

Whittlesea Preschool Parents Handbook 2024

Welcome

The committee of management and staff welcome you to Whittlesea Preschool. We take great pride in being a country town preschool right on the doorstep of the city. The community we belong to is a big part of what defines us.

Preschool is the next step in your child's journey and we aim to support them and you in providing quality programs to suit each child in a safe environment where PLAY is our work.

Please use this Parents Handbook together with our website and Facebook page and the support resources at the preschool, to assist you throughout your child's journey.

Whittlesea Preschool is managed by a volunteer Committee of Management, and is a Child Safe Organisation. We have our Annual General Meeting in November to elect our new committee – we invite you to become part of, we need enthusiastic family members to support, guide and be involved in the running of Whittlesea Preschool.

Our preschool programs are based on the development of preschool children and on their skills, needs, interests and experiences. Our educators believe children learn through play which allows them to develop skills at their own rate as they explore and experiment with equipment, activities and ideas as they interact with others.



Whittlesea Preschool recognises the support of the Victorian Government

Philosophy

Whittlesea Preschool provides an accessible, quality teaching and learning program for preschool children in a safe, caring, inclusive and supportive environment. Whittlesea Preschool provides a stimulating atmosphere where learning is a natural and welcome part of everyday life and our Educators maintain a place of nurturing, encouragement, understanding and caring. We work within the Victorian Early Years Learning framework which ensures equality of opportunity for all children and their families.

Our philosophy is evaluated annually to ensure it meets the needs of our community.

Whittlesea Preschool Philosophy

We believe that learning is:

Children are capable competent learners, our

High expectations of each child ensure they grow and succeed, our

Image of the child is one, that is full of potential, curiosity to learn and embracing others in the joy of learning,

Leadership & continuous learning for our educators empowers them to be the best they can be, it is a major component in the

Development of highly effective learning opportunities for all children incorporating the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework

Collaborative partnerships within the preschool and its wider community build the sense of “belonging” to for our children and their families.

Engagement with them allows us to build social capital, creating a strong foundation that reflects the identity and needs of our community.

Natural environments ensure children appreciate the world around them and build an understanding of sustainability, being mindful of conserving energy and using natural and recycled materials.

Transitions within the program are viewed as valuable learning opportunities in building confidence and wellbeing within our

Everyday routines and group times are important learning opportunities. Life is constant process of ‘change’ and we need to support children to be prepared for this.

Respectful relationships encourage an inclusive and nurturing culture, where children families& staff communicate openly and;

Effectively, with warmth and honesty. Learning happens during social interactions and collaborations with others.

Diversity of children families and staff are to be acknowledged and celebrated, ensuring individuals are valued for their strength’s, abilities, culture and beliefs and we understand that these qualities are what build a community.

Educators & Co-Educators

Our educators have a wealth of knowledge and experience in early childhood education and will use this to develop a program for each child and will concentrate on their social, emotional, language, intellectual, physical and creative development.

Educators

Gina Repic	Centre Director, 3 & 4 year old Educator
Lisa Pang	4 year old Educator

Co-Educators

Debra Rankine	Co-educator
Vivien Lashford	Co-educator
Pam Vandersman	Co-educator

Committee of Management

The committee of management is an incorporated association and is governed by the Rules of the Constitution of Whittlesea Preschool Inc.

We meet on a monthly basis (except January) and parents are encouraged to join the committee as an active member. If this commitment is not possible parents are welcome to attend the monthly meetings, dates and times are advertised on the preschool noticeboard.

Our Program

Our program revolves around the individual needs of children.

The Curriculum is developed based on the National Early Years Learning Framework (0-5years) (EYLF) and on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (0-8years) (VEYLF). It is divided into 5 Outcomes – Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning and Communication.

It recognises the 5 Principles (EYLF) that are important for children's learning and development. These are:

- Secure, Respectful and Reciprocal Relationships between children and educators
- Partnerships between Educators and Families
- High Expectations and Equity when considering children,
- Respect for Diversity – acknowledging the many ways of living and knowing and
- Ongoing Learning and Reflective Practice by Educators constantly questioning what is happening and why.

The Victorian State Government provides funding for children to access high-quality kindergarten programs in the two years before they start school.

The funding is a contribution towards meeting the cost of the kindergarten program. Government funding is only available for one place per child per year. If your child is currently attending another children's service that offers a preschool program please ensure they are aware the Whittlesea Preschool will be claiming the funding in 2024 for your child.

If you or your child holds a valid concession card (health care card or pension card) please bring the card in at the beginning of each term and the administration staff will sight the card and note the expiry date. Please note this information is treated with utmost confidentiality.

Kindergarten is an essential time for children to assist in a smooth transition to school. It is the first step towards more formal learning and sometimes the first experience of regular time away from the security of home. It is a time when children need to have many affirming experiences with a group of children their own age.

Three Year Old Program

Children must have turned 3 years of age before they can commence our 3 year old program. They must be 3 on or before the 30th April in the year they are enrolled in the 3 year old program.

3yo Kindergarten is fully funded by the Victorian State Government. The 3yo program provides a range of indoor and outdoor activities that are planned using the VEYLF outcomes they are designed to use the childrens interests and allow growth and development in each child's learning journey.

Children commencing 3yo Kinder are unable to access a second year of 3yo Kinder and must move to 4yo Kinder in 2025.

Four Year Old Program

To attend the 4-year-old program children must have turned 4 on or before the 30th April 2024.

Second Year Enrolments

A second year of funded preschool is only made available to children enrolled in 4yo programs, who meet strict eligibility criteria determined by the Department of Education.

Early childhood teachers can help to reassure concerned families by discussing the ways in which their child's individual learning and development needs can be supported within the preschool program.

A Preschool Field Officer is available, to children in the 3yo and 4yo preschool program, to support families and educators in developing individual program's and strategies for children who may require additional support transitioning into preschool.

Required information

Enrolment Forms

The Department of Education (DoE) requires an enrolment form to be completed before your child can start preschool. It is important to make sure you fill out all sections completely. The information provided will be used to ensure your child's safety and wellbeing whilst at preschool, statistical information required by DoE and contact information for the administration staff.

If your address, contact details or any other information changes, it is your responsibility to notify our educators immediately.

Your child cannot attend preschool until the parent or guardian signs an authorisation for staff to seek emergency, hospital, medical or ambulance services, and provide a copy of current immunized status from Medicare.

If your child has been diagnosed by a medical practitioner with a specific health care need or medical condition including, Anaphylaxis, Asthma and Diabetes an action plan will need to be completed by your DOCTOR and a risk minimisation plan discussed with your teacher BEFORE your child can commence at Whittlesea Preschool.

Interview/Information Day

The preschool year begins with an interview/information session for both parents and children. This is an opportunity for you and your child to become further acquainted with the staff and the preschool environment, and a time for information sharing with the Preschool staff.

On this day you will need to bring:

- You and your child
- Medical action plan (for children with a medical condition ie: Anaphylaxis, Asthma, Epilepsy, Diabetes or an Allergy) which has been completed by your doctor
- Custody papers if applicable

Your interview day and time will be sent on 1st December 2023.

Settling In

During the first two weeks of the year, your child will be introduced to our programs within a smaller group. This enables children time to settle and gives educator time to spend with each child to get to know them. Details of the schedule for the first two weeks can be found on the email with the subject heading: 2024 Welcome Email, detailing 2024 groups. We limit these shorter sessions to the first two weeks of Preschool.

A gradual transition time with small groups recognises the importance of a successful start for all preschool children. Children react differently to the new preschool environment and their ability to cope may depend on their personality and past experience of attending other services or spending time away from their parents and home. Some children cope well with the new setting while others find it more difficult. Please feel free to discuss the separation process with your teacher who will advise you about and implement strategies for your child's individual needs.

