .

Children may be dropped off and signed-in at Mudgee Preschool (Perry Street gate). Children must be picked up and signed-out by 4.30pm. Children are cared for outdoors in the playground near the Perry Street gate or in the Sunshine Room.

There is an additional fee for extended hours to contribute to the wages of the staff required to supervise the children. These fees will be added to your term account.

Parents/Carers who have casual or changing shifts may advise the office by telephone.

Children who arrive and leave Preschool on a bus are also eligible to use the Extended Hours service. (See Bus Travel)

- **BUS TRAVEL**

Mudgee Community Preschool is committed to reducing the barriers to access Preschool for children in remote areas, so we have processes in place to enable children to travel to and from Preschool by bus.

However we believe that not all Preschoolers are ready to take the bus to and from Preschool, especially at the beginning of their time here. It is the responsibility of the parents to decide if and when their child is ready to use the bus. We're happy to discuss it with you if you have any concerns.

Parents are responsible for making arrangements with the bus company. Not all bus companies will transport Preschool children. Preschool will receive children from buses if the bus driver will drop them off in the bus zone in Perry Street. Ogdens buses also drop off and pick up children at our South Mudgee Campus. Parents must notify the Preschool and the bus driver if there is a change to departure arrangements for bus children. Please contact the office if you would like details of bus companies and their routes.

Parents who want their children to travel by bus must complete the appropriate authorization form to permit staff to sign their child in and out each day. Preschool staff will greet the children at the beginning and end of the day, help them to unpack and pack up their bags, and sign them in and out of Preschool.

Please note that Preschool is only responsible for your child once they have been signed in to Preschool by a Preschool member of staff who will help them to disembark from the bus, until they have been signed-out and put on the bus by a Preschool member of staff.

- **PARKING**

Please exercise particular care when parking near the Preschools. Toddlers and Preschoolers may not be visible to drivers.

At the Lovejoy Street Campus parking spaces in Lovejoy Street closest to Mudgee Community Preschool are 15 minutes only. Spaces alongside Robertson Park, beyond the Lovejoy Street road barrier, are unrestricted. It is only a short walk through Robertson Park if you choose to park in Market Street opposite the Post Office.

Please do not park outside the Preschool in Perry Street (bus zone) between 8.00 – 9.15am and 2.30pm - 4.00pm as school buses are dropping off and picking up children during these times.

At South Mudgee Campus it is best to avoid the necessity to cross Church Street which is a very busy road. If spaces are not available directly outside the Preschool, it may be wiser to turn off towards the showground, parking in Meares Street.

- **GIFTS AND DONATIONS**

Mudgee Community Preschool is a registered charity. Any donations/gifts made to the Preschool of \$2 and over are tax deductible.

G. PRESCHOOL ROUTINES AND PROCEDURES

- **SIGNING CHILDREN IN AND OUT**

Your child **must** be signed in by the person bringing them to Preschool. This person **must** also record the person who will collect the child that day. The person who collects your child from Preschool **must** be authorized to do so and must sign your child out. A special sign-in/out register is provided for this purpose in each classroom.

- **AUTHORISATIONS TO COLLECT A CHILD (Policy: Acceptance and refusal of authorisations)**

Children are only allowed to leave Preschool with people authorized by their parents. These authorizations are usually completed at the time of orientation but can be amended at any time. If possible, parents should introduce or describe to the teacher any person who is to collect a child. If you need to make a change at short notice, you **must** contact the Preschool by phone. In the event that a person unknown to Preschool staff is authorized to collect a child then that person must present their identification to the office prior to collecting the child.

- **ARRIVING AT PRESCHOOL (Policy: Arrival & Departure of children)**

On arrival, sign your child in and take them to greet classroom staff. The ability to greet people is an important part of developing social confidence, as well as a courtesy, and we like to be able to greet each child in such a way that they know we are happy to see them – this will help to establish secure relationships and help them settle in for the day. Sometimes staff will be waiting to greet you. At other times they may already be working with other children somewhere in the room. If your child is reluctant to greet staff, don't worry, just keep doing it yourself as a good role model.

Please encourage your child to unpack their bags themselves, placing food containers and water bottles in larger baskets if required by the teacher.

Children who travel by school bus or who are dropped off before 9am will be welcomed by staff at the Perry Street “bus” gate. Classroom staff will help your child to unpack their bag and settle in for the day.

