



## **SA Montessori Pre-Schools**

### Parent Handbook

# Welcome

Thank you for enrolling your child at *Cedars Montessori Pre-school*. We are so pleased to welcome you and your family to our Montessori community. Your child's early years are immensely important and we feel honoured by your choice to trust us to nurture and support these precious years. We value and respect your role in your child's life and we always welcome your input and ideas. We will also endeavour to provide you with support, information and opportunities for participation. We look forward to partnering with you throughout your child's journey of growth, discovery and development.



The following Parent Handbook is designed to help you approach your child's Montessori journey feeling informed and empowered. The Handbook covers areas including our philosophy and programs as well as practical information about our policies and expectations. We encourage you to read this Handbook prior to your child's first day but it is also important that you retain this book so that you can refer to it throughout your child's journey at Cedars Montessori Pre-school.

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## **WELCOME**

The Director and staff of Cedars Montessori Pre-school warmly welcome you and your family to our centre. We trust that during your time with us, both you and your child will feel happy and secure. We also extend an invitation to you to take an active part in the centre's activities.

Parents are invited to provide suggestions and feedback on our service and policies at any time.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Our *Statement of Principles* booklet serves as our centre philosophy as it sets out our values and beliefs in relation to the desired outcomes for children and families in our care. It guides the practices in the centre and is reflected in the program. We encourage parents/guardians to familiarise themselves with the *Statement of Principles*, which outlines how we nurture the individual development of each child within a loving and safe environment. A brief summary of our core values are outlined below:

### ***We believe that each child;***

- Is special and unique
- Deserves respect and love
- Should experience a happy childhood

### ***As we share time with the children our aim is;***

- To develop their curiosity
- To encourage their love of learning
- To help them develop independence and self-discipline
- To allow them to feel valued
- To share in their joy of self-achievement
- To offer comfort and support in an honest and sensitive way
- To provide the best foundation of learning to prepare for future schooling
- To surround them with a secure and happy environment.

### ***Our Goals are:***

- To be a centre of excellence in the provision of high quality care and education for children
- To provide a safe, secure, nurturing environment
- To develop children's understandings, cultural and environmental awareness
- To enhance children's physical, social, emotional, cognitive and language development
- To provide each child with equal opportunities regardless of their race, culture, background, ability or gender
- To provide spacious, aesthetically pleasant environments that allow children the opportunity to explore freely with materials and equipment and to interact with others
- To work in partnership with families to achieve the best outcomes for the children
- To employ professional staff who are experienced, caring, committed, alert and responsive to children's needs and safety
- To encourage staff to continue to pursue excellence through professional development

## HOURS

Cedars Montessori Pre-school is open from 8:00am to 4:00pm Monday to Friday.

Parents/guardians are advised that these opening hours mean families must only enter the premises *after* 8.00am and must vacate the premises *before* 4.00pm.

Fees are charged on a daily basis, with fees for a *full day* applying regardless of a child's exact arrival and departure time.

The Pre-school operates for 48 consecutive weeks of the year. The centre is closed for 4 weeks during the Christmas and New Year break (families will be advised of exact term dates and closure periods throughout the year). Fees are **not** payable for this extended holiday closure.

The Pre-school will be closed on all public holidays. Regular fees **remain payable** for all public holidays that occur during the 48 weeks of operation.

## SESSIONS

Pre-school children must attend a minimum of two days each week.

*Exemptions may be requested in instances where a child has particular needs that may prevent the child from benefiting from multiple day attendance. Exemptions are not guaranteed and are entirely at the discretion of the Director.*

## LICENSING

The centre is licensed by the *Education and Early Childhood Services Registration Board of South Australia* for a maximum of 24 children per day.

## ABSENTEEISM

It would be appreciated if parents/guardians would inform the centre by 8.30am if their child will be absent. Fees will still be due and payable for all public holidays, absences for sickness and for any other day/s that children are normally enrolled but do not attend.

## LATE COLLECTION

Children must be collected prior to our closing time (4.00pm) so that staff can leave at 4.00pm.

Where a child remains after closing time (4.00pm) a late fee will apply to cover the cost of overtime wages payable to the staff members who remain behind. This charge is \$30.00 for the first 15 minutes (or part thereof) and then \$5.00 for every additional 5 minutes increment (or part thereof).

Parents / guardians are requested to contact the centre if they are delayed to alleviate unnecessary concern.

## HOLIDAYS

The centre is closed for four weeks over December/January period (exact dates to be advised).

Parents/guardians are kindly asked to notify the centre two weeks in advance of any other holiday periods for which their child will be absent.

## CHILD CARE SUBSIDY (CCS)

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) provides assistance to help families with the cost of child care. The CCS replaces the Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate.