Arrivals and Departures

Please bring and collect your child from preschool on time.

When moving into and out of the preschool gates please ensure you only let your child through the gate with you, if other children are trying to move through the gate please ensure they are being accompanied by an adult.

Attendance Book

As per the DoE regulatory requirements there is an attendance book which records the time of arrival and departure of each child. Please ensure the adult accompanying your child completes the attendance book details on arrival and departure. It is a requirement for all children to be signed with correct time in and out on arrival and departure.

Arrival at Preschool

Please wait for staff to open the gate into the outdoor play space.

On entering our yard, sign the attendance book and farewell your child before letting them move into the bag room by themselves.

On the occasions that you need to pick your child early please just let staff know at the beginning of the session.

Change in the collection of your child:

It is important to notify the preschool staff if you are going to be delayed in collecting your child. Children can become distressed if they are the last at preschool and the staff are unsure as to what has happened.

A signed authorisation note/email and telephone call to the staff is required if someone other than the parent/guardian or authorised persons listed on your enrolment form will be collecting your child from the preschool.

Departure from the Preschool

At the end of the session we ask parents to wait for staff to release the children to your care.

It is important when collecting your child to wait until they have been dismissed to you. This enables us to make sure that all children go home with the correct person, and to adequately supervise children during dispersal times.

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to collect their child promptly at the conclusion of the session. We recognise however that there may be isolated occasions when parents/guardians may be delayed. Please be aware our staff have other tasks to complete after the conclusion of the session and their own commitments at the end of their rostered day of work.

In the event of children not being picked up on time, teachers follow this procedure:

- Contact parents/guardian on home and work numbers provided on the enrolment form
- If parents cannot be reached, we call emergency contact numbers provided on the enrolment form.
- If no contact can be made with any guardian/emergency contact after a period of 45 minutes, we are required to contact Victoria Police.

Starting Tips

Getting Started

There's so much to think about when your child is first enrolled in Preschool- what to pack, how to dress them, how drop-off and pick-up runs will fit into your daily routine and what the expectations are for you as a parent. We realise it can be a bit daunting, so please use this book as a tool or ask any one of our friendly staff. The best way to prepare your child for Preschool is to talk positively about the experience, however don't make it a 'big deal' as this can overwhelm small children. It is the start of an amazing journey, one of endless growth and development for them. If you are positive they are more likely to be happy about the experience, particularly at the beginning.

Preparing for Preschool

Below is a list of things that you might like to practise at home. Please note: there is no expectation that your child will have mastered all of these, so please don't stress!

- Talking to other people about familiar objects and events
- Answering and asking simple questions
- Following simple instructions
- Using books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- Using the toilet independently
- Adapting to unfamiliar settings and new experiences
- Finishing a task and tidying up afterwards
- Playing cooperatively with other children - sharing and taking turns
- Putting on and taking off jumpers, shoes, socks independently

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

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

Children at Preschool

All children are required to bring a bag big enough for a lunchbox and snackbox, drink bottle and a change of clothes.

When arriving please encourage your child to find their own picture and choose a locker, hang up their own bag in their locker.

Please ensure any medications or sunscreen is given to an educator. These items **MUST NOT** be left in children's bags.

Healthy Lunch & Snacks (Nude Food)

We have a nutrition policy to guide and promote good nutrition and healthy bodies in children. We have committed to the guidelines of the Healthy Together Achievement program developed by the Victorian Government.

In accordance we ask parents provide a prepared snack / lunch in a clearly name lunchbox. Water is available at all times, children can bring their own clearly named drink bottle with water if they would like to.

Purple 3yo group –

2.5 hours session:

Children are at preschool for a short time and will only require a small snack. We encourage parents to provide a piece of fruit/vegetable and a piece of dairy.

5 hours session:

In the 5 hour sessions we will have a fruit snack for morning tea and lunch after midday. Lunch – See attached flyer for snacks and lunch ideas, tips and information.

4yo – 5 hours session:

In the 5 hour sessions we will have a fruit snack for morning or afternoon tea and lunch after midday. **Lunch** may include a sandwich, wrap or roll, a piece of fruit/vegetable, or a salad.

We ask that all food that is brought to preschool is 'NUDE' that is no wrappers. Food should be sent in reusable plastic containers. Some lunch boxes have divisions that are easy to pack.

Please be aware we ask that food containing CHOCOLATE OR NUTS are **NOT** brought to preschool.

For the fruit snack we ask parents to ensure it consists of a piece of fruit/vegetable and a piece of dairy.

We will encourage children to choose a healthier alternative from their food and send home any foods that do not fit the Healthy Together guidelines. Please see our healthy lunch box flyer for suggestions

The preschool program supports a worm farm and composting so our food scraps will be used in these.

We are an 'Allergy Aware Pre-School. Please check all labelling to ensure that children with allergies are not put at any risk.

Thank you for your co-operation.

For the safety of all children at preschool please **DO NOT include** nuts or nut products in your child's snack or lunch to help children with life threatening allergies remain safe. We will make families aware of any other foods that may cause an anaphylaxis reaction as we become aware.

How much food to provide can be tricky, if you are unsure please speak with educators. Too much food children may throw it away, eat only bits of everything, or they will sit and try and eat it all

missing out on activities. This is a great opportunity to get your child ready for school so provide lunch and snack as they will have it provided when they go to school.

TIP: Have your child practice opening and closing their snack/lunch box at home to see if they can do this by themselves. Some lunchboxes are very tricky for small hands to open and we would like to encourage all children to be independent and complete this for themselves where possible.

Practical Clothing

Please dress your child in comfortable clothes that are washable and easy to manage so they are free to participate fully in all activities. Although protective clothing is provided, it is not possible for your child to stay clean at all times – sand, water, paint, playdough and other 'messy' activities are important sensory experiences at preschool.

Please be aware that long dresses make climbing activities very difficult and lots of buttons, ties, belts and buckles can make it hard for preschool children at toilet time.

Shoes that stay on children's feet and have non slip soles are best for preschool. Shoes with slippery soles, thongs, open toed sandals, crocs, gumboots and girls fashion shoes are often dangerous when running, climbing, jumping and moving at preschool and should not be worn. GUMBOOTS should only be brought on WET DAYS in a separate bag.

SunSmart

We are a SunSmart accredited Preschool, children will be required to wear a hat outside and children will be encouraged to play inside or in the shade between the times of highest UV radiation exposure designated on the Bureau of Meteorology website. Please apply sunscreen to your child before he/she comes to preschool to protect your child while playing outside. (Sunscreen is available on the front table if you forget to apply before coming to kinder).

Please send a hat that can remain at Kinder for the year.

Children will not be allowed to play outside without a hat or sunscreen. Staff, parents who are helping and visitors are also asked to wear a hat when they are outside with the children to set a good example.

A Sun Smart hat is one that covers the face, back of the neck and ears of the child.

On the enrolment form, parents will be asked to sign an authorisation for staff to apply sunscreen to their child, if or when we need to reapply during a session. If you DO NOT wish to use the sunscreen supplied by the preschool you are REQUIRED to provide a suitable sunscreen to be left at preschool for the use of your child.

Wet Children/Toilet Accidents

Children can sometimes be so involved in what they are doing that they forget to go to the toilet until it is too late. Sometimes they feel uncomfortable about going to the toilet because of the different set up and routines or they cannot unfasten zips, buttons, buckles, press studs etc. in time. Accidents of this nature are not unusual for preschool children so if they do happen just be relaxed about it, find out if anything is worrying your child at preschool and ensure children are wearing clothes they can undo quickly. In these situations staff spend time with the child reassuring the

child and restoring self-esteem by adopting the approach - "accidents happen to everyone and it's okay".

Children also get wet at preschool by falling in puddles, being over enthusiastic at water play, when washing their hands or spillage of drinks.

We ask that you have at least one change of clothes in your child's bag each day to ensure they feel comfortable if they require a new set of clothes.

Children will not be changed against their will and we will let them change themselves if they want to. If they do not want to change we will call you.

Uniform

It is not compulsory, we do have a uniform available here at Whittlesea Pre-School. There are three order dates throughout the year. Any orders outside of these times will incur a \$10 administration fee. Order forms are available from the office, or simply ask your child's teacher.

1. Orientation Day – December 18th 2023.
2. Third week in February.
3. Third week in April.

Birthdays and Celebrations

Many of the children like to share their birthdays or celebrations with the rest of the group. The provision of cupcakes or fairy bread to share with the other children makes it a special occasion. We will sing "Happy Birthday" and blow out the candles on our "cake". Please notify the staff before bringing birthday treats so we can arrange for children with special dietary restrictions to have something special to celebrate with your child.

Whittlesea preschool believes that it is important for children to become familiar with values, customs, beliefs and traditions of other people and the ways they celebrate special occasions. Celebrations and joyful experiences foster in children attitudes of acceptance and value of culture. We welcome any assistance and information parents can give us, particularly regarding a festival or event your family celebrates.

If you do not wish to have your child participate in any event or celebration that is occurring in the preschool please speak to your child's teacher.

Toys & Books

Toys from home are **not** encouraged at preschool. We understand they may provide emotional support for your child however they can often become lost, left behind or broken. They may also cause disruption to the curriculum and cause distress with children who do not have these toys. If your child needs a toy for reassurance when settling into preschool or going through a traumatic time in their lives please talk to your child's teacher.

Books from home are welcome if they relate to an interest we are following at preschool. Children often become upset if we cannot read their book because we have another book planned or there are several children who have brought a book that day or we do not get time to read it so please prepare your child for this or ask your child's teacher what day is best to bring it to preschool.

If your child has an item of educational interest to bring to preschool such as a nest, animals, reptiles, rocks, gem stones, shells, feathers, photos, x – rays, musical instruments, anything from holidays or nature, etc. we like them to bring these things to preschool and share their interest and knowledge with the other children.

Role of Families at Whittlesea Preschool

Family involvement

Families are welcome to attend sessions and to be involved with children’s activities. This gives staff both an opportunity to informally share information with you about your child and the program and some extra help at activities so they can work closely with individual children when needed.

Helping at preschool gives you an opportunity to:	Other ways in which you can help include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Spend valuable time with your child (children enjoy their parents’ involvement and often look forward to these occasions) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Supporting committee activities and fundraising activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Get to know your child’s friends and your centre staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attending working bees
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read stories 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attending committee meetings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prepare and assist with snacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Helping with excursions and incursions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Share special skills (cooking, music etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Attending Special occasion days held throughout the year: Mothers Day morning tea, Fathers Night or Grandparent’s day.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See the program in action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mending and maintaining equipment

Siblings

Other children are welcome to visit the centre with their parents, but please make sure they are supervised at all times for their safety. They are your responsibility while at the centre.

Recycled Materials

We often use materials that are usually considered to be junk. Throughout the year staff may ask you to save particular items to be used in the program, e.g. boxes, wool scraps, containers, cards, buttons etc.

Engaging with the preschool program

The curriculum and program book is written up in a continual cycle. It includes changes that occur due to children’s interests and abilities, what children have been doing, what learning has taken place as a result and where we will go next. The program book is available for parents to make comments about anything interesting your child has done or has said about what they have done while at preschool so we can include this in our planning.

Notice Board and Hanging Files

Notes about what is happening at preschool will be placed in your child's hang file located at the front door so please check them every session. Daily information about upcoming events or illnesses is displayed on the whiteboard and posted on our facebook page. This is a great way to stay in touch.

Health and Safety

Accidents

All staff members hold a current **First Aid Certificate including asthma and anaphylaxis training**. Parents will be notified of any accidents involving their child as soon as possible and will be required to sight and sign the staff's written account of the accident when picking up their child. In cases where medical attention is required, all efforts will be made to contact you or those persons you have nominated as emergency contacts. In case of an emergency, an ambulance will be rung and any associated costs will be the parent's responsibility.

Allergies

Please ensure educators are informed of your child's allergy requirements on enrolment. Please contact your teacher before bringing celebration food to share with other children. Some children have allergies to food that may be life threatening. We may nominate particular foods that may be excluded as a strategy to provide a safe environment. If your child has been diagnosed with an allergy you will be required to complete and **Allergic Reaction Action Plan BEFORE** your child can start preschool. Information in the plan should be updated if there are any changes to your child's medication, symptoms or treatment. Any medication is to be given to staff to store safely during the session.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can be life threatening. If your child has been diagnosed with anaphylaxis you will be required to complete and **Anaphylaxis Action Plan and a risk minimisation plan BEFORE** your child can start preschool. Information in the plan should be updated if there are any changes to your child's medication, symptoms or treatment. Any medication, including an EpiPen, or Anapen is to be given to staff to store safely during the session.

Asthma

Parents are required to complete an **Asthma Care Plan, BEFORE** your child can start at preschool. These records ensure that teachers are aware of your child's needs in the event of an asthma attack. Information in the plan should be updated if there are any changes to your child's medication, asthma symptoms or treatment. Any medication, including Asthma medication, is to be given to staff to store safely during the session.

Medication

If your child requires any type of medication during the session you must provide accurate information regarding its administration to staff and give permission through completion of the Medication Form. Please note that medication can only be administered from its original container bearing the original label and instructions and before the expiry date. All medications are required to be given to Educators before entering the Kinder – medication **CANNOT** be stored in your child's bag!

Attendance and Health

If a child becomes ill or is injured at preschool, teachers follow this procedure:

- Make the child comfortable
- Contact parents/guardians phone numbers provided
- If parents cannot be reached, emergency contact personnel will be called
- Staff will continue to make the child comfortable and provide ongoing supervision until parent/guardian/emergency contact has been notified and the child is collected from the preschool
- Call an Ambulance if required. A member of staff will endeavour to contact parents/guardians/emergency contact person in the event of calling an Ambulance, however if the staff need to ring the Ambulance in an emergency they will contact parents after the Ambulance has been rung.

Infectious Diseases & Illnesses

Under health regulations, any contact with infectious diseases (e.g. COVID-19, Gastro, conjunctivitis, head lice, measles, chicken pox) must be reported to the teacher; if children are infectious or unwell, they should stay home until they are better. See the **DHS School Exclusion Table** on display in the preschool, as a guide for your child's attendance.

It is required that children are kept at home when showing the following illness or symptoms:

- Covid-19
- Vomiting- at least 48 hours from last event
- Diarrhoea- at least 48 hours from last event
- Fever and associated symptoms – heavy nasal discharge
- Conjunctivitis
- Cold sores
- Viral infections
- Rashes

If your child is diagnosed with an infectious disease, we request that you notify us as soon as possible so that staff can inform other families of an illness currently circulating at Preschool. If your child is not immunised you will be notified, and your child may need to be excluded as per the DHS School Exclusion Table. A family's confidentiality will be respected at all times.

Other Important Information

Privacy Policy

Parents are bound by the same Privacy and Confidentiality Regulations as educators. As part of enrolment parents and guardians sign the Code of Conduct agreement and Privacy Consent form. There are many reasons children behave in the way they do and these reasons and the strategies that have been put in place to deal with them are known only to staff, other professionals and a child's parents.

If you witness behaviour that concerns you please bring it to the attention of staff so they can deal with the situation in an appropriate way.

**Please do not discuss other children or behaviour that you may have witnessed at preschool with other parents or on any media device.
This is a breach of Confidentiality and Privacy Laws.**

Staff will only discuss matters concerning your child with you or their legal guardian.