It is important for your child to be warmly greeted and welcomed by a staff member when they arrive at Preschool. Many parents like to see their child settled at an activity before they leave. However, some children find it hard to settle until their parents have gone. You know your child best but if in doubt, be guided by recommendations from your child’s teacher. Children respond best to set routines so try to establish the “Preschool day” routine from the out-set. Being well organized and avoiding being rushed usually results in a calm start to the day at Preschool. Most children will want to have a look around first, to see who else has arrived and to look at what learning opportunities/activities are available. Please tell your child when you are leaving as they may become upset if they haven’t said ‘goodbye’. Rest assured that we will ring you if your child is distressed. If in doubt give us a call after 30mins of leaving and we’ll let you know how your child has settled.

- **GOING HOME (policy: Arrival & Departure of children)**

At home time we keep the classroom door closed until we have the children and their belongings/bag packed up. Make sure you farewell the classroom staff and sign your child out before you leave. It is most important that staff know that your child has left with you, or with a person that you have authorized.

It is also most important that you collect children on time as Preschool staff have many duties before and after class. Children who are not picked up on time will be taken to Extended Hours and parents will be required to pay the relevant fee.

Separate arrangements are made for children who are booked in for Extended Hours.

- **WHAT SHOULD MY CHILD BRING TO PRESCHOOL?**

- Large school bag – big enough to hold food containers, drink bottle, spare clothes and some arts and craft.
- Morning tea and lunch in separate containers. (see Nutrition)
- A bottle of water.
- A hat with a broad brim. Please remove all cords as these pose choking hazards.
- Spare set of clothes (Preschool only has a limited amount of spare clothes).
- **Please label all personal items with your child’s name.**

- **WHAT SHOULD MY CHILD WEAR TO PRESCHOOL?**

We strongly suggest that your child wear play clothes to Preschool. It is a good idea to have one or two sets of “Preschool clothes”. Preschool T-shirts and sloppy joes are available for sale at the office.

Preschool is a place where children can have a wide range of experiences, some of which they may not be able to have at home. We regularly include lots of messy play, like finger painting, sand, water & mud play, playdough and clay in our programs. Your child cannot get the full value from these activities if they are worried about getting dirty.

Please provide a spare set of clothing, especially underwear, if your child is prone to having toileting “accidents”.

We suggest that precious jewelry is not worn to Preschool as it is very easy for it to be lost or broken.

- **SHOULD MY CHILD BRING TOYS TO PRESCHOOL?**

Generally children are discouraged from bringing their own toys to Preschool as they are easily lost or broken and issues of ownership may arise. However, we know that in some cases it is important for children to bring something familiar and special from home to help them settle in and this can easily be arranged with your child’s teacher.

We also understand that children love to show their treasures (photos, interesting found objects etc) from home and our teachers and educators often arrange “show and tell” sessions where children can take turns to share their news. If your child does bring something from home, every attempt is made to ensure that it returns home in one piece. However, we cannot guarantee this and your child must assume responsibility for the safety of their own possessions.

H. HEALTH AND SAFETY (We have a number of policies relating to Health and Safety)

- **GENERAL INFORMATION**

Some important things you need to know about your child’s health and safety at Preschool are listed below:-

- Preschool staff work hard to maintain a safe and healthy environment for all children and have many procedures in place to ensure this. However, accidental injuries including serious ones, sometimes occur in early childhood services.
- Many diseases, including potentially disabling and fatal ones, are spread through contact with body fluids. Despite all the sensible precautions which early childhood staff take, it is impossible to completely eliminate all avenues of bodily fluid contact between young children. It seems that children are more likely to catch a wide range of illnesses in “group care” situations like the Preschool, than they are in the home environment.

- Please let staff know if your child has a medical condition or infectious disease that places their health and safety at risk.
- Please ensure that you have a copy of our Medical Conditions Policy if your child has a diagnosis which places their health and safety at risk eg. asthma, diabetes or risk of anaphylaxis.
- Staff work hard to curb children's aggression. However, we cannot guarantee that your child will not be injured accidentally or intentionally by another child. Biting and scratching can result in contact between body fluids.
- Staff always complete an Incident/Illness report detailing any incidents at Preschool and which parents are required to sign. If your child tells you of an incident at Preschool about which you have not been informed, or, if you have any concerns please speak to your child's teacher or the Director.
- Serious incidents (requiring hospitalization, emergency services or medical treatment) are reported to the regulatory authority.
- Staff cannot pass on information about a child's health status to other parties unless the child's parent authorizes them to do so.