### ***How does it work?***

If you are eligible to receive the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), your entitlements will be paid **directly to the service** your child is attending. The service will then deduct CCS from your child's regular fees, leaving you with only a gap to pay for your child's enrolment.

Some basic requirements must be satisfied for an individual to be eligible to receive Child Care Subsidy for a child. These include:

- the age of the child (must be 13 or under and not attending secondary school)
- the child must meet immunisation requirements
- the individual, or their partner, must meet the residency requirements.

### ***How much will I receive?***

Three things will determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy:

1. A family's annual adjusted **taxable income** will determine the percentage of subsidy they are eligible for
2. An **activity test** will determine how many hours of subsidised care families can access, up to a maximum of 100 per fortnight, and
3. The **type of child care service** will determine the hourly rate cap.

The government has an online estimator to assist you with determining your expected entitlements. This is available on the Centrelink website (click on 'Payment and Service Finder'):

### ***How to Apply for Child Care Subsidy***

In order to apply for Child Care Subsidy, you will need to:

1. Create or sign in to your MyGov account at [www.my.gov.au](http://www.my.gov.au)
2. Link your MyGov account to Centrelink
3. Complete a Child Care Subsidy Assessment. You will need to supply details about your situation and finances, and may need to provide supporting evidence.

For further information about applying for the Child Care Subsidy, please refer to the following:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/online-help/centrelink/claim-child-care-subsidy>

FAQ: <https://www.education.gov.au/new-child-care-package-frequently-asked-questions>

## PRIORITY OF ACCESS

When the centre has a waiting list we are required to consider priority of access as outlined by the Commonwealth Government guidelines:

- **Priority 1** - a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- **Priority 2** - a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test
- **Priority 3** - any other child.

For a more detailed breakdown of the priority guidelines please visit:

<https://www.education.gov.au/priority-allocating-places> .

The centre may require evidence to establish the priority category.

## FEES and BONDS

Attendance patterns are booked upon enrolment by parents/guardians and subject to availability of places. Upon enrolment (or when increasing days of attendance) a **BOND** is required to the equivalent amount due for *two full weeks of fees*.

The Bond is held by the centre and may be used to cover any unresolved or unpaid fees during a child's attendance. If the bond is depleted entirely by fee payments the enrolment will be forfeited. If the child's enrolment *continues* after the bond has been depleted (as fee payment has resumed by that point) an **additional bond** will be collected from the family to secure the ongoing position.

The Bond (less any outstanding payments) will be refunded after a child's last day *only if four full weeks' notice has been given to the centre in advance in writing*.

Fees are due at the end of each week of attendance. Fees apply for 48 weeks of the year including public holidays, holiday periods and sick days. Cedars Montessori uses a direct debit payment system called 'Debitsuccess' to collect fees. This program coordinates payment details with the reporting requirements of the Commonwealth Child Care Subsidy. It is a condition of enrolment that families agree to participate in the direct debit payment system. This involves a weekly automatic withdrawal of fees from your nominated credit/debit card or bank account.

Direct debit is one of the safest ways to pay your bills; in fact, 85% of identity theft cases actually occur with *offline* transactions such as lost or stolen cheques, paper bills, or account statements (*Javelin Strategy and Research*). This approach also offers the convenience of ensuring that your Account is paid on time, without the hassle of having to manually process the payment yourself.

**Cedars Montessori** has partnered with **Debitsuccess** to provide you with this service. Debitsuccess is a fully compliant Direct Debit service. Debitsuccess is an Authorised Representative (AR 407894) of Transaction Services Holdings Ltd (AFSL 338256) within the Australian Financial Services Licensing Regime. It is compliant with Level 1 PCI DSS (Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard) and is independently certified and externally audited. "Debitsuccess" will appear on the statement of those parents who choose the direct payment option of paying through a credit card. "Cedars Montessori Pre-school" will appear on the statements of those paying from their bank accounts.

**NB: Families that nominate a credit card (visa/mastercard) for account payment please be aware that an EXTRA SURCHARGE of 1.87% will be charged on each transaction. We encourage all families to nominate Direct Debit from a Bank, Building Society or Credit union Account.**

Payments will be collected weekly in arrears and will incorporate any Child Care Subsidy entitlements.

### **Fees & Bonds in the event of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Dispute Resolution**

If a 'Dispute Resolution' is activated by a family to challenge charges to their account this causes Centrelink to immediately suspend Child Care Subsidy (CCS) payments to the centre. Until the dispute is resolved the centre reserves the right to **charge the full amount of the fees** to the account nominated on your Debitsuccess form in order to maintain your child's enrolment. Where sufficient funds are unavailable, or where parents otherwise revoke access to that account, **fees owing will be taken from the bond**. If the bond is depleted entirely by fee payments the enrolment will be forfeited effective immediately. If the child's enrolment *continues* after the bond has been depleted (as fee payment has resumed by that point) an **additional bond** will be collected from the family to secure the ongoing position.