Behaviour Guidance Policy

Whittlesea preschool is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and volunteers attending our preschool. We believe that positive behaviour in all children is to be encouraged and that all children need to be respected and valued as individuals.

We understand there are many factors that influence behaviour exhibited at preschool and will guide children to understand that there is alternative ways to showing displeasure, or frustration

Setting limits for behaviour is important for safety and protection of children, adults and the environment and that ultimately limit setting will develop self-regulation in children. Managing behaviour positively assists in promoting a predictable and caring environment.

Concerns and complaints policy

It is lovely to receive compliments and positive feedback. You are also encouraged to contact staff or the committee if you would like to make a positive comment!

If at any time throughout the year you have any concerns about your child or the preschool program, please do not hesitate to approach your child's teacher to make a suitable time to discuss them. If this does not resolve your concern you can contact the President of the Committee of Management, who will then follow the procedure documented in the Complaints Policy.

Concerns or complaints in relation to the Health Safety or Wellbeing of a child made to an Educator or Committee of Management must be forwarded to the DoE within 24 hours of being received.

Parent concerns or complaints can also be made directly to the DoE. The number to contact is available from the front Noticeboard.

Policies

Whittlesea Pre-School has a number of policies that are required for the management of the preschool. These cover 7 areas of the National Framework covering a variety of topics. They

cover Health and Safety, Staffing, Relationships with children, Service Management and Curriculum.

Copies of all policies are available from the Pre-School for your perusal. Policies currently being updated are made available for 4 weeks prior to being adopted. Please take time to read and make suggestions during this time.

Emergency Evacuation Procedure

The emergency evacuation plan is displayed near the exits in the preschool. The staff will practice emergency evacuation drills with the children once a term so that they are familiar with them. We will let you know when we have practised an emergency procedure so you can talk about it with your child at home.

Fundraising

Government funding for preschools does not sufficiently cover all the costs required for a preschool to operate and provide ongoing educational activities for our children. In addition to funding, to ensure that our children continue to receive a high standard of education and care, fundraising is required. Throughout the year a number of fund raising events are organised. It would be appreciated if you could support these events.

Professional Development for Staff

We believe the training of our staff in up to date practices in Early Childhood Education is very important.

Staff are required by their employment conditions to attend professional development over the course of the preschool year. This means that one day in the year a preschool session will be cancelled so staff can attend professional development. Other times staff may miss a session so that they may attend valuable professional development.

No Smoking Policy

Preschools are non-smoking environments. Please refrain from smoking on the premises or near the front gate.

Emergency Management

Code Red Days

For the safety of all children, families and staff, so they can enact their Personal bushfire Plans, it has been decided, by the Committee of Management, that there will be **NO PRESCHOOL** on **CODE RED DAYS**. We will inform families the day before so you can make arrangements to keep your family safe and will place a sign at the front of the preschool.

Incident within the Preschool

We will take ALL children, as per our emergency management plan, out of the preschool and assemble at our designated evacuation point with our emergency kit, which includes an emergency

contact list and a mobile phone. We will ring emergency services, take the attendance records, evacuate if necessary and keep children safe and comfortable. Once the situation has been assessed as safe we will contact parents/emergency contacts to inform them about the emergency and where they can collect the children from.

Threat from outside the Preschool

All children will be kept inside the preschool and staff will supervise them and ring emergency services. Children will leave the preschool only after emergency services have given the all clear to do so. Educators or a member of the committee will contact parents/guardians or emergency contacts to advise them that their child is safe and inform them about how and when they can pick up their child or seek advice about an alternative location from which to pick up their child. If the area has been impacted by the threat and parents are unable to pick up their child, committee and educators will make plans to care for those children at the preschool. No attempt will be made to transport children home through the impacted area. On days of Extreme and Severe Fire Warning staff will keep the radio tuned to ABC 774, regularly check the CFA website and check the atmosphere.

The Emergency Management Plan is available from the preschool



It is a good idea to ask for a copy of the policy on exclusion periods when you join the care service.

If you have any questions or concerns about exclusion periods, talk to your care service or doctor.

IMMUNISATION

Immunisation is a reliable way to prevent certain diseases. Immunisation works by giving a person a vaccine against a particular disease. The vaccine contains a dead or modified version of the germ. This makes the person's immune system respond in a similar way to if they actually had the disease, but with less severe symptoms. If the person comes into contact with that germ in the future, their immune system can rapidly respond and prevent the person becoming ill.

The chance of an infection spreading in a community reduces if a high proportion of people are immunised, because the immunised people should not become infected and can protect more vulnerable people. This is known as 'herd immunity'.

MY CHILD IS NOT ILL, WHY IS HE/SHE BEING EXCLUDED?

He/she will be excluded from care during outbreaks of certain diseases such as measles and whooping cough (even if your child is well) if he/she has not been medically vaccinated. This includes if the child has been naturopathically or homeopathically vaccinated. The effectiveness of naturopathic or homeopathic vaccinations has not been scientifically proven.

The education and care service will usually have a policy on excluding non-medically vaccinated children in their exclusion policies.

When you enrol your child in a care service, provide the care service with a copy of your child's vaccination records. If your child has a vaccination record, make sure they have received all the vaccinations recommended for their age group.

For more information on immunisation, visit www.immunise.health.gov.au or call the Immunise Australia Program on 1800 671 811.

IMMUNISE AUSTRALIA
www.immunise.health.gov.au

IN SUMMARY

You can work with your education and care service and their exclusion policy to prevent your child, other children or staff from developing an infectious disease:

- Ask for a copy of your education and care exclusion policy.
- Provide the care service with a copy of your child's vaccination records or tell your care service if your child has not been medically vaccinated.
- Tell your care worker if your child has been diagnosed with an illness.
- Talk to your education and care service if you are unsure if your child can attend the service that day.

More information

Consumer guides are also available on

- What cause infection?
- Breaking the chain of infection

References

NHMRC (2012) *Staying healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services* found at www.nhmrc.gov.au/guidelines/publications/ch55.

NHMRC Ref. CH55b
Printed June 2013





Working with Children Check

Applicant guide

Applying for a Working with Children Check

This guide is for people who need to apply for the Working with Children Check (Check).

The purpose of the *Working with Children Act 2005* ('the Act') is to assist in protecting children from sexual or physical harm by ensuring that people who work with, or care for, them are subject to a screening process..

When should I apply for a Check?

You must lodge an application prior to starting child-related work.

What if I don't apply?

You are breaking the law if you start child-related work without applying for a Check first.

Your organisation is also breaking the law if they allow you to do child-related work when you have not yet applied for a Check.

Applying in Victoria

Go to the website and click on [Apply for a Check](#), then select 'Apply in Victoria'.

1. Fill in the application form, providing details about yourself and the organisations where you plan to do child-related work
2. Save time by following the prompts to verify your identity online. If you choose not to, or are unable to do this, you must follow the in-person identity verification process.
3. Finalise your application by attending a [participating Victorian Australia Post outlet](#). The steps here will differ depending on your identity verification method.

If you successfully verified your identity online:

- i. show Australia Post's counter staff the barcode emailed to you on your smart phone or a printed copy.
- ii. present a photo ID document (such as your Australian passport or driver's licence) from the list of acceptable [proof of identity](#) documents.
- iii. pay the non-refundable [fee](#) if you are applying for an Employee Check. Volunteer Checks are free.
- iv. Have your photo taken by Australia Post staff for inclusion with your application (at no charge to you)

If you need to undertake in-person identity verification:

- i. show Australia Post's counter staff the barcode emailed to you on your smart phone or a printed copy.
- ii. present multiple proof of identity documents (including one with your photo), according to the rules set out on the [proof of identity requirements](#) page.
- iii. pay the non-refundable [fee](#) if you are applying for an Employee Check. Volunteer Checks are free.
- iv. Have your photo taken by Australia Post staff for inclusion with your application (at no charge to you).