- **MUNCH AND MOVE (see attached factsheet)**

Mudgee Community Preschool is supported by the Munch and Move program which promotes healthy eating, active play and encourages limiting small screen recreation through six positive health promoting messages: Encourage and support breastfeeding; choose water as a drink; eat more fruit and vegetables; choose healthier snacks; get active each day; and turn off the screen and get active.

- **SICK CHILDREN (policy: Infectious Diseases and Exclusion of Children)**

At Preschool we have a responsibility to promote each child's health and to take steps to control the spread of infectious diseases in accordance with recognized guidelines. One important way of reducing the spread of infectious diseases is to exclude children and educators who are unwell. Please do not send your child to Preschool if he or she is showing any signs of being unwell - this will help to prevent other children and educators from becoming unwell. Children who are feeling unwell will recuperate faster at home. Should your child become ill at Preschool, you will be notified so that you can come and collect him/her. Staff will exclude children in accordance with the current Department of Health Guidelines and/or children who are feeling seriously unwell or who are displaying signs and symptoms that suggest they may be ill. **(see attached Exclusion Guidelines and Guide to Staying Healthy in Preschool factsheet)**

- **ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION (Policy: Medication)**

(National Law: Section 167 (protection from harm and hazards) National Regulations: Regulations 92-96, 178, 181-184)

- Medication (including prescription, over-the-counter and homeopathic medications) will not be administered to a child at a service without authorisation by a parent or person with the authority to consent to administration of medical attention to the child.
- Medication can only be administered to a child by staff from its original container before the expiry or use-by date.
- Prescribed medications will only be administered from a container that bears the original label with the name of the child to whom it is prescribed.
- Medication will be administered in accordance with any instructions attached to the medication or provided by a registered medical practitioner
- On arrival at Preschool parents must give medication to staff for safe storage and complete a medication register. Under no circumstances should medication be left in children's bags.
- If a child requiring medication is brought to Preschool by someone other than their parents, then the parent must send a letter to the Preschool permitting staff to administer medication.
- In the case of bus children, parents must contact the Preschool by phone, so that the staff know that the child is carrying a note and medication in their bag.
- In the case of an emergency, it is acceptable to obtain verbal consent from a parent, or a registered medical practitioner or medical emergency services if the child's parent cannot be contacted.
- In the case of an anaphylaxis or asthma emergency, medication may be administered to a child without authorisation. In this circumstance, the child's parent and emergency services will be contacted as soon as possible.

- **IMMUNIZATION**

The Public Health Amendment (Vaccination of Children Attending Child Care Facilities) Act 2013 came into force on 1 January 2014. Under the changes to the Public Health Act 2010, before enrolling a child from 2018 child care centres (Preschools) must obtain documents (Australian Childhood Immunisation Register) from parents/guardians that show the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or;
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated, or;
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations.

More information can be found at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation>.

If your child is not immunized and there is an outbreak of any of the diseases against which your child could be immunized, you will be asked to withdraw your child for the period suggested by the Government Health Department.

- **SUN PROTECTION (Policy: Sun Protection)**

Our Sun Protection policy requires children to wear sun safe clothing that covers as much of the skin (especially the shoulders, back and stomach) as possible. Please note that midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not acceptable.

When outdoors, children are required to wear sun safe hats that protect their face, neck and ears eg. a legionnaire hat or bucket hat or a broad brimmed hat. Please note that baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not acceptable. Preschool provides each child with a free sun safe hat on enrolment.

Please apply sunscreen **before** coming to Preschool, or, alternatively apply the Preschool sunscreen when you arrive. Sunscreen will be reapplied every 2 hours.

- **FOOTWEAR**

Rachel Disher, our Occupational Therapist team member, has noticed that sometimes children struggle to join in play because of their footwear – they can't move, run or climb well if they have ill-fitting shoes. Rachel advises “no thongs, no gumboots, no cowboy boots” at Preschool and she recommends fitted sandals and shoes/sneakers. Children will also be encouraged to play barefoot which is great for their development!

