

## **Welcome to Blue Gum Early Learning and Child Care Centre**

Dear Parents

The Management Committee, Director, Supervisors / Educators and Food - Co-ordinator of Blue Gum would like to welcome you to our warm and inviting service.

For many children, it will be their first time away from family and friends. It is important that they feel comfortable and secure in their new environment.

Therefore, it is necessary for you as a parent and us as your child's Educators, to collaborate and share information about your child. This will ensure a smooth transition from home to Blue Gum and vice versa.

We always endeavour to achieve the highest quality of early learning and care for your child.

Please feel free to contact our Director/Supervisors on any matter regarding your child while attending our Service.

### **Our Early Childhood Personnel**

Our Early Childhood personnel are dedicated to providing you and your child/children with high quality education and care in a clean homely environment.

All our educators have, or are working towards Early Education and Care Qualifications. We consistently participate in ongoing training to further develop our skills and knowledge.

We have a pool of relief educators, ensuring that children receive continuity of care while our regular educators are on leave.

Students from various universities, colleges and schools do at times attend our Service for observation work and/or work experience. These students are always supervised by one of our Qualified Educators.

### **Our Curriculum**

We aim to provide a total learning experience where children are free to observe, question, experiment and explore.

It is important for children to experience being wet, dirty, noisy and messy.

Children need to learn independence by knowing where to find things and being able to get things for themselves.

They need to learn to respect themselves, the needs and feelings of others and feel that they are important to and belong to a group.

An understanding of all cultures is an important part of our daily curriculum along with pictures, puzzles, manipulative equipment and play, books, dolls, dress ups and music.

Our curriculum is reflective of the Early Years Learning Framework which is part of the National Quality Standards in which we incorporate the five learning outcomes. We present our curriculum as a play based emergent curriculum and it is available on Storypark for our families to view on a daily basis.



Daily curriculum incorporates an awareness of a variety of cultures that exist in our community.

Our curriculum is evaluated on a long and short term basis.

Our philosophy and policies have a strong influence on our curriculum and have been developed in accordance with national legislative law, early childhood national quality standards and committee /parent input.

Your child's room leader is happy to make an appointment to discuss with you the experiences your child/children engage in on a daily basis. Your room leader can explain the important learning processes taking place. This can be at a time by mutual arrangement or alternatively this can be a phone appointment.

## **Our Rooms**

Centre rooms may be divided into the following groups:

- Joeys 0 - 18 months
- Possums 13 - 24 months
- Wombats 2 - 3 years
- Koalas 3 - 4 years
- Kangaroos 4 - 5 years

Each room leader brings individual skills and experiences that enhance their unique teaching skills. Therefore variations within rooms will occur, however we all follow the same Early Years Learning Framework.

Blue Gum's philosophy is based on a sound knowledge of early childhood theories and practices, which form the basis of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Your child's Room Leader is available to discuss the room's programme and your child's progress with you at a mutually convenient time.

## **Sleep & Rest**

Regulation 81 of the Education and Care Services National Regulations state that:

*The Nominated supervisor of an education and care service must take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, developmental stages and individual needs of the children.*

Our Service aims to meet each child's needs for sleep, rest and relaxation in a safe and caring manner that takes into consideration the preferences and practices of each child's family.

Educators will take into account families' preferences about the amount of sleep their child has at our service and will accommodate any requests about their child's sleeping practices where these are not inconsistent with the safe sleeping practices discussed in the Sleep, Rest, Relaxation and Clothing Policy.

Educators have a legal obligation to ensure that children are safe and are offered sleep or rest when they need it. If a child is displaying signs of tiredness, Educators must allow the child to sleep or rest for a reasonable amount of time. Where families are concerned that children's sleep at the service is impacting night time sleep patterns, Educators will discuss expected sleep patterns with families based on advice from recognised authorities, and adjust a child's sleep time at the service if appropriate. The Nominated Supervisor and Educators, however, will make the final decision about the child's sleep and rest at the Service to ensure they can meet their obligations.

### **What to Bring**

Please make sure that when your child attends Blue Gum Early Learning & Child Care Centre, they have the following packed in their bag:

- A pillow case to keep sheets in.
- A couple of changes of clothes. Sometimes we get "messy" or just need a fresh set of clothes.
- A wet bag for messy/soiled/wet clothing
- A broad brimmed or Legionnaires style sun hat with no strings attached
- A water bottle that is labelled with your child's name

And if needed:

- All bottles made up ready for your child with their name on them.
- Any special comforter's e.g. dummy, blanket, special teddy.

### **Open Door Policy**

We have an "Open Door" policy and Parents are invited to visit our service and experience and participate in the daily curriculum.

### **Communication**

**Please read all the notices and signs when entering the centre to check for up-coming events of interest and special requests.**

Your Fee Statements are emailed to you every Tuesday. Newsletters and other information will either be emailed or published on Storypark, when necessary, throughout the year. As emails and Storypark are our primary form of communication, we advise that you check them on a daily basis.

### **Waitlist Applications, Enrolments & Fees**

On your Waitlist Application, you are required to nominate specific days. We always do our best to accommodate these days, but unfortunately due to the high demand for places at our Service, this is not always possible.

The Service cannot accommodate all wait list applications; however, if places become available, we will do our best to offer you a place as soon as feasible.

Once your enrolment is confirmed, we strive to ensure that it is a positive experience for both you and your child.

When you visit the service you will be given a code to use to complete an enrolment package on our website.

A Supervisor will discuss important information including Service Policies, the Daily Routine of your child's room and the Centre Curriculum.

Please complete the enrolment forms electronically as soon as possible. Your child cannot commence at Blue Gum without us having this information prior to their attendance.

The information you provide to us is extremely important and will remain confidential at all times. (Please see our Privacy Policy on our website.)

A minimum of 2 days is suggested to support each child's involvement in the curriculum offered and to assist in the development of their friendships.

## **Fees**

The following outlines the how fees can be paid. Upon completing the enrolment pack electronically, families must pay a security deposit of **\$50.00**.

- Fees must be paid **two weeks in advance**.
- Fees can be paid weekly, fortnightly or monