

Children's Services Family Handbook

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About CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay

CatholicCare Diocese of Broken Bay is a not for profit non-government social care organisation that has provided professional services to the people of the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay since 1987. CatholicCare provide a wide range of programs to assist children, young people, individuals and families through our Children's Services, Family Centres, and Out-of-Home Care programs in Sydney's North and on the NSW Central Coast.

CatholicCare works with and for people in making a positive difference in their lives leading to:

- Improved well-being
- Sustained support networks
- A sense of hope for the future

CatholicCare programs are funded by NSW and Australian Governments through a number of Departments, Financial support for CatholicCare services is also provided by the Catholic Diocese of Broken Bay (via the twice yearly Charitable Works Fund) and the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. Our relationship with other Churches in addition to private donors provides valued support to enable CatholicCare to reach out widely into our local communities.

CatholicCare is also assisted by the CatholicCare Advisory Council .The purpose of the Council is to help enact the vision of CatholicCare in the Broken Bay Diocese by:

- Discerning for the Bishop broad policies and priorities, recommending their adoption to the Bishop and monitoring their implementation once adopted; and
- Tendering advice to the Bishop regarding issues relevant to CatholicCare in the Diocese.

The CatholicCare Council is essentially pastoral in its outlook and operation. It seeks to initiate, encourage, support and promote activities within the Diocese which further the local Church's mission to provide social services.

CatholicCare Mission, Vision and Values

Our Vision for the Future

In line with principles of Catholic Social Teaching, we strive for a world where people are safe, happy, well and connected with each other in inclusive communities.

We recognise that individual wellbeing is influenced by relationships within families, neighbourhoods and the wider community.

Our Mission

We serve in justice and love.

We live out the Gospel by walking alongside people to find and build solutions to their needs; to deliver evidence-based services; and to do so with commitment, regardless of the difficulties faced.

To this Mission we bring a long history of service and faith, the resources of dedicated staff, volunteers and partners, a willingness to go beyond essential care, and persistence in supporting justice and well-being for all.

Our Values

Respect

We respect the dignity and worth of all people and embrace difference

Hope

We see the strengths in each person and believe that every individual can grow and build a positive future. We respect each person's right to shape their own future.

Commitment

We build relationships with those we serve and stand in solidarity with them through tough times and joyous times. We dedicate ourselves to their rights and interests.

Professionalism

We are ethical and act with integrity in all we do. We are accountable to the communities we serve, to our funders and to each other. We take responsibility for continually learning and improving.

Excellence

We learn from and act on evidence of what works. We maintain high standards and pursue innovative and best practice approaches to effecting change in people's lives.

Social Justice

We take time to care. We strive for equity and opportunity for all. We speak up for and give voice to those who are vulnerable.

Statement of Philosophy

The Philosophy is a statement of values and beliefs that helps to guide our day to day practice. A copy is given to all families in the Policy Booklet in your enrolment pack. It is revised every two years and input is sought from all educators and families. Please take the time to read the Statement of Philosophy. Educators will be happy to answer all of your questions.

The National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework applies to all pre-schools, Outside School Hours Care centres, Long Day Care centres and Family Day Care services in Australia. Its aim is to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in children's services.

The National Quality Framework includes:

- A national legislative framework that consists of the Education and Care Services National Law and Education and Care Services National Regulations
- National Quality Standard. This Standard sets out the national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. There are 7 Quality Areas.
- An assessment and rating system. Services are assessed and rated against each of the 7 Quality Areas.
- A regulatory authority in each state and territory who have primary responsibility for the approval, monitoring and quality assessment of services. In New South Wales this is the Department of Education and Communities
- A national body that guides the administration of the National Quality Framework to ensure consistent implementation across states and territories. This is the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Up to date information about the National Quality Framework can be accessed on the ACECQA website (www.acecqa.gov.au).

Educational programs and curriculum for children

Curriculum Planning Policy which is guided by the My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia is found in the Policy Booklet. This contains information about the way in which educators go about planning for and keeping documentation of children's experiences and learning.

During the enrolment interview, the Coordinator will discuss the way in which Educators go about planning for your child's interests and the types of documentation they will be keeping. This documentation will be available for you to view and make contributions on an ongoing basis. Educators will value any feedback, ideas and contributions you have about the curriculum and your child's participation.

Health handbook

In your enrolment pack you will find a copy of our Health Handbook for Families. It is important that you read this handbook because it contains all of the policies that are related to your child's health. These include:

- Clothing
- First Aid
- Dental
- Illness and Infectious Diseases
- Immunisation
- Incident, Injury and Trauma
- Managing Asthma, Allergies, Anaphylaxis, Diabetes and Other Medical Conditions
- Medication
- Nutrition and Food
- Sun Protection

Policies and procedures

You will find some of the service's policies and procedures in your enrolment pack. However, a complete copy of all the policies and procedures is available to families at the service. Please ask the Coordinator or one of the educators where they are located.

The policies and procedures are regularly reviewed and updated in order that they take account of current research, recommendations and practices. Educators and families are able to be involved in these reviews. However, if at any time you have feedback on any of the policies you can talk to the Coordinator or send your feedback via email to the centre email address.

Sustainability

Our centre is committed to teaching children about environmental stewardship and sustainability. The support of families is very important in reinforcing this message and some initiatives are joint projects between educators and families. Examples of maintaining sustainable practices might include:

- Minimising paper usage by utilising email to send newsletters, daily diaries and other family communication
- Turning lights off whenever possible
- Limiting use of the air conditioning system when possible
- Providing paper recycling bins in class rooms
- Encouraging families to bring items from home which can be reused for art projects
- Monitoring water play activities and limiting the replenishment of water
- Establishing a garden which is hardy and needs limited water
- Science projects about environmental sustainability
- Maintaining and utilising our vegetable garden to reduce the need for purchased foods for cooking experiences.