During the dispute resolution period the centre will work with the family and Centrelink to identify and rectify any confusion or issues. Following that process we will work within the individual context to reconcile the account fairly for all parties.

## **CHANGES TO YOUR CHILD'S REGULAR ATTENDANCE**

We are pleased that our centre has a thriving and loyal community, which results in our sessions tending to be 'full' most of the year. This means that, most of the time, *we are operating at our legally mandated maximum capacity.*

Occasionally we are approached by families to accommodate changes to their child's current placement. Changes are not easily made once the centre is at capacity and therefore families are asked to understand that requests for change cannot always be accommodated. Every early childhood service operates under strict licensing requirements, with the number of licensed positions in a centre depending on a range of factors that are externally enforced and regulated. We are legally obliged to ensure that no more than the maximum licensed number of children are enrolled or attending on any given day. Therefore, despite our desire to meet the needs of families, we cannot add children to a different day if our sessions are already full.

If you need to change your child's attendance pattern, please let us know in writing, giving as much notice as you can, and you will be placed on our *Internal Waiting List* until such time as we can accommodate your request.

### ***Internal Waiting List***

If our centre is operating at maximum capacity we cannot grant a change to one child's enrolment until another family vacates a position or requests a corresponding swap. If you do wish to change your child's current attendance, you can let us know in writing and we will add your request to our *Internal Waiting List*. We do prioritise the requests of our current families before we consider children from the Waiting List. Please note that **all changes to enrolment are subject to availability.**

### ***Cancellation of days***

A minimum of **four weeks'** notice is required prior to either permanently withdraw a child from a *particular day* of enrolment, or to *completely* cancel their enrolment altogether. Failure to supply four weeks' notice of withdrawal from a day or cancellation of enrolment will incur regular fees during that four-week period. If your child is completely departing the centre, please note that if he/she does not attend his/her **last day** of enrolment (as identified by your notice of withdrawal), Centrelink will not provide subsidy entitlements for that last day, or any absences immediately surrounding that day, and parents will be charged the full fee.

### ***Extended periods of absence***

We realise that some children may experience extended periods of absence for a variety of reasons, such as family holidays, health concerns and so on. We do kindly ask that you inform the centre of any anticipated periods of absence so that your child's Focus Teachers can plan around this accordingly to support your child's learning experiences and their transition back into the classroom.

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer a reduction in fees during extended periods of absence. **This is primarily because your ongoing fee payments secure your position in the long-term.** Fees also remain payable as the overall costs associated with operating our high-quality service do not decrease when a single child is absent. We cannot, for instance, allocate our staffing roster according to the varying levels of attendance on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis, and must therefore cover the wage costs associated with having our highly qualified team of educators present each day of the year.

Families wishing to avoid incurring fees during an extended period of absence have the option of formally giving notice that they are *vacating their enrolment*, with a request to re-enrol upon their return date. Please note, however, that any children on the Internal/External Waiting Lists will be offered enrolment to that vacated position and so *we cannot guarantee that the original placement will be available for re-enrolment at the nominated date.* We will certainly prioritise the re-enrolment of any returning children, but we are still limited by our legal requirements, and so parents must accept the risk that vacating a position in order to avoid fees may also result in a loss of that placement.

### **Casual placements**

Families wishing to request casual placements (occasional or irregular attendance in addition to their regular enrolment) are advised that this is a *highly uncommon* occurrence in our centre due to the fact that our sessions are ordinarily full. We are not legally allowed to place an additional child into a session that is enrolled to its maximum capacity. Casual placements are therefore only available during periods where we have ***predictable, ongoing vacancies*** in a session. Parents are welcome to make contact via email if they wish to enquire about casual attendance for a particular date, but we do ask for your *understanding and respect* if we are unable to fulfil your request due to the restrictions placed on us.

### **Emergency support**

In exceptional circumstances, and only if our licensing capacity and regulatory requirements allow, we may be able to assist families in a one-off situation where the family needs *emergency support* which requires an irregular day of care. This is a highly uncommon occurrence in our centre due to the fact that our sessions are ordinarily full. However, we reserve the right to use our judgement and discretion to assist families who are experiencing emergency situations. We will always endeavour to support the needs of families who are coping with crisis. Our top priority is the welfare and well-being of the children in our care, and this will be our primary consideration in determining how to provide aid in emergency situations.