What happens after you finalise your application at Australia Post?

Your receipt

The Department of Justice and Regulation will email you a receipt advising that your application is being processed. Use this receipt to show organisations you have applied for a Check. You can follow the progress of your application at [Check Status](#).

Applying from interstate

The application process is different for applicants who live interstate. For full details on the interstate application process, go to the [Interstate applicant information sheet](#).

Can I work while my application is being processed?

The policies of some organisations only permit applicants to work after they have passed the Check. Please ask your organisation about this.

Most people can do child-related work during this time. However, by law you must not if you:

- have been charged with, found guilty, or convicted of a sexual, violent or drug offence listed in Schedule 3 of the Act
- have previously been given a Negative Notice and not subsequently been given a card
- will be supervising a child in employment under the *Child Employment Act 2003*
- will be working in a service defined under the *Children's Services Act 1996*, or in an education and care service under the Education and Care Services National Law (Victoria) Act 2010.

What if I have a criminal record or an adverse professional conduct report?

Whether you pass or fail the Check depends on the professional conduct report, the type of offence and the circumstances surrounding these matters.

By law you must not apply for a Check if you have to report or are supervised under the:

- *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*
- *Serious Sex Offenders Monitoring Act 2005*
- *Serious Sex Offenders (Detention and Supervision) Act 2009*.

Further information

Website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Email workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au

Customer Support Line 1300 652 879
8.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays)

TTY 13 36 77 **Speak & Listen** 1300 555 727



Interpreter If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact Customer Support.

Large print Please email the Check Unit.

Disclaimer: This information is intended as a general guide only. It is not intended to be given as legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. It is recommended that you obtain legal advice relevant to your particular circumstances.



Working with Children Check

Legislative Amendments Guide

Effective 1 August 2017

The amendments to the *Working with Children Act 2005* (the Act), effective 1 August 2017, are part of the government's response to implementing recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Amendments to the Act

The changes include:

1. Expanding the definition of 'direct contact' in the Act. The definition of direct contact now includes oral, written or electronic communication as well as face-to-face and physical contact.
2. Removing references to 'supervision' from the Act. This means that even if a person's contact with children as part of their child-related work is supervised by another person, they will still need to apply for a Working with Children Check (Check).
3. Creating a new occupational category of child-related work, known as 'kinship care'. Family members or other persons of significance caring for a child placed by Child Protection under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* are required to obtain a Check.
4. Ensuring that non-conviction charges (charges that have been finally dealt with other than by a conviction or finding of guilt) for serious sexual, violent or drug offences are considered as part of Check assessments and reassessments.
5. Enabling the Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation to compel the production of certain information for the purposes of compliance monitoring.

In addition, various other miscellaneous and technical amendments have been made to improve the Act's operation and administration.

Child-related work

Significant changes have been made to the definition of child-related work.

From 1 August 2017, 'child-related work' is:

Work within one or more of the occupational fields defined in the Act where contact with a child is direct and part of a person's duties.

New meaning of 'direct contact'

Previously, the term 'direct contact' only referred to physical contact or face-to-face oral communication with a child. In order to reflect the growing use of technology, which is presenting more opportunities for grooming children, the new definition of 'direct contact' has been expanded to also include the following types of contact:

- contact by post or other written communication
- contact by telephone or other oral communication.
- contact by email or other electronic communication.

Example:

John is employed as a counsellor with a phone counselling service specifically for young people aged between 5 and 18. Because John's role involves direct contact with children by telephone, he is required to hold a Check.

Removal of supervision from the definition

The reference to 'supervision' has been removed from the definition of child-related work and no longer applies.

Previously, the element of supervision was used to determine whether a person required a Check. If a person's contact with children was directly supervised by another person, then they were not required to hold a Check.

Now, a Check is required whether contact with children is supervised or not. This amendment responds to the Royal Commission's findings that perpetrators can often groom children in the presence of other people.

Example:

Chris has taken up a position as an assistant coach of a junior football team. Even though he is directly supervised by the head coach, Chris is required to hold a Check.

Kinship care

Kinship care is now considered to be a type of child-related work and has been added as a specific occupational field. Kinship carers are required to pass the Check.

For the purposes of the Check, a person is engaged in kinship care if:

- the person is a family member or other person of significance to a child; and
- the child is or has been placed in the out of home care of that person under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*. Out of home care means care of a child by a person other than a parent of the child.

Kinship carers are required to obtain a volunteer Check, which is free of charge.

Kinship carers obtaining a Check

There are two dates that apply to kinship carers.

New carers

New kinship carers are required to apply for a Check within 21 days of being approved as a carer. This requirement came into effect on 1 May 2017.

Existing carers

Existing carers are required to apply for a Check within 21 days of 1 August 2017.

Exemptions

There is one change to the exemptions. Ordinarily, a person working with a child who is closely related to them is exempt from the Check. This exemption does not apply if the person is a kinship carer. A person who engages in kinship care work must hold a Check.

Non-conviction charges

Charges for serious sexual, violent or drug offences that have not resulted in a conviction or finding of guilt (non-conviction charges) may now be considered as part of a Check assessment or reassessment. A non-conviction charge is a charge that has been finally dealt with other than by way of conviction or finding of guilt. For example:

- a charge that has been withdrawn
- a charge that has been dismissed by a court
- a person has been discharged by a court following a committal hearing
- a charge has been dismissed after the completion of a diversion program
- a conviction has been quashed on appeal
- a charge has led to an acquittal.

This change brings Victoria into line with all other state and territory Working with Children Check regulators.

Power to require information

The Secretary to the Department of Justice and Regulation (the Secretary) may compel the production of certain information for the purposes of compliance monitoring. If the Secretary suspects that a person has committed an offence against the Act, the Working with Children Regulations 2016 or Part 5 of the *Sex Offenders Registration Act 2004*, then the Secretary has the power to require anyone to provide information to help determine if the suspicion is reasonable. The Secretary can also notify the Chief Commissioner of Police about these suspicions. These offences include:

- a person engaging in child-related work without a Check
- a person who has been given a negative notice applying for a Check or engaging in child-related work
- a person using a Volunteer Check for paid work
- a person using a false or other person's Check
- a person engaging a person in child-related work who does not have a Check
- an agency offering the services of a person who does not have a Check
- a registered sex offender engaging in child-related work.

If a person receives a request for information from the Secretary and fails to provide that information without a reasonable excuse, they may be charged and face a fine of 60 penalty units (maximum penalty).

Other changes to the Act

Various other miscellaneous and technical amendments have been made to improve the Act's operation and administration.

Removal of the term 'supervision' from the Act

The term 'supervision' has not only been removed from the definition of child-related work, but also from all assessment provisions. Therefore, whether a person's work is supervised or not is no longer a relevant consideration under the Act.

Considering an applicant's age

In some circumstances, the age of the applicant at the time of their offending/alleged offence determines which category they will fall into. The Act now clarifies that the categorisation of assessment and reassessments is determined by the age of the applicant at the time the offence or alleged offence was committed.

If the offending occurred over a period of time and the applicant was at any time an adult during that time, the person is taken to be an adult for the purpose of the assessment/reassessment.

Interstate offences

The Act now states that for the purpose of the equivalent interstate offences of murder, attempted murder, rape and attempted rape, the age of the victim is irrelevant and these offences are considered as category A offences for the purposes of assessments and reassessments. An interstate child abuse material offence is also a category A offence.

Carnal knowledge committed as a child

If, as an adult, a person has been charged with, convicted or found guilty of the offence of carnal knowledge, they must not engage in child-related work whilst their application is being assessed.

People who have committed the offence as a child are not restricted from working with children whilst their application is being assessed.