- **NUTRITION (Policy: Nutrition)**

We believe it is important to encourage and to teach healthy nutrition habits at Preschool. For information and ideas on healthy eating go to www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au.

- Please pack fresh, tinned or dried fruit and/or vegetables for morning tea. Please prepare the fruit/vegetables ready to eat eg. peel or cut an orange. In addition to fruit or vegetables, children may bring another healthy snack for morning tea such as crackers and cheese or yoghurt to have if they are still hungry after eating their fruit.
- Please pack a nutritious lunch such as salads, sandwiches, corn or rice cakes, wholemeal pasta or noodles, fruit and cheese.
- Please do not send lollies, chips and chocolate products (including Nutella and chocolate muesli bars).
- Please send water only in your child's drink bottle. The Preschool has a water only policy as latest research in children 3-5 years indicates that children should drink at least 2 litres of water per day to maximize brain development. Exceptions to our water only policy will only be made where a child has special dietary requirements.
- Please pack food that does not require heating.
- Please include an ice-pack for dairy and meat products.
- **In order to provide a safe environment for those children with allergies to peanuts and other nut products Mudgee Community Preschool promotes a nut-free environment. Please do not provide any products that contain nuts** including peanut butter, nutella, fruit and nut bars or any other products that have nuts listed in their ingredients (not including products that contain the warning “may contain traces of nuts”.)

- **SLEEP AND REST (Policy: Safe Sleep and Rest)**

All children have individual sleep and rest requirements. Mudgee Community Preschool will ensure that all children have appropriate opportunities to rest, relax and sleep in accordance with their individual needs.

- **CHILD PROTECTION (Policy: Child Protection)**

The Preschool Director **must** contact the Family and Community Services Helpline if any staff member forms a reasonable belief that a child has been abused or neglected, or is likely to be abused or neglected in **any** way and is at risk of significant harm. This includes domestic violence situations where the child has not been hurt directly, and situations where children are exposed to inappropriate sexually explicit acts or materials eg. videos.

From time to time parents speak to us with concerns about sexual or physical abuse of their own or other people's children. In some cases parents are aware of abusive situations. In other cases they have noticed behaviors in children and are not sure as to whether they should be concerned or not. We encourage parents to discuss these matters with us. However, we think it may also be helpful to have other contacts.

If you suspect a child might be abused emotionally, physically or sexually, you should ring the [Family and Community Services Helpline 132111](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families) and discuss the matter. For further information and help go to <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/families>

- **TOBACCO, DRUG AND ALCOHOL-FREE ENVIRONMENT**

National Law: Section 167; National Regulations: Regulations 82-83

The children being educated and cared for by the Preschool will be provided with an environment that is free from the use of tobacco, illicit drugs and alcohol.

I. THE CURRICULUM (Policies: Educational Program and Practice; and Social Justice)

• THE VALUE OF PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD SETTINGS

The United Nations in 1989 declared that it is every child's right to freely engage in age appropriate play activities. We see this as being an integral part of our Preschool philosophy. All our planning, observations, evaluation, preparation and daily interactions are influenced by your child's right to play and our knowledge of how important play is in setting your child up for future life success.

Through play experiences your child is making sense of the world around them. They are exploring, experimenting, practicing and learning. Play is a child's "work". It requires commitment, time, space, opportunity, provisions and energy.

We aim to provide a happy, safe and stimulating environment in which your child can explore, experiment, wonder, grow, and learn – and exercise their right to play!

• THE PROGRAM AND SCHOOL READINESS:

We believe that children learn best when they are playing and are involved in experiences and activities that interest and delight them and that support their needs and strengths.

At Mudgee Community Preschool our teachers and educators have the freedom to develop play-based programs that are responsive to the children's interests, needs and strengths, the families' interests and concerns. The teachers and educators also make the most of their own skills and interests. We use the principles and practices embedded in the national Early Years Learning Framework to help us ensure that, whilst playing, children are thriving in all areas of development.

We provide a great environment for children to develop the skills and qualities needed to flourish in all aspects of life, including school. In preparing children for the future, we also value the "here and now" in children's lives and allow unhurried time for children to make sense of the world as they play and enjoy being 4 and 5 year olds. School readiness is not a separate program but is an integral part of our everyday program as we nurture all areas of children's growth and development.