## **SIGNING IN AND OUT**

Children must be **signed in upon arrival and signed out when departing** at the end of the day. This forms the legal basis of when our 'duty of care' to a child begins and ends.

**Our centre uses QikKids Kiosk to record a child's arrival and departure.**

Parents/guardians/authorized persons (as indicated on the Enrolment Form supplied by the parent/guardian) should sign their child in and out each day by accessing QikKids Kiosk through an iPad prominently displayed on a stand. Parents / guardians / authorized persons can access QikKids Kiosk by entering their phone number and following the prompts. The QikKids Kiosk system records the time of arrival and departure, and delivers requests to acknowledge absences or attendance data if this has been previously neglected.

**Parents/guardians must never drop off or collect a child without informing a staff member.**

When arriving please ensure that you accompany your child to a position where the teachers are present and ensure that you have notified a staff member when you are leaving so that they are aware that you are no longer present to supervise your child.

When departing please ensure that you follow the collection procedures advised by the teachers and do not ever remove your child from the classroom/premises without actively alerting a staff member. *Please note that whenever parents/guardians are on the premises they accept full responsibility for their child's safety and supervision.*

## **RELEASING AND COLLECTING CHILDREN**

Children will only be released to the enrolling parent or those authorised persons nominated on the enrolment form. If those who are nominated are not known to staff, identification may be requested. Unknown or unauthorised persons seeking to collect a child will be refused. Should parents call during the day to advise staff of collection by a person not already authorised, that person's name and contact details should be given so that staff can verify this upon collection of the child.

Please note that any person collecting your child should carry photo identification.

Late fees (after 4pm) may be charged to cover staff overtime if applicable, at the rate of \$30.00 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof and \$5.00 for every additional 5 minutes increment (or part thereof).

## **CUSTODY AND ACCESS**

On enrolment, parents/guardians must provide information regarding any guardianship, custody and access details. Any change to these details during the child's time at the centre must be provided. Requests for information about a child from a non-custodial parent will first be discussed with the custodial parent. Where a court prohibition order stands, and the centre has been informed of this, contact will be refused.

## **CHANGE OF DETAILS**

It is essential that the centre is notified when any of the following details change:

- Change of address
- Change of phone numbers – work, home and/or mobile
- Change of name
- Changes to custody/access aspects
- Changes to emergency and authorised persons

Update slips are available from the pre-school. Please complete and place these in the fees box. Without updated information we may not be able to contact parents in an emergency.

## **EDUCATORS**

All staff working at the centre are required to hold a current criminal history clearance authorizing them to be suitable for work with children.

We employ skilled professionals who hold appropriate ACECQA recognised qualifications in early childhood education and care. All staff at our centre complete an In-Service Training Course and all permanent staff are required to study the Montessori philosophy. Educators maintain current first aid qualifications including Asthma and Anaphylaxis training. All staff are mandated notifiers of suspected abuse and neglect and will act according to legislation to report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Throughout the year staff will need to take time off for holidays or illness and wherever possible our regular relief staff will be used during this time.

## **PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS & FAMILIES**

We respect the significant role of the family in a child's life. We acknowledge that a child's growth, well-being and learning outcomes are best supported by a reciprocal partnership between the centre and families. We encourage the regular exchange of information and we encourage parents/guardians to feel valued in expressing their thoughts, ideas or suggestions. It is particularly important to raise any concerns with the staff or the Director immediately. Problems or concerns can only be solved or answered if they are raised in an open, direct manner. All decisions will be guided by the centre's policies and regulations. The centre has in place formal grievance procedures. A grievance form can be requested from the staff and an appointment can be made to meet with the Director if necessary.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All records are the property of the centre and are kept secure and private in accordance with our Confidentiality Policy. Access to information by staff is on a need-to-know basis, as authorised by the Director. No private information will be shared with other parties except where regulations/legislations demand (such as in the case of mandated notifications) or where the parent/guardian has consented (such as when sharing observations about the child with specialists). The centre may provide statistical information to relevant government departments to meet our legal obligations.

## ORIENTATION

An enrolment information package will be sent to families prior to your child's first day. The centre requires the family to attend a *minimum* of one orientation visit to the centre before a child's official enrolment commences. This allows the family to spend time meeting staff, other children and to become familiar with the centre. Parents / guardians must stay with their child during these visits. Families and the Director can collaborate to determine if additional visits would benefit the child.

## SEPARATION

Initial separation can sometimes be challenging for parents and children. When leaving your child we recommend the following (*unless an educator has worked with you on an alternative strategy based on the individual needs of your child*):

- Always leave your child with a staff member
- Always say goodbye to your child
- Tell your child when you will return relative to a recognizable event e.g. "I'll be back after Music Time"
- Do not prolong the goodbye. Say goodbye and leave
- Try not to let the child see your distress; if you have a calm, positive demeanour it will be reassuring to your child.