More Information

Website www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Email workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au

Customer Support Line 1300 652 879
8.30am – 5pm, Monday – Friday (except public holidays)

TTY 13 36 77

Speak & Listen 1300 555 727



If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Working with Children Customer Support Line.

Large print Email workingwithchildren@justice.vic.gov.au

This information is intended as a general guide only. It is not intended to be given as legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. It is recommended that you obtain legal advice relevant to your particular circumstances.

Term Dates & Public Holidays 2024

Term Dates for 2024

Period	Start	Finish	Length
Term 1	Monday, 29 January 2024 (School teachers Start)	Thursday, 28 March 2024	9 weeks
Term 2	Monday, 15 April 2024	Friday, 28 June 2024	11 weeks
Term 3	Monday, 15 July 2024	Friday, 20 September 2024	10 weeks
Term 4	Monday, 7 October 2024	Friday, 20 December 2024	11 weeks

Victoria Public Holidays 2024

Holiday	Date
New Year's Day	Monday 1 January 2024
Australia Day	Friday 26 January 2024
Labour Day	Monday, 11 March 2024
Good Friday	Friday, 29 March 2024
Easter Saturday	Saturday, 30 March 2024
Easter Sunday	Sunday, 31 March 2024
Easter Monday	Monday, 1 April 2024
ANZAC Day	Thursday, 25 April 2024
King's Birthday	Monday, 10 June 2024
Friday before AFL Grand Final	TBD
Melbourne Cup	Tuesday, 5 November 2024
Christmas Day	Wednesday, 25 December 2024
Boxing Day	Thursday, 26 December 2024

Immunisation and enrolling in early childhood services

Information for parents and carers
October 2018

No Jab, No Play – Changes to the Victorian law

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, before enrolling a child, early childhood education and care services have to first obtain evidence that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

An [Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register \(AIR\)](#) is the only form of documentation accepted for the purpose of enrolling in an early childhood education and care service.

After enrolment, parents need to continue to supply up to date Immunisation History Statements to their child's early childhood service.

About required documentation

Under 'No Jab, No Play' what documentation is required as evidence of up-to-date vaccination?

To have an [enrolment confirmed](#) for a child in long day care, kindergarten, family day care or occasional care, parents/carers have to provide the service with:

- a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR); AND
- the statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

The Immunisation History Statement from the AIR lists the vaccines the child has received and, if applicable, which vaccines are due in the future and when. Medical exemption may also be listed, where applicable.

An Immunisation History Statement from the AIR is the only type of immunisation record accepted by early childhood and care services for the purposes of confirming enrolment and must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at the service.

The Medicare logo and Australian Government crest must be present and identifiable to be considered a

valid Immunisation History Statement. For example, if the statement is page two of a letter from Medicare, both pages need to be presented to the service to confirm enrolment.

How can parents/carers get an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR?

You can print a copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement from your [myGov account](#) or the Express Plus Medicare app. If you have difficulty getting a copy via your myGov account or the app you can:

- call the AIR on phone 1800 853 809
- visit a Medicare or Centrelink office.

How can parents/carers who are not eligible for Medicare get an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR?

Families who are not eligible to hold a Medicare card can ask their immunisation provider to print an Immunisation History Statement or they can call the AIR to request an Immunisation History Statement be posted (allow up to two weeks for delivery by post).

A Translating and Interpreting Service is available by calling 131 450, Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:45pm.

Can parents/carers provide proof of immunisations from an immunisation provider (e.g. a GP)?

No. Other forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, are not acceptable for the purposes of enrolment in an early childhood service.

What is considered a 'medical exemption' under 'No Jab, No Play' and what documentation is required as evidence?

Some children may be exempt from the requirement to be fully vaccinated on medical grounds. Examples of valid medical reasons that a child could not be fully vaccinated include:



Health
and Human
Services

- an anaphylactic reaction to a previous dose of a particular vaccine, or
- an anaphylactic reaction to any vaccine component
- has a disease which lowers immunity (such as leukaemia, cancer, HIV/AIDS, SCID), or
- is having treatment which lowers immunity (such as chemotherapy).

Parents/carers who think their child may require a medical exemption to one or more vaccines should consult their GP.

If a child has a valid medical reason they cannot be vaccinated, a GP needs to complete and sign a [Medicare Immunisation Medical Exemption Form](#), and send it to the AIR.

The parent/carer then needs to obtain an updated [Immunisation History Statement from the AIR](#) that indicates the child is up-to-date with all the vaccines that they can have and listed the vaccines that they cannot have due to a medical contraindication. This statement needs to be provided by the parent/carer to the early childhood service to confirm enrolment.

If parents/carers have questions or concerns about immunisation or particular vaccines, they should seek answers from a qualified source, such as a GP or local council immunisation service. The [Better Health Channel](#) also provides quality-assured information online.

What do parents/carers whose child's vaccinations are not up-to-date need to do to obtain an Immunisation History Statement?

If a child's vaccinations are not up-to-date then parents/carers should consult their GP or local council immunisation service about bringing the child's vaccinations up to date.

The GP or local council immunisation service needs to give all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive, and inform the AIR. The parent/carer then needs to [request an updated Immunisation History Statement from the AIR](#).

The updated Immunisation History Statement showing that vaccines are 'up-to-date' needs to be provided by the parent/carer to the early childhood service to [confirm enrolment](#).

How can parents/carers obtain acceptable documentation if their child was vaccinated overseas?

Children who were vaccinated overseas must have their vaccine records assessed by a GP or local council and be offered catch-up vaccinations as required. The GP or local council will then report overseas vaccines to AIR by submitting the AIR Immunisation History form.

The AIR updates the child's records and the parents/carers can request an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR and provide the statement to the early childhood service to confirm enrolment.

Families who experience difficulty accessing vaccinations or the required documents can seek support and guidance from the early childhood service. They may be eligible to enrol under the [Grace Period provision](#).

About the grace period

What about vulnerable children who are behind on their vaccinations and find it difficult to access the required documentation or immunisation services?

There are some children in the community whose families face difficulties accessing vaccinations and/or the required documentation to prove immunisation status.

Under the legislation, some families are eligible to enrol and commence at the childcare/kindergarten service, under a 'grace period' provision, while they bring their children's vaccinations up-to-date and/or obtain the required documentation.

Early childhood education and care services, with help from the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education and Training, will support families of children who are not up-to-date with their vaccinations and provide them with information as to where they can access vaccinations.

Who is eligible for the grace period?

Children experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage are eligible to enrol in a service under a grace period, without having provided proof of up-to-date immunisation. The grace period provisions allow the family to continue to access early childhood education and care services while receiving information and assistance to get their child's immunisations up to date and to obtain the required Immunisation History

Statement from the AIR that needs to be provided to the service.

Families who meet any of the following criteria are eligible for the grace period:

- **Evacuated children**
 - Children evacuated following emergency (such as flood or fire)
- **Children in emergency care**
 - Children in emergency care (for example, emergency foster care) under the Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- **Children in the care of an adult who is not their parent**
 - Children in the care of an adult who is not the child's parent due to exceptional circumstances such as illness or incapacity
- **Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children**
 - Children identified by their parents as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
- **Other children experiencing vulnerability or disadvantage**
 - Children who hold or whose parents hold a health care card, pension concession card, Veterans Affairs Gold or White card
 - Children from a multiple birth of triplets or more
 - Children who are refugees or asylum seekers
- **Children known to child protection**
 - Children who are on or who have been on a Child Protection Order
 - Children in or who have been in foster care or out-of-home care
 - Children who have a report made about them under the Children Youth and Families Act 2005
 - Families that have received support through Family Services including ChildFIRST; Services Connect; a community-based child and family service; or an integrated family service.

How long is the grace period?

The grace period is for 16 weeks commencing from the date that the child first attends the service.