Parent involvement

Our Outside School Hours Care Centres have an "open door" policy. Parents are always welcome to visit and spend time at the centre and to be involved in ways such as:

- Sharing an interest with the children
- Doing experiences with the children such as cooking
- Providing feedback, ideas and input into the curriculum

Refer to *Family Participation and Collaboration Policy* for more information.

Parent resources

You will find in our outside school hours care centres information and resources on topics that you may find helpful. This includes information about

- Children's health such as sleeping, eating, immunisation
- Parenting issues such as guiding children's behaviour
- Family support services in the community

Please see the educators if there is any information you would like to access.

Enrolment policy

An 'Expression of Interest' List is maintained at the centre and is updated annually. Families will be offered places according to the expression of interest list with the majority of places being offered at the end of each year for the next year. Priority will be given to existing children and then to existing families. In the event a position becomes available mid-way through the year, the Expression of Interest list will be consulted and the child next in line for the appropriate age group will be contacted. Once a position at the centre is accepted, a non-refundable holding deposit is required to ensure the position is held. This will go towards your first week's fees. For further details, refer to *OSHC Fee Policy*.

Information update

It is essential that we have your most up to date contact information. If any of your details change including address, telephone number and emergency contacts please let the Coordinator know as soon as possible. It is important that emergency contacts are informed of your intention to list them so they too can advise you of changes to their details.

Fee policy and payment method

You must read the attached *Fee Policy* for information about fees for the service. There is also information about how to pay your fees. If you are experiencing difficulty in paying your fees please speak to the Coordinator and a payment plan may be developed on a case by case basis.

Orientation to the centre

All families will be required to be involved in an enrolment interview. This provides the opportunity for families to ask questions, see the centre and gather all the information they will need about the way in which the centre operates. Coordinators will also discuss the best way of helping your child to settle into the centre.

If your child is going to be absent

If your child will be late or absent on their day please contact the centre and inform them as soon as possible to assist educators in the organisation of the day. If educators do not know your child will be late or absent, in particular for after school care, they will expect them to be waiting at the afternoon pick up location. If your child is not there, educators will be concerned and start searching for them. For after school care absences, we request that you contact the service no later than 2:30 PM on the day of your child's absence.

If you are intending to take holidays, please notify educators ahead of time.

What to bring

Before and After School Care

- A sun safe hat for outdoor play. Refer to *Sun Protection Policy*.
- A filled water bottle. This is useful when children are engaged in active outdoor play
- Raincoat/umbrella during wet weather

Vacation Care

- A sun safe hat for outdoor play. Refer to *Sun Protection Policy*.
- Suitable shoes for running and outdoor play (closed-in shoes are preferred)
- Enough food for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. Refer to Nutrition and Food Policy.
- Change of clothes in case they become wet or soiled
- Raincoat/umbrella during wet weather

Recommended clothing for Vacation Care

For children to be able to participate fully in the day's activities it is important they are wearing appropriate clothing that is suitable to the season, comfortable, non-restrictive and safe for play (including messy play). Closed in, non-slip shoes are the safest shoes for children to engage in play.

Please refer to our *Clothing Policy*, contained in the Health Handbook for further information.

Treasures from home

Occasionally children may wish to bring toys, books and electronic items from home to share with their friends. It is important to remember, that when such items are brought from home, regardless of efforts made by educators, there is the risk that they may be lost, broken or damaged. Therefore, educators would prefer that these are not brought to the centre.

Pick up and drop off

Refer to *Children's Arrival and Departure Policy* for further information. It is important that you read this policy because it contains our procedure for ensuring your child's safety when they arrive and leave the centre.

Excursions

Routine excursions

Routine excursions include any regular outings the children attend outside of the approved centre premises.

A Routine Excursion form will be signed at the time of enrolment and renewed each year. Educators will endeavour to notify families of these outings beforehand.

Non-routine excursions

Educators may organise to take children on an excursion from time to time.

In particular, during Vacation Care educators will organise to take children on an excursion.

Parents will be notified ahead of time with details of date, time, location, activities involved, any cost and their permission will be sought.

Please refer to the *Excursion and Incursion Policy* for further information.

Illness and medication

The Health Handbook for Families contains an *Illness and Infectious Diseases Policy* and a *Medication Policy*. It is important that you read these policies.

From time to time your child may get sick and it is important that if you notice symptoms which may indicate your child is unwell, you keep them at home. If your child arrives at the centre sick or becomes unwell during the day you will be contacted and asked to collect your child. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated in our efforts to reduce the incidence of illness at the centre.

Immunisation

At the time of enrolment (and before a child can begin attending the service) and when immunisations are updated, families must provide confirmation of their child's immunisation status. Please refer to our *Immunisation Policy* for more information.

Nutrition and food policy

In your enrolment pack you will find a copy of the Health Handbook which includes the *Nutrition and Food Policy*. You will note that all food required for your child during before and after school care is provided. Our aim is to provide children with an environment where they can enjoy and learn about nutritious food. They will be encouraged to eat food from the food groups recommended by Nutrition Australia and to develop good eating habits. These foods will support children's overall health, including dental health.

During Vacation Care children will need to bring enough food for the day. Ideal food to include in a lunch box are fresh fruit, vegetables, crackers, cheese, sandwiches, yoghurt and rice cakes, Food will be stored appropriately while at the centre.