Most children do not remain upset for very long and a child is usually able to calm much more quickly *after* the parent has left as they are no longer sensing the parent's anxiety. If your child is upset a staff member will offer some comfort and support. Be assured the centre will phone you if your child is very distressed and cannot be settled. If you are concerned about your child you are welcome to phone the centre to check on him/her, but please remember that we do not always answer the phone during school hours so you may need to leave a message on the answering machine. You will receive a return phone call to provide information about your child's well-being as soon as possible. If you are calling with an urgent notification or concern while your child is in attendance, and you therefore need to reach a staff member immediately, you may call our **emergency mobile** on **0449 724 839**. Please remember that this number is for emergencies only, not general queries, and parents can only call this number while their child is in attendance at the centre.

## MONTESSORI PROGRAMS

The centre implements a Montessori curriculum, which reflects the belief in the child as the creator of his/her own development. Each child is a unique individual and our Montessori approach nurtures and responds to each child's unfolding readiness and respects their sensitive periods for acquiring new skills. The child's environment is an essential component in facilitating the learning process. The Montessori learning areas are carefully prepared with resources and learning experiences that empower children with responsibility, choice and freedom to explore, discover, problem-solve and create. For children to flourish and grow in self-esteem they need to engage in purposeful activities that promote independence and concentrated effort.

The Montessori programs meet the developmental needs for each child. Programs will ensure that your child's physical, cognitive, social, emotional and language development is enhanced. Observations will be kept on each child, which allows for an individual focus. Parents are invited to discuss their child's progress, either informally at the conclusion of the day or by making an appointment for a longer discussion at a mutually convenient time.

Parents' suggestions, comments and participation in all our programs are welcomed. Please refer to the Parent Information Station for more guidance about how you can offer your input or feedback. We also value parent donations of cut flowers for our classroom and fruit and vegetables for the children to use in their kitchen.

## **PARKING**

Please be aware of restricted parking zones immediately in front of the premises. Parents are reminded to be courteous and patient. Please carefully check behind you when reversing, especially for young children. Please obey the speed limits in front of the school.

## **INFORMATION**

We pride ourselves on empowering parents/guardians with information and inspiration. Please check your 'Family Pocket' (pigeon hole) regularly for correspondence directly from the centre. You are also invited to take pamphlets, articles, publications or other resources from our displays and parent information areas.

## **COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICES**

The centre may access, or connect families with, other support services such as inclusion support, speech pathologists and other specialists. Please let the Director know if you have any concerns about your child's development or if you require their collaboration with other professionals.

## **NEWSLETTERS**

The centre issues regular newsletters with updates on the activities and events in the centre. We also share other helpful information such as articles on Montessori or other support for families. Please check your 'Family Pocket' every time you attend to collect these and other related items.

## **PHOTOGRAPHS**

Staff will take photographs and conduct video filming regularly during activities at the centre and on outings. Parents are required to provide (or withhold) consent upon enrolment for their child to be included. Photographs and film are used primarily for parent communication and maintaining records of each child's development but may also be used for advertising, professional training and presentations. Professional photographs (group and individual) are taken annually at the centre and are available for purchase but there is no obligation to buy and some children choose not to participate in this process.

## **BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS**

Birthday celebrations are treated as a reflection of a child's journey through the years. If your child wishes to celebrate their birthday please let the staff know in advance. Parents are encouraged to send photos of the child showing each year of their life for our special "Around the Sun" ceremony that focuses on how the child has changed over time. This is a special time for the birthday child and does not rely on gifts or food. Please **do not** send cakes or any other treats or toys.

## **ITEMS FROM HOME**

We request that children do not bring items from home as they may become broken or lost. We also discourage children from wearing dress-ups or clothing that may inspire aggressive or disruptive fantasy play (such as Superman, Spiderman etc.).

## **NON-SMOKING**

The centre, including the indoor and outdoor environment, is an entirely smoke-free zone at all times (including outside of operating hours or during holiday periods).

## **NUTRITION**

It is the centre policy to encourage parents to provide nutritious, well-balanced and varied food. **Due to the high incidence and severity of nut allergies we ask parents to never send food containing nuts or nut products.** We also encourage parents to either avoid sending eggs or communicate to staff if cooked egg is an ingredient in your child's snack or lunch. Snacks should have low salt and low sugar content. Items that are high in sugar, salt and/or saturated fats may be politely removed from your child's meal prior to consumption so that we can comply with our regulatory requirements to promote nutrition. Water is available for the children to drink throughout the day. Snack and lunch times will be as relaxed and enjoyable as possible. Parents are required to inform the centre if their child has any allergies or dietary requirements. A completed health care and/or action plan will then be required to address any allergies or medical conditions.