Through play, children will learn skills in areas such as numeracy, literacy and self-care and, just as importantly, they will develop the physical, social and communication skills to help them take on the challenges and opportunities that life (and school) might present. Because teachers and educators at Preschool focus on individual children's interests, strengths and needs they foster curiosity, enthusiasm and a willingness to learn – important dispositions to be successful and confident life-long learners.

Positive relationships with children, their families and the community form the foundation of everything we do. *We believe that to be ready for school, children also need ready families, ready schools and ready communities.* We work collaboratively with our families, schools and other community organizations to achieve good outcomes for our children.

Families

We recognize parents and families as the child's first teacher and work with them to gain a shared understanding of each child, including their cultural and religious backgrounds. Our partnership with parents begins with registration and orientation meetings and extends to regular catch-ups throughout the year. There are many opportunities for families to be involved in different ways in our Preschool.

Schools

We have strong relationships with each primary school in Mudgee and help to ensure that appropriate transition plans are in place for every child, acknowledging that some children may need more support than others. Every year, we prepare a "Transition to School Statement" for each child which is sent to the child's school and which outlines their progress and development as well as their strengths, needs and interests. Children and parents also contribute to the Transition to School Statement.

Community

We recognize that the Wiradjuri people are the original owners of our land and work to raise understanding of Aboriginal culture and history through respectful connections with local Aboriginal people. We include culturally appropriate resources in our program and Aboriginal music, art, stories, dance and symbols are part of our everyday activities.

Our community connections are strengthened with regular excursions into the town and visits from different community members such as the local fire fighters and environmental officers from the Council who help us to plant

CURRICULUM:

"Curriculum encompasses all the interactions, experiences, routines and events, planned and unplanned that occur in an environment designed to foster children's learning and development" (Early Years Learning Framework)

trees in community parks and spaces. We work closely with community organizations such as Mid-Western Region Community Health, Barnardos and the Benevolent Society to support families' and children's health and wellbeing.

Our Director is an active member of the Mudgee Region Child and Family Network and is well positioned to advocate for the needs of young children, their families and early childhood services.

- **THE EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK** (see pamphlet attached)

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and Mudgee Community Preschool Philosophy inform the development of the curriculum for the children at Mudgee Community Preschool.

Working in partnership with families, educators use the EYLF principles, practices and learning outcomes to guide their planning for children's learning.

1. Outcomes - curriculum decision-making will maximise each child's learning and development opportunities in relation to
 - o Their identity
 - o Their connection with community
 - o Their wellbeing
 - o Their confidence as learners
 - o Their effectiveness as communicators
2. The following principles underpin practice:
 - o Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships between educators and children
 - o Partnerships with families
 - o High expectations for *all* children's achievement in learning and challenging processes that contribute to inequities
 - o Respect for diversity
 - o Ongoing learning and reflective practice – educators will seek ways to build their professional knowledge and develop learning communities
3. Educators draw on the following teaching practices to promote children's learning:
 - o Adopting holistic approaches
 - o Being responsive to children
 - o Planning and implementing learning through play
 - o Intentional teaching
 - o Creating physical and social learning environments that have a positive impact on children's learning
 - o Valuing the cultural and social contexts of children and their families
 - o Providing for continuity in experiences and enabling children to have successful transitions

INTENTIONAL TEACHING

(Early Years Learning Framework)
"Intentional teaching is deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful. Educators who engage in intentional teaching recognise that learning occurs in social contexts and that interactions and conversations are vitally important for learning. They actively promote children's learning through worthwhile and challenging experiences and interactions that foster high-level thinking skills"

- **CREATIVITY / AESTHETICS**

All individuals need a creative outlet. Some people, draw, write, sing, think, decorate, cook, design, build or garden and some people simply prefer to appreciate and enjoy the creative efforts of others.

At Preschool we believe that through many "languages" such as drawing, painting, modeling, sculpting, building, pasting, singing and dancing children can express what they are thinking, doing, feeling, learning and experiencing. We encourage your child to be creative in the way most appropriate for their needs. Some children may need adult guidance to explore our materials and equipment. Some children may create freely and easily while others may come to it slowly and cautiously. We respect your child's individual approach to creativity and we aim to encourage their growth and development. We also aim to foster your child's appreciation of other people's creative efforts, as well as developing their own personal sense of what is beautiful, moving and eloquent.

