



# **FAMILY INFORMATION HANDBOOK**

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[www.wheelershillchildcare.com.au](http://www.wheelershillchildcare.com.au)

## Useful Telephone Numbers

Contact	Number
Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre	(03) 9561 7789
Emergency	000
Poisons Information	13 11 26
Child Protection Crisis Line	13 12 78
Child Protection Unit	1300 360 391
Gas Leaks	132 771
Royal Children's Hospital	(03) 9345 5522
Royal Victorian Eye & Ear Hospital	(03) 9665 9666
Royal Women's Hospital	(03) 9344 2000
State Emergency Services	132 500
VECRA (Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority) - General Enquiries	1300 307 415
VECRA - Eastern Metropolitan Regional Office	(03) 5771 4471
Family Assistance Office / Centrelink	13 61 50
Maternal & Child Health Line	13 22 29
NURSE-ON-CALL	1300 60 60 24
Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS)	131 450
Kids Helpline	1800 55 1800
Lifeline	13 11 14

## **Partnership with Families**

At Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre, we recognise the value of working in partnership with families, and the positive effect this can have on children and families. A partnership involves sharing information and negotiating experiences for children.

Partnerships between educators and families require open communication about and for the child. The child's wellbeing and healthy development is the goal of this partnership.

Partnerships don't just happen they require ongoing work and commitment from both parties; they work best when there is open, respectful communication and a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.

Our educators help develop partnerships by providing opportunities for families to share information about their child and about the service. Families are also offered opportunities to share their ideas, concerns and goals for their child. In this way, families are made welcome to contribute their expertise about their child and participate in planning their child's education and care experiences.

Communication involves both talking and listening, for both the educator and the child's family.

### **Our Statement of Philosophy**

Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre embraces a holistic approach to early childhood learning, where children's rights and best interests are paramount.

At the core of our approach to learning and care is the belief that all children ought to feel empowered, secure, nurtured and loved. We believe all children deserve choices, autonomy, consistency and access to education.

We create an environment where the whole centre community feels like they belong and are respected; an environment that is exciting, accepting, stimulating, encouraging, and reflective of different cultures, beliefs and needs.

Central to our curriculum is a working partnership between educators, families and the community. We ensure individual values and ethics are supported and incorporated into the program.

Our teaching decisions and pedagogy are guided by these beliefs and the incorporation of the Early Years Learning Framework.

## Settling into Child Care

Settling children into childcare can be an emotional experience for both children and families. Whether they are attending care for the first time, moving to a new room, or commencing care in a different service, children often experience some difficulty settling, particularly when they find it hard to separate from their family or familiar care givers. Each child's reaction, and the length of time they take to settle, depends on the individual child, their age, and their past experiences.

### Some helpful hints that may help your child (and you!)

- Try to spend some time with your child as they settle in.
- Try to allow shorter days at first, gradually increasing as the child settles.
- Inform staff of what comforts your child and makes them happy.
- Advise staff of routines, activities or times of the day that your child finds difficult or unsettling and discuss how to manage these.
- Show your child that you feel secure leaving them, and that you trust the staff. Confidently say 'goodbye' and reassure them you will be back later. While it may be tempting to leave while they are happily engaged in play, it can be very distressing for a child to realise you have left without saying goodbye.

*Extract adapted from Putting Children First, the newsletter of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC).*

## Operating Hours

Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre is open from 7:00am to 6:30pm, Monday to Friday. The centre is open 52 weeks of the year but is closed on Public Holidays. Normal fees are payable for all Public Holidays.

## Fees

Fee Type	Amount
Daily	\$183.00
Full Time (5 days)	\$885.00

Upon enrolment at the centre, one week's full fees are payable by cash or credit card to secure your child's position. These fees are non-refundable once orientation has commenced. All further payments must be made via our direct debit system. Fees are due and payable one week in advance and may be paid weekly or fortnightly. Should your childcare fees fall into arrears in excess of two weeks, your child's place at the centre may be cancelled.

All payments are made at the full fee rate prior to us receiving notification of any benefits or rebates you may be entitled to. Once notification has been received, we will adjust your fees accordingly.

## Holiday Rate

All families are entitled to two weeks' Holiday Rate per financial year. The number of days your child attends affects how many days your child is entitled to (e.g. 2 days a week = 4 days per financial year). Holiday Rate is charged at 50% of your normal weekly fee. An application for Holiday Rate must be completed a minimum of two weeks in advance for the half rate to apply.

## Absences and Public Holidays

Full fees continue to be payable for all absence days and public holidays. Swap days in lieu are unavailable. All children are entitled to a set number of allowable absence days per financial year before this affects Child Care Subsidy (CCS) eligibility; current limits are set by Services Australia. Should you exceed these absences, supporting documentation (such as a medical certificate) will be required to ensure your CCS entitlements continue to be paid for these days.

### **Late Collection Fees**

Our centre closes promptly at 6:30pm. A late fee will be charged should your child not be collected from the centre by this time, charged per minute per child with a minimum late fee applying. [Our minimum late fee is \$15.00]

### **Notice Periods**

Two weeks' notice is required in writing for any cancellation of booked days, or when withdrawing your child's place from the centre. Upon termination notice, your remaining fees will be calculated and debited immediately. Children who do not attend the centre following termination notice will be charged full fees. No CCS is paid by Services Australia for absences during the termination period.

## Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to services. Three things determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy:

- A family's annual adjusted taxable income determines the percentage of subsidy they are eligible for.
- An activity test determines how many hours of subsidised care families can access per fortnight.
- The type of childcare service determines the hourly rate cap.

### Using myGov

- Step 1: Sign in to your myGov account. If you don't have one, you will need to create one.
- Step 2: Link myGov to Centrelink under Services.
- Step 3: Select Centrelink and complete the Child Care Subsidy Assessment.

To check your eligibility and entitlements, visit the Services Australia website or call 13 61 50.

## **Dr. Robert Chan**

Dr. Robert Chan will visit the centre every fortnight on a Wednesday to see children and staff as required.

This service is bulk billed and provides piece of mind if you are concerned, on any level, with your child's health. Your Medicare number that is detailed in your child's enrolment form is used for the claim. A staff member will accompany your child at the consultation in the centre office.



Dr. Chan will provide you with a letter detailing his findings and write a prescription when required. If necessary, Dr. Chan will phone to discuss any concerns further. Immunisations are also available. Parents are required to provide the child's health record book for completion. A form also needs to be completed, detailing which immunisation is required.

The doctor's form is situated on the shelf, outside the office window. Please complete with as much detail as possible & if necessary, consult with a staff member so we can pass information on to Dr. Chan. If your child does not attend on the day Dr. Chan is here, you are welcome to complete the form and leave a phone number for us to contact you with when Dr. Chan arrives. Please feel free to take advantage of this service as Dr. Chan comes highly recommended and can provide great peace of mind for working families.

## **Our Menus and Meal Times**

All children in childcare require regular healthy meals, snacks and fluids. At Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre, we believe it is vital that children in our care eat nutritious meals and are educated about healthy eating.

Our menus aim to meet a substantial portion of each child's recommended daily dietary intake of nutrients. A variety of foods are provided, including a range of textures and tastes.

We provide breakfast (between 7:00am and 8:00am), morning tea, a cooked lunch, afternoon tea, and a late snack (after 5:45pm).

Our menus are on display outside the kitchen, along with feedback forms. Please take the time to read these and provide any comments or suggestions. Copies of our menu can be provided upon request.

We believe the mealtime atmosphere is important to the development of healthy eating practices. Children should be relaxed and happy while eating. Educators sit with children during meals, and are encouraged to eat a portion of the meal to promote discussion and role-modelling of healthy eating, table manners, and food preferences.

### **Dietary Requirements**

Please ensure you document any dietary requirements your child may have on your enrolment form. If your child has a diagnosed allergy, an Action Plan signed by your child's doctor is required, and a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan will be developed for your child. If you have dietary preferences for your child — such as foods you do not wish them to eat for cultural, religious or personal reasons — please notify us directly so we can accommodate these.

Although the centre prepares meals that do not include known allergens as an ingredient, we cannot guarantee that there are no traces of the allergen in food served, as meals are prepared in a kitchen where menu items containing known allergens are also prepared.

### **Dental Care**

Health experts recommend children brush their teeth twice per day: in the morning and following their final meal of the day. At Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre, we do not brush children's teeth after meals; however, we regularly educate children in our care about dental hygiene and care. Experiences are programmed to promote dental care discussions, and healthy, nutritious meals and snacks are provided and discussed.

Smile for Kids visits our centre twice a year, providing subsidised dental care for children, free for eligible children. Further details and consent forms are provided to families ahead of each visit.

### **Drinks**

Water and milk are provided at Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre. Juice or flavoured drinks are not available and should not be brought from home. Water is the best drink for children over one year; it helps transport nutrients, maintains blood volume, regulates temperature and removes waste products.

## **Dropping Off and Picking Up**

Children are to be brought into the building and delivered to a staff member in the child's room. Children are to be signed in each morning on the centre's sign-in system. Expected pick-up time and the name of the person picking up your child must also be recorded.

The person named to pick up your child must be registered on your enrolment form. Unless a person is registered formally in writing by the child's parent/guardian, the child will not be released to them.

Children **MUST** be signed OUT of the centre at the end of the day.

## **Custody and Access**

Management must be provided with a copy of any court orders relating to your child. Please notify us in writing of any changes to your custodial arrangements.

## **Safety and Door Code**

You will be provided with a code for the keypad at the front door when your child commences care. To ensure the safety of all children:

- Please do not give the door code to family and friends; ask them to ring the doorbell so a staff member can let them in.
- Please do not use your door code in front of people you don't know.
- Please do not stand in the doorway with the door open. Open and close the door only to let yourself and your own children in or out.

## Our Rooms

Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre is licensed to provide education and care for children across the following rooms:

Room	Places in each room	Age Range
Babies Room	12	6 weeks to 1 year
Toddler 1 Room	16	1 year to 2 years
Toddler 2 Room	20	2 years to 3 years
Kindergarten 3 Room	22	3 years to 4 years
Kindergarten 4 Room	33	4 years to 5 years

Our Babies and Toddler rooms are led by qualified Early Childhood Educators and supported by Certificate III or Diploma trained Assistants. Our Kindergarten 3 and 4 rooms are led by qualified Early Childhood Teachers who provide quality educational, play-based programs, supported by Diploma qualified Early Childhood Educators and Certificate III trained Assistants.

All educators at Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre hold current Working with Children Checks, First Aid qualifications, and are trained in the Management of Anaphylaxis.

## What to Bring

Each child is required to bring their own bag each day. This encourages the children's independence and ability to recognise their personal belongings. Please ensure all items brought into the centre are clearly labelled, as staff cannot take responsibility for unlabelled items.

### Babies

- At least two changes of clothes, a hat, coat (depending on season), labelled dummies, bottles (with formula already made) with caps, and any other necessary comfort toys or nappy creams.

### Toddlers

- At least two changes of spare clothes, a hat, coat (depending on weather), dummies, bottles or other comfort items if necessary. Children who are toilet training need several changes, including underwear, socks and shoes. Wet or soiled clothing will be rinsed and placed in a plastic bag in the child's bag to be taken home.

### 3-5 Year Olds

- At least one change of clothes, a hat, coat (depending on weather), and any necessary comfort items.

The centre will provide sunscreen and smocks. We strongly suggest avoiding expensive or special clothes; messy play experiences are incorporated into the program daily, and our educators cannot always prevent children from getting dirty.

### Items and Toys from Home

Parents and guardians are advised to leave their child's toys at home; however, comfort items are more than welcome. The centre has beautiful, educational experiences and equipment for your child to engage with. The centre is not liable for any lost or broken personal items brought into the centre.

## Parent Information and Involvement

Parent information is provided in the following ways:

- Newsletters
- Seesaw app
- General notices, surveys and feedback forms on display
- Children's individual portfolios
- Parent information sessions
- Daily discussions with staff
- Room communication books
- Daily communication books in the Babies room

Parent involvement in the centre is welcomed and encouraged. We appreciate any time or contribution you may be able to give. If you have a special talent or skill you would like to share with us, just let us know — or feel free to drop in for some afternoon tea and a play. Special friends and grandparents are always welcome!

### CODE OF CONDUCT FOR FAMILIES

- The organisation provides an inviting, safe, open and welcoming environment for all that attend our services. Therefore, all families are required to abide by the Code of Conduct for Families.
- A breach of the Code of Conduct for Families may result in a child's enrolment being terminated.
- Families must ensure all of their authorised nominees, emergency contacts and persons chosen to drop off and pick up their children are aware of this code of conduct.
- Serious or repeated breaches of the Code of Conduct for Families may result in a child's enrolment being terminated. Except where there is an immediate risk to the safety of children or staff, families will be given written notice and an opportunity to respond before any

termination takes effect. Any such decision will treat the safety, rights and best interests of the child as the paramount consideration.

- Families are expected to model appropriate behaviour and language whilst at the service or when engaging with the organisation. Swearing, threats, or offensive, racist and/or inappropriate conversations are prohibited.
  
- All families agree to:
  - Act courteously and respectfully at all times.
  - Refrain from impolite, abusive, racist or offensive behaviour and language towards, or around, staff, children or other families.
  - Respect the service's environment.
  - Deliver and collect children during the scheduled operational hours.
  - Practice safe driving on the road outside the service and in the carpark, including the use of entry and exit points in their correct manner.
  - Ensure no child is left unattended in a vehicle on the service premises.
  - Ensure any child being dropped off or collected from the service is placed into a suitable car seat or booster seat appropriate for their age, weight and height.
  - Respect cultural differences of staff and other families.
  - Not be adversely affected by alcohol or other drugs.
  - Not smoke tobacco, vapes or other substances on, or near, the service and its carpark.
  - Maintain a professional relationship with staff.
  - Refrain from posting abusive, defamatory, harassing or privacy-breaching content about the service, its staff, children or families on the internet or social networking sites, including community noticeboards and personal accounts, pages or groups. This does not limit a family's right to raise a complaint with the service or directly with VECRA at any time. Abide by all policies and procedures, the service philosophy, and all information detailed in the family handbook.
  - Understand that staff may need to discuss sensitive topics such as behavioural difficulties or developmental issues on occasion and that the service only has the best interests of the child and family in mind during these discussions.
  - Follow the organisation's grievances procedure when raising concerns or issues.

- Respect and interact with all staff regardless of gender, sex, identity, race, impairment, age, culture, qualifications, knowledge, religious beliefs, religious practices, marital status, abilities, background, appearance, behaviour, parental status, health status, relationship status, parental preferences, political beliefs, sexuality, orientation, family responsibilities, experience, personal or professional barriers, and/or any other determinant.
- Accept and respect the decisions made by the approved provider, nominated supervisor, responsible persons or staff within the organisation.
- Maintain complete confidentiality regarding any information or events that occur within the service and ensure these topics are not discussed inside or outside of the service.
- Refrain from bringing any ingredients, foods, meals, or products containing nuts or nut oils into the service.
- Be responsible for any child brought into the service that is not enrolled. This includes supervising them and ensuring they do not damage any property. If non-enrolled children are disrupting the program, the family may be asked to remove them.
- Ensure that photos, videos and images of children at the service are not taken, recorded, saved, removed from the service, or used for any purpose without written permission from the guardians of those depicted.
- All families agree that they will not engage in the following abusive acts:
  - Using any form of corporal punishment or physical discipline. This includes spanking, slapping, pinching, hitting, tapping, shaking, poking, smacking or any other physical force as retaliation or correction.
    - Touching the groin, genital area, buttocks, breasts or any other part of another person's body that may cause distress or embarrassment.
    - Initiating, permitting or requesting contact with others including kissing, massage, hand holding, tickling or tickling games, and rough, physical games.
    - Developing a 'special' relationship with a specific child or young person for their own needs.
    - Emotionally abusing another person including name calling, humiliation, ostracism, shaming, degrading, intimidation, oppression, belittling, making derogatory comments, or using threatening, humiliating or frightening language.
    - Inappropriately physically restraining a person (including, but not limited to):
      - force applied to the head or neck

- grabbing a person by, or pulling them around by, their arms.
  - restrictions to breathing.
  - punching or kicking.
  - holding by the hair or ear.
  - confining them in a locked room or limited space.
- Being alone with a person unnecessarily, particularly a child or younger person.
  - Engaging in any activity with a person that is likely to physically or emotionally harm them.
  - Initiating unnecessary physical contact with a person, or do things of a personal nature for them that they can do for themselves, e.g. toileting.
  - Punishment of any form with regards to toileting habits, or lack thereof.
  - Showing favouritism through the provision of gifts or inappropriate attention.
  - Photographing or recording a child or young person without the consent of the child and their family.
  - Entering the service while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
  - Engaging in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children.
  - Using inappropriate language in the presence of children.
  - Unlawfully discriminating against any person on the basis of gender, sex, identity, race, impairment, age, culture, qualifications, knowledge, religious beliefs, religious practices, marital status, abilities, background, appearance, behaviour, parental status, health status, relationship status, parental preferences, political beliefs, sexuality, orientation, family responsibilities, experience, personal or professional barriers, and/or any other determinant.