The children may engage in food preparation or cooking experiences during their time at Pre-school. During these activities we follow safe food handling practices, hygiene procedures and adhere to our policies relating to allergy and nutrition.

Parents are asked to bring a daily contribution to the fruit bowl for snack times.

Children should have breakfast before attending each day.

## **REST**

The centre will endeavor to meet the individual needs of each child. Children will be allowed to rest or sleep as desired, however, it is anticipated that children of pre-school age will not require a regular sleep during the session. Children will not be made to sleep or rest if they are not showing the need to do so, nor will children be woken from sleep for arbitrary reasons.

## **VACCINATION / IMMUNISATION**

It is a policy that all children enrolling into this centre must be vaccinated according to the Australian National Immunisation Program (NIP) Schedule. Vaccination records will be required on enrolment and again throughout the time the child is at the centre to ensure ongoing participation in the vaccination program.

Please note that failure to maintain (or provide evidence of) your child's immunisations in line with the NIP will result in forfeiture of your enrolment at our centre.

Please refer to [www.immunise.health.gov.au](http://www.immunise.health.gov.au) or speak to your doctor for more information.

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

The Director and staff members make every effort to ensure a safe environment for your child. Staff members will implement first aid procedures where *minor* accidents occur and will seek medical advice should more urgent incidents arise. In the case of a severe accident or a medical emergency, staff members will make every reasonable attempt to notify parents. Where the parents are not contactable - or if the centre deems the situation to be urgent - an ambulance will be called. The centre will not accept liability for any medical or transportation fees incurred.

## INFECTIOUS ILLNESSES

If your child becomes unwell at the centre you will be contacted to either collect or arrange to have your child collected as soon as possible. We will tend to 'err on the side of caution' by sending children home if they appear to be unwell during their time at the centre. This will occur if there is the presence of some or all of the following indicators:

- A child appears to have a fever
- A child is complaining of feeling unwell
- A child has a runny nose (or sneezing) with yellow, thick mucus
- A child has a chesty cough or a particularly persistent dry cough
- A child is lethargic and lacks energy
- A child has diarrhea or vomits

Some of these are enough on their own (such as the thick runny nose) but others (such as lethargy) are not sufficient alone to prompt us to call a parent and would need to be present in combination with other factors. The most common causes for concern are:

- Cold like symptoms, some of which include temperature, runny nose with green or yellow mucus, phlegm producing cough.  
**ACTION:** Exclude until temperature has ceased, runny nose is CLEAR, and cough has cleared to a 'dry' nature.
- Gastroenteritis (diarrhea and/or vomiting).  
**ACTION:** Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion and/or vomiting for 24 hours.

In order to prevent cross infection, children with infectious disease must be excluded from the centre. A medical certificate may be required to before a child can return after an infectious illness. Please notify the centre when your child is away due to ill health. When illnesses are present in the centre a notice will be posted for all parents. Strict hygiene practices such as hand washing, use of gloves, and disinfecting equipment are implemented at the centre to reduce the risk of infection.

Please refer to the following table for further details of our exclusion policies:

Campylobacter	Excluded until diarrhea has ceased for 24 hours
Chicken Pox	Excluded until fully recovered or 5 days after the eruptions first appear, blisters dried
Conjunctivitis	Excluded until eye discharge has ceased
Diphtheria	Excluded until medical certificate issued following 2 negative throat swabs
Hand foot & mouth	Excluded until blisters have dried
Hepatitis A	Excluded until medical certificate is received or 7 days after the onset of jaundice/illness
Impetigo	Excluded until treatment underway. All sores must be covered.
Measles	Excluded for 4 days after rash appears
Meningitis (bact)	Excluded until well
Meningococcal infection	Excluded until well, antibiotic treatment
Mumps	Excluded for 9 days or until swelling subsides
Poliomyelitis	Excluded for 14 days and until medical certificate is received
Ring worm, Scabies, Lice, Trachoma	Excluded until treatment obtained
Streptococcal Infection	Excluded until antibiotics are taken for 24 hours and until well
Whooping Cough	Excluded for 5 days after treatment starts

Any other illnesses will be checked with the relevant health authorities.

## MEDICATION

Single course medication (such as antibiotics) can **only** be administered by staff when a doctor has provided clear instructions on the type, time and dosage of the medication (either in the form of a detailed prescription label and/or a letter or medication plan). Parents should ensure that:

- the medication is in the original container
- the medication is clearly labelled
- the medication has not expired
- the medication is prescribed for the recipient
- the prescription / medication plan clearly outlines the dosage and when/how it is to be administered.