What needs to happen during the grace period?

Parents/carers

During the 16 week grace period parents/carers should endeavour to have their child vaccinated if required, and/or obtain the required Immunisation History Statement from the AIR and provide it to the service.

No Jab, No Play – Information for parents and carers

Early childhood services can provide parents/carers with support and information to do this.

Early Childhood Education and Care Services

During the 16 week grace period, early childhood education and care services are required to take reasonable steps to obtain the required Immunisation History Statement from the AIR.

When can an early childhood education and care service confirm an enrolment?

Having an application accepted or being registered on a waiting list for a place at an early childhood service is *not* a confirmed enrolment.

Confirmation of enrolment can be given by the service, no more than two months prior to the child first attending, only once the parent/carer has provided the service with:

- a current Immunisation History Statement from the AIR; AND
- the statement must show that the child is up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive; OR
- is eligible to enrol under the 16 week [grace period](#) while the service works with the family to obtain the necessary immunisations/documentation.

An [Immunisation History Statement from the AIR](#) is the only accepted document for proving a child's immunisation status, including that they are up to date with all vaccinations that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive, or have a [medical condition](#) that prevents them from being fully immunised for their age.

Evidence required to [qualify to enrol under the Grace Period provision](#) varies depending on the circumstances of the family. Families should discuss their individual circumstances with the service.

Immunisation after enrolment

Under Victorian law, parents/carers are required to continue to provide early childhood education and care services with evidence that their enrolled child is up to date with their immunisations.

Parents/carers will need to provide their child's service with a new Immunisation History Statement whenever their child receives (or was due to receive) immunisation/s after enrolment.

Who does this apply to?

This obligation applies to the parents/carers of children enrolled in long day care, kindergarten, occasional care and family day care.

Why is this required?

If there is a disease outbreak at the service, accurate and current evidence of immunisation is needed to identify children at risk (for example, children too young to be fully immunised against a disease) who may need to stay away from the service until it is safe for them to return.

The Victorian Government introduced this requirement to provide an important additional prompt to parents regarding immunisation as part of a continued effort to improve and maintain high childhood immunisation rates and protect the community from vaccine-preventable diseases.

What does the early childhood service do?

The service will regularly request that parents/carers ensure that immunisation evidence is up to date at the service throughout the time your child is enrolled. Services review the immunisation evidence you provide to make sure it meets the requirements of the law and keep it on file with the child's enrolment records.

What do parents/carers do?

If an enrolled child has received a vaccine while they are attending an early childhood education and care service parents/carers should obtain an updated Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) and provide it to the child's service.

If a parent/carer receives a request from the service to ensure that the service has the latest evidence of up to date immunisation, and the parent/carer knows that the service already has the most up to date Immunisation History Statement, they do not need to provide another copy.

About vaccination

Why are vaccinations so important?

Vaccination is one of the most effective ways of preventing disease worldwide. Modern vaccines provide high levels of protection against an increasing number of diseases which, in some cases, can be fatal. Worldwide, it is estimated that immunisation programs prevent approximately 2.5 million deaths each year.

The current immunisation rate in Victoria for children under five years of age is around 95 per cent. This coverage rate is necessary to halt the spread of highly infectious diseases such as measles.

Immunisation not only protects those people who have been vaccinated, it also protects those in our community who may be unable to receive vaccines themselves, by reducing the prevalence and spread of disease.

What immunisations are required for children at childcare and kindergarten?

[The immunisation schedule](#) for vaccines outlines what vaccines are available under the National Immunisation Program and when they should be received.

Children who are not eligible for Medicare are still eligible to receive vaccines on the National Immunisation Program for free.

Where can parents/carers go for immunisation services?

Local council immunisation services (free service), GPs and health clinics can provide immunisation services.

Are vaccines safe?

The scientific evidence supporting vaccination is overwhelming, and the benefits far outweigh the very rare risks.

All vaccines currently available in Australia must pass stringent safety testing before being approved for use by the [Therapeutic Goods Administration](#), Australia's regulatory authority for therapeutic goods. Safety testing is required by law and is usually done over many years during the vaccine's development.

Once vaccines are in use, their safety is continually monitored by the Therapeutic Goods Administration and other organisations.

All immunisation providers play an important role in reporting adverse events following immunisation which assists in safety surveillance after a vaccine is registered for use in Australia. In Victoria the agency that receives all reports is SAEFVIC (Surveillance of Adverse Events Following Vaccination in the Community) - more information at the [SAEFVIC website](#) or 1300 882 924, option one.

About the 'No Jab, No Play' law

What is the objective of the 'No Jab, No Play' law?

The purpose of the No Jab, No Play law is to help increase immunisation rates for young children in the community.

The legislation is designed to:

- provide a prompt regarding immunisation for parents/carers enrolling their child in early childhood education
- allow for children of families experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage to be able to access the lifelong benefits of early childhood education and care, while being supported to obtain vaccinations and/or required evidence of vaccination.

'Conscientious objection' to vaccines is not an exemption under the law.

Since the introduction of the legislation in 2016, immunisation coverage rates for young children have been steadily increasing in Victoria and are now at around 95 per cent.

What early childhood services does the 'No Jab, No Play' law impact?

The law applies to all early childhood education and care services¹ in Victoria providing:

- long day care
- kindergarten (including 3 and 4 year old kindergarten)
- occasional care
- family day care.

The law does not apply to:

- enrolment in primary or secondary school (however, please note an Immunisation History Statement from the AIR does need to be provided for enrolling in primary school, however there is currently no requirement for the statement to show the child is up to date with all immunisations)
- children attending an outside school hours care service (after school care, before school care, vacation care)
- enrolments of school children in long day care, family day care or occasional care

- casual occasional care services that offer care of no more than 2 hours per day and no more than 8 hours per week (for example, crèches at gyms and shopping centres) playgroups
- services primarily providing instruction on particular activities (for example, sport, dance or music)
- services primarily provided or shared by family members of the children (and a family member is readily available and retains responsibility for the child).

Shouldn't immunisation be a personal choice?

The legislation does not mandate vaccinations, nor does it require the administration of vaccines without consent. Parents/carers may continue to make a choice not to vaccinate their children.

Governments have a responsibility to make decisions that balance the best possible community health outcomes with individual choices. Preventing problems before they occur is vital to good health.

The purpose of 'No Jab, No Play' is to increase immunisation rates in the community, particularly amongst young children. This is a public health priority, given the serious risk posed by vaccine-preventable diseases and the proven safety and efficacy of vaccines.

Is 'homeopathic immunisation' accepted under 'No Jab, No Play'?

No. 'Homeopathic immunisation' is not a recognised form of immunisation. For more information view the [Homeopathy and Vaccination fact sheet](#) produced by the National Centre for Immunisation Research.

Resources for parents and carers

Access these FAQs online

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

Accessing an Immunisation History Statement

You can print a copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement from your [myGov account](#) or the Express Plus Medicare app. If you have difficulty getting a copy via your myGov account or the app you can:

¹ approved under the *Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010* and licensed under the *Children's Services Act 1996*

- call the AIR on phone 1800 653 809
- visit a Medicare or Centrelink office.

Families who are not eligible to hold a Medicare card can ask their immunisation provider to print an Immunisation History Statement or they can call the AIR to request an Immunisation History Statement be posted (allow up to two weeks for delivery by post).

A Translating and Interpreting Service is available by calling 131 450, Monday to Friday from 8:30am to 4:45pm.

Locate an immunisation provider

The Better Health Channel website has [a health service locator](#) that can assist Victorians to find their nearest immunisation provider.

More about vaccine safety

SAEFVIC (Surveillance of Adverse Events Following Vaccination in the Community) can help parents with concerns about vaccine safety – www.saeovic.org.au or phone 1300 882 924, option one. Telehealth is also available with this service.