## Children's Illness

Wheeler's Hill Child Care Centre's Illness policy requests that if your child is unwell, you keep them at home. We do not have the facilities or staffing levels required to care for unwell children and must also consider the health of other children and staff at the centre.

Please refer to the exclusion period table displayed at the centre. Our underlying rule is that if your child is not well enough to engage in play and routine as normal, they are too unwell to be at childcare, and you will be contacted to collect them. Please keep your child at home until they are completely well.

Part of our enrolment form requires you to authorise the person in charge of the centre to arrange medical treatment for your child should this be required.

### Immunisation

Please ensure you bring your child's Immunisation History Statement from myGov to the centre on their first day. Staff must sight this information. Please ensure you regularly update us on your child's immunisation status; the centre will remind you to do this periodically.

### Medication, Illness and Accident Forms

Each room maintains Medication, Illness and Accident/Injury/Trauma forms where relevant information is recorded when required.

**Medication:** This must be completed each day by the parent/guardian on arrival when medication is required, and handed directly to the staff member caring for your child. The medication record must also be signed on departure to acknowledge administration and timing. Prescription medication will only be given to the child for whom it is prescribed, according to the instructions given; out-of-date medication will not be administered. Over-the-counter medications must be clearly labelled with dosage and expiry date visible, and kept in their original container. Naturopathic, homeopathic or herbal medications require an accompanying letter from a parent and must be clearly labelled.

#### **Please do not leave medication in your child's bag.**

**Illness:** If your child becomes unwell during the day, you will be notified immediately and appropriate action will be taken. The illness will be recorded on an Illness form, which must be signed by a parent or guardian upon collection.

**Accident/Injury/Trauma:** Should your child have an accident or incident while at the centre, staff will provide any necessary first aid and notify you immediately if required. The incident will be documented, and you will be required to sign this record upon collecting your child.

## **Medical Condition Management**

For children enrolled with a diagnosed medical condition (such as anaphylaxis, asthma, or a specific allergy), an individual Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan will be developed in partnership with families and, where required, the child's medical practitioner. The Risk Minimisation Plan identifies the practical strategies our centre puts in place to reduce the risk of an allergic reaction, asthma episode, or other medical event occurring while your child is in our care, including strategies relating to food handling, supervision, excursions, and the physical environment. The Communication Plan ensures all relevant staff, including casual and relief staff, are aware of your child's medical condition, its signs and symptoms, and the steps to take in the event of a reaction or episode; this plan is displayed in the child's room and reviewed regularly.

Families are required to provide an up-to-date Action Plan, signed by their child's doctor, which forms the basis of these documents. Please notify staff immediately of any changes to your child's medical condition, medication, or treatment plan so these documents can be updated accordingly.

## **Policies and Procedures**

While this handbook is designed to give you insight into our centre and provide our most frequently asked-about information, it is not our policies and procedures.

Our policies and procedures formally document how Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre operates. These guide our everyday practices and ensure we consistently deliver the highest quality education and care, and are regularly reviewed. Families, staff and management are strongly encouraged to provide feedback and input.

Families and staff are asked to read and become familiar with our policies and procedures, and will be informed of any modifications made to them.

Our policies and procedures can be accessed via the QR code displayed in our foyer, and are also available on our website. These can be translated if required — should you require an interpreter, please let our staff know.

It is essential that you read and become familiar with our policies and procedures prior to signing your child's enrolment form and commencing care at Wheelers Hill Child Care Centre. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.



## Thank You

Thank you for your enquiry about our centre. We trust this handbook answers many of your questions and provides relevant information about Wheeler's Hill Child Care Centre.

Please do not hesitate to get in contact with us again should you require further information or would like to enrol your child. You are encouraged to make an appointment with the Centre Director should you wish to visit and discuss your needs further.

Should you require an interpreter, please let us know and this can be arranged.

Again, thank you for your enquiry — we hope to see you soon.

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