Staff members will record the administration in a medication log in accordance with our Medication Policy.

Please note that we are not authorized, under any circumstances, to administer the **first dose** of a medication. This is due to the possibility of children having severe adverse reactions to new substances. It is therefore a requirement that a child has already successfully ingested at least one dose of a new medication at home (or under a doctor's supervision) otherwise it will not be administered in the centre.

Over-the-counter medication (eg. paracetamol) will **not** be administered unless a medical health professional has prescribed it to the individual child with specific dosage instructions.

## ONGOING MEDICAL OR PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Where a child requires regular medication or treatment to sustain their health and well-being, a doctor's letter detailing the condition, treatment and emergency action is required. A completed Health Care Plan will be required from a medical practitioner. Families will need to supply the relevant medication and are responsible for updating this prior to its expiry date. Families are asked to proactively update the centre if/when the condition and/or treatment procedures change.

## ALLERGIES

Parents/guardians are required to inform the centre of any known allergies / sensitivities that a child experiences *whether they have been formally diagnosed or not*. We encourage families to err on the side of caution by informing us even if an allergy is simply suspected, such as where minor reactions have been observed in the past but the condition has not yet been medically confirmed. Families will be asked to provide details about the cause/trigger of the allergy, the symptoms/effects of a reaction and any treatment that will be required. Where an allergy has been formally diagnosed this information will be communicated in a completed Health Care Plan or Allergy Plan developed by a medical professional. Families will need to supply the relevant medication and are responsible for updating this prior to its expiry date. Families are asked to proactively update the centre if/when the allergy and/or treatment procedures change.

## CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

We believe that all children deserve access to a nurturing environment and inclusion in inspiring early learning experience. We recognize that this journey is unique for each individual, particularly where a child has identified additional needs. Our team is always willing to partner with parents and professionals to ensure that a child's well-being is supported and his or her needs are being met to the best of our ability. When we welcome an individual with identified additional needs we will approach parents to request the appropriate information and advice, particularly regarding health care plans for those with physical or mobility difficulties. The centre and play spaces are accessible to children and adults with mobility difficulties and appropriate toileting facilities are provided.

## CLOTHING

Parents /guardians should dress children in the prescribed uniform,(purchase details available from staff).

Spare clothing, which must be provided in your child's bag each day, should allow for protection from the elements, be comfortable and allow children to participate in play experiences. **We do recommend that parents carefully consider the clothing that children wear each day to ensure that it is appropriate for the experiences that a child will encounter at Montessori.** Smocks will be provided to protect clothing during creative activities wherever possible but clothing may still be stained or marked as a natural result of creative art activities or sensory play experiences. *Please do not dress children in clothing that is precious or irreplaceable.* Please also provide appropriate footwear that supports and protects the child's feet. A sun hat is also required between 1st September and 30th May, in accordance with our Sun Protection Policy. Please also provide a complete change of clothes each day and several sets of underpants (or pull-ups).

All clothing, bags and footwear must be clearly labelled with your child's full name. The centre accepts no liability for loss or damage. Please check the lost property regularly.

The centre keeps a minimal supply of spare clothing for emergency use by children. Where the centre's spare clothing is used, parents are required to launder and return it to the centre as soon as possible.

## WHAT TO PACK

When your child comes to Pre-school each day we recommend you bring the following items:

- A backpack or bag that your child can carry independently,
- A complete change of clothes (please update this as weather patterns change),
- Appropriate headwear (protective sunhat in Summer / Autumn, warm beanie in Winter / Spring),
- Several changes of underpants (or pull-ups/nappies and wipes),
- Protective clothing to suit the weather – such as gum boots and a warm jacket in winter.

All of your child's personal belongings should be clearly labelled with your child's full name.

Water bottles and other drinks are **not** required as children have continuous access to fresh, cool water throughout their time at Pre-school.

## SUN SAFETY

The centre believes strongly in protecting children from the harmful effects of the sun. Children, staff and visitors must wear a hat in the outdoor environment between the months of September and May. Children should arrive wearing sunscreen. Children are supported to apply sunscreen before going outside. If the centre's sunscreen product is not suitable for your child you will need to supply your own labelled sunscreen. Hats must be clearly labelled with your child's name and are to be taken home each day. Children who do not have a hat will not be allowed outside of shaded areas.