[‘The science of immunisation / Questions and Answers’](#) addresses six questions including *‘Are vaccines safe?’* and *‘How are vaccines shown to be safe?’*

More information

More about immunisation

More information for parents and carers is available on the [Better Health Channel](#).

[View the immunisation schedule](#)

View the ‘No Jab, No Play’ legislation

View the legislation online [at Victorian Legislation and Parliamentary Documents](#). (Please note, due to frequent changes to this site, a direct link to the Bill cannot be provided. Go to the ‘Archive’ link and look under ‘2015’ for the [Public Health and Wellbeing Amendment \(No Jab, No Play\) Bill 2015](#))

About Commonwealth ‘No Jab, No PAY’ initiative

Under the Commonwealth Government No Jab No Pay law, in effect from 1 January 2016, families are no longer eligible for family assistance payments if their children (up to the age of 19) are not fully immunised or if they do not have an approved medical exemption. For information call the Families and Parent Line on 13 61 50, or [visit the website](#).

About similar legislation in other Australian states

Similar legislation currently exists in New South Wales and Queensland.

Information regarding requirements in Queensland:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/health/conditions/immunisation/childcare/index.html>

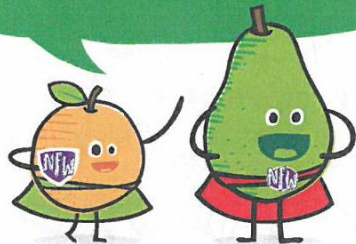
Information regarding requirements in New South Wales:

http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/pages/vaccination_enrolment.aspx

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HOW TO PACK A NUDE FOOD LUNCH



The Nude Food Warriors have created a step-by-step guide to make packing a Nude Food Lunch easy as 1, 2, 3!

STEP 1

Choose the main lunch item, it may be something from the list below or a Nude Food creation of your own

- Sandwich/ Roll
- Wrap/Pita
- Frittata/Quiche
- Pasta/Pasta Salad
- Salad
- Sushi/Rice Paper Rolls
- Noodles
- Stir Fry
- Egg Muffins

STEP 2

Select your fruit

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| Apple | Berries |
| Orange | Fruit Salad |
| Banana | Pear |
| Grapes | Mandarin |
| Watermelon | Kiwi Fruit |

STEP 3

Pick a nutritious Nude Food snack

- Yoghurt
- Vegetable Sticks and dip
- Cheese and crackers
- Popcorn (natural)
- Rice Crackers
- Vege chips (homemade)
- Pretzels

STEP 4

Dont Forget Hydration!

Fill your favourite reusable drink bottle with filtered or tap water! Remember to refill throughout the day to make sure you stay hydrated!



Stuck on what to pack your Nude Food Lunch in? Turn over for some great storage ideas!

smash **NUDE** FOOD DAY

Join the Nude Food **MOVEMENT**

Nutrition Australia

Eco-Schools

Keep Australia Beautiful

PICK&MIX SOMETHING FROM EACH GROUP 1-6!

FOR A HEALTHY LUNCHBOX

1 FRUIT

FRESH FRUIT

- Apple
- Banana
- Mandarin
- Orange quarters
- Passionfruit halves (with spoon)
- Watermelon, honeydew, rockmelon chunks
- Pineapple chunks
- Grapes
- Plums
- Nectarines, peaches, Apricots
- Strawberries
- Cherries
- Kiwifruit halves (with spoon)
- Pear

MIXED FRUIT

- Fruit salad
- Fruit kebabs

DRIED FRUIT

- Dried fruit, nut, popcorn mixes*

TINNED FRUIT/SNACK PACKS/CUPS

- In natural juice (not syrup)



2 VEGETABLES

FRESH CRUNCHY VEGIES

- Corn cobs
- Carrot sticks
- Capsicum sticks
- Green beans
- Cucumber sticks
- Celery sticks
- Snow peas
- Tomatoes (e.g. cherry and Roma tomatoes)
- Mushroom pieces

Can serve with either:

- Hummus
- Tomato salsa
- Tatziki
- Beetroot dip
- Natural yoghurt

SALADS

- Coleslaw and potato salad (reduced fat dressing)
- Mexican bean, tomato, lettuce and cheese salad
- Pesto pasta salad*

BAKED ITEMS

- Grilled or roasted vegetables
- Wholemeal vegetable muffins or scones
- Vegetable slice (with grated zucchini and carrot)
- Popcorn

SOUP (in small thermos)

- Pumpkin soup
- Potato and leek soup
- Chicken and corn soup

3 MILK, YOGHURT AND CHEESE

- Milk
- Calcium-enriched soy and other plant-based milks
- Yoghurt (frozen overnight)
- Custard

Tip:

- Freeze the night before to keep cool during the day

- Cheese cubes, sticks or slices
- Cottage or ricotta cheese
- Cream cheese
- Tatziki dip

Can serve with either:

- Fruit
- Wholegrain cereal, low in sugar
- Vegetable sticks
- Rice and corn cakes
- Wholegrain wheat crackers

4 MEAT OR MEAT ALTERNATIVE

- Tinned tuna or salmon in springwater
- Lean roast or grilled meats (e.g. beef, chicken, kangaroo)
- Falafel balls
- Tinned tuna or chicken patties
- Lentil patties
- Lean deli meats (e.g. ham, silver-side, chicken)
- Baked beans (canned)
- Tofu cubes
- Hummus dip
- Lean meat or chicken kebab sticks
- Peanut butter*

Can serve with:

- Wholegrain sandwich, roll, pita or wrap bread with salad
- Rice and corn cakes
- Wholegrain wheat crackers
- Side salad
- Vegetable fritтата
- Skinless chicken drumsticks
- Savoury muffins or scones (e.g. lean ham, cheese and shallots)
- Homemade pizzas with lean roast or deli meats and vegetables

Can serve with:

- Side salad
- Steamed or roasted vegetables

5 GRAIN AND CEREAL FOOD

MAINS

- Wraps
 - Sandwiches
 - Rolls
 - Toasted sandwiches
- Tip:** Use breads such as wholemeal, multigrain, rye, sourdough, pita, flat, corn, mountain, lavash, white fibre-enriched, soy and linseed, herb, naan, bagels, foccacias, fruit bread and English muffins.

- Pasta dishes
- Rice, quinoa or cous cous dishes
- Noodle dishes
- Sushi

SAVORY BAKED ITEMS

- Homemade pizzas
- Wholemeal savoury muffins or scones (e.g. ham, cheese and corn muffins)
- Vegetable based muffins
- Pasta or noodle bake

SWEET BAKED ITEMS

- Fruit loaf
- Wholemeal fruit based muffins

SNACKS

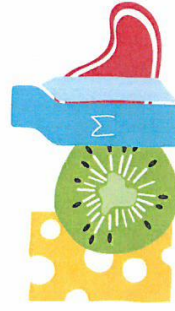
- High fibre, low sugar cereal (e.g. muesli)
- English muffins
- Crackers
- Crisps/spreads
- Rice cakes
- Corn thins
- Wholemeal scones
- Pikelets
- Crumpets
- Hot cross buns (no icing)

6 WATER

- Take a water bottle (for refilling throughout the day)
- Tip:**
- Freeze overnight to keep foods cool in lunchboxes

Sweet and savoury snack foods (e.g. muesli/fruit/nut bars, biscuits, crisps, cakes, muffins, slices) should be limited in lunchboxes. They can lead to excess energy intake if consumed in large amounts.

Sugar sweetened drinks and confectionery should not be provided in lunchboxes. They can lead to excess energy intake and tooth decay.



* Check your school's policy regarding the use of nuts and products containing nuts.

For more information about healthy eating and for many tasty recipes, visit the the Healthy Eating Advisory Service: www.heas.healthytogether.vic.gov.au.