- **THE ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY (Policy: Environment and Sustainability)**

As a Preschool, we aim to encourage and increase awareness of our environmental responsibilities and we implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children are supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment. We practice Re-using, Recycling and Reducing and to this end encourage families to pack low-waste meals and snacks. Environmentally sustainable practices are embedded into the operations of the Preschool and involve educators, children and families

- **INCLUSION AND PARTICIPATION OF ALL CHILDREN (Policy: Inclusion and Participation of children with disabilities and/or additional needs)**

Research tells us that the first five years of a child's life are developmentally the most crucial. At Mudgee Community Preschool we are committed to ensuring that all children are included in the full range of experiences that we offer. We employ additional educators (Inclusion Support Educator) to ensure participation and inclusion of children with high additional needs. If you are aware of any additional needs your child may have, or have concerns or queries about your

child's development please speak to your child's teacher. Should your child present with any difficulties or problem areas, you will be made aware of them by the class teacher and appropriate support will be provided. In some cases referrals for assessments will be made to other professionals such as Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists or Physiotherapists. Staff works closely with families and other professionals to develop Individual Education Plans for children with additional needs.

- o **Preschool Inclusion Program (PIP)**

We recognize that there are some children who are enrolled at Preschool, whether or not they have a diagnosed disability, who face barriers to inclusion and participation in the Preschool program – they do not always have the skills to keep up with their friends. To help these children we employ an Occupational Therapist, Rachel Disher, as part of our team to spend regular time in each classroom to work with the staff and children. Rachel trains the staff in strategies and techniques to use in the everyday program in the classroom and playground and to support all the children to play and learn with their friends.

The PIP does not include 1:1 therapy for individual children, or formal assessments for individual children although the staff and Rachel may use “screeners” to help identify areas of need. Appropriate referrals are made for children who may benefit from more intensive therapy or support.

Families have regular meetings/communication with teachers to discuss their child's development and progress and to contribute to their child's learning program. There may also be opportunities to meet with Rachel during the year if your child has been specifically referred to the PIP program.

- o **Speech Therapy**

Our staff are trained to identify children who may be experiencing difficulty with language, speech and communication. In consultation with families, teachers may refer these children to a speech pathologist. Mudgee Preschool works closely with Speech Pathologists from Mudgee Community Health who conduct regular group sessions at Preschool for children who have been referred to them. We also work closely with private Speech Pathologists who are able to use the Preschool to work with their clients.

Our staff are trained to implement strategies in their daily program and routines that support children's language, speech and communication.

- o **Mental Health and Wellbeing Program – BE YOU National Education Initiative**

Australian research indicates that between 4 per cent and 14 per cent of children aged from 18 months to 3 years have mental health problems such as anxiety, social withdrawal and high levels of aggression. These figures are similar to those reported for Preschoolers and infants in international studies.

There is a solid body of evidence indicating that helping children build resilience leads to better mental health. In addition, if children with mental health difficulties are identified early and their condition managed, they will be less likely to have poor mental health outcomes as adults.

BE YOU aims to transform Australia's approach to supporting children's and young people's mental health in early learning services and schools. Our vision is that every learning community is positive, inclusive and resilient – a place where every child, young person, educator and family can achieve their best possible mental health.

Be You promotes mental health and wellbeing, from the early years to 18, and offers educators and learning communities evidence-based online professional learning, complemented by a range of tools and resources to turn learning into action. Be You empowers educators, helping them to develop valuable mental health skills and knowledge, while also providing an effective model for implementing a whole-learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Be You is led by Beyond Blue with delivery partners Early Childhood Australia and headspace. Both partners have local teams of trained consultants to provide advice and support to early learning services and schools nationally to help implement a whole-learning community approach to growing Australia's most mentally healthy generation.

You can find out more about Be You at <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/healthy-places/learning-communities>

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.mychild.gov.au

www.service.nsw.gov.au/nswgovdirectory/community-services

www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.acecqa.gov.au

www.nswhealthykids.gov.org

www.beyondblue.org.au

TERM DATES 2019

Term 1	Tuesday 29 January to Friday 12 April	Pupil Free day 29 January
Term 2	Monday 29 April to Friday 05 July	Pupil Free day 29 April, Queen's Birthday 10 June
Term 3	Monday 22 July to Friday 27 September	Pupil Free day 22 July
Term 4	Monday 14 October to Friday 20 December	Pupil Free day: 20 December