## TOILETING

Where possible the centre prefers that children are independently using a toilet or in the process of acquiring this skill. We respect, however, that each child will meet this developmental milestone at his or her own individual time and therefore it is not a prerequisite for enrolment. Where children are not yet in control of their toileting, pull-up style nappies should be worn so that assisted toileting can be done in a dignified way for the child and independence can be encouraged. Parents must supply additional spare clothing during the time the child is preparing for independent control and spare pull-up nappies should be provided. Parents and the centre should be working towards the same goal of facilitating the child's independent toileting control.

## **POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE**

Every child and adult in the centre has a right to feel safe and to enjoy positive experiences. We have developed several policies which aim to ensure this outcome. Our Positive Behaviour Guidance Policy outlines our approach to managing and supporting the behavior of children. Where necessary, staff members will liaise closely with parents to ensure continuity of behaviour guidance between the home and pre-school environment. We expect all members of our Pre-school community, including staff members, families and visitors, to role model the safe, respectful, inclusive and positive behaviours that we ask the children to emulate. These expectations are outlined in our Ethical Conduct Policy, Inclusion and Bias Policy and Parent Communication Policies. These policies are available from our office for parents to read.

## **STUDENTS**

From time to time the centre provides on the job training for students who are studying a Certificate IV, Diploma, Bachelor of Early Childhood or are high school students on Work Experience. This is a vital part of their training and we closely supervise and monitor the placement. At no time are students left alone with the children. You will be advised when a student is present.

## **PHONE/CAMERAS**

The use of photo phones/cameras/videos or recording devices by parents or visitors is not permitted whilst in the centre. Permission must be gained from the Director or staff prior to taking photographs during special occasions.

## **EXCURSIONS / INCURSIONS / SPECIAL EVENTS**

The centre believes in the value of community activities, whether this involves going out to visit our local area or inviting special guests to contribute to our classroom activities. As part of the Enrolment process parents/guardians are given the opportunity to consent to their child participating in short walks/outings in the area immediately surrounding the centre. These local outings may occur spontaneously without advance notice being provided to parents/guardians. All other excursions will require notification from the centre to parents/guardians regarding details including:

- Date
- Destination
- Times
- Costs if applicable
- Transport arrangements
- Staff attending

Parents/guardians have a right to decide on their child's participation.

Parents / guardians accompanying the centre on an excursion will need to comply with staff directives and act in accordance with centre policies.

## ENROLMENT AGREEMENT

- 1) I/we have viewed the premises and consent to the enrolment of my child.
- 2) I/we have received and read the Parent Handbook.
- 3) I/we agree to comply with centre policies, and government requirements in relation to the centre and its service (eg. Signing in/out, health regulations).
- 4) I/we agree to pay the fees and understand that the centre will implement a late fee on outstanding payments.
- 5) I/we agree to maintain current income assessment for Child Care Subsidy purposes, if applicable.
- 6) I/we agree to provide four weeks' notice of cancellation of care for my child, with failure to do so resulting in forfeiture of the bond.
- 7) I/we agree to pay for all time booked – for public holidays, absences for sickness and non-attendance days for the period of my child's enrolment.
- 8) I/we understand that the centre will be closed for four weeks over the Christmas period. Fees will not be charged during this closure.
- 9) I/we agree to pay late fees (after 4:00 pm) to cover staff overtime should I/we be late collecting my child at the rate of \$30.00 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof and \$5.00 per minute thereafter.
- 10) I/we are aware that fees may be adjusted annually on July 1<sup>st</sup> or at other times with due notice given by the centre.
- 11) I/we agree to make alternative arrangements when my/our child cannot be in care due to infections or illness.
- 12) I/we are aware of the centre's policy regarding immunisation and the need to maintain the immunisation status of my child throughout his/her attendance, with failure to do so resulting in forfeiture of the enrolment.
- 13) I/we are aware the centre reserves the right to terminate enrolment when it is considered in the best interests of the centre (eg. non-payment of fees).
- 14) I/we are aware that staff at the centre will seek emergency help in the event of an accident or illness requiring emergency medical treatment and I/we agree to pay all costs incurred.
- 15) I/we are aware that staff at the centre will administer basic first aid treatment to my child if the need arises.
- 16) I/we are aware that staff at the centre will supply sun block to my/our child in accordance with the centre Sun Protection Policy.
- 17) I accept the Enrolment Arrangement as outlined within this Enrolment Form and agree that all details of the Enrolment Arrangement are correct.
- 18) *(For parents who have nominated a CWA:)* I understand that I will need to confirm my Enrolment Arrangement outlined within this Enrolment Form on MyGov once it is available, in order for any Child Care Subsidy to commence via Cedars Montessori Preschool.

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***Please feel free to talk to staff or the Director  
about any questions or concerns you may have.***

***We look forward to a rewarding partnership  
with you during your time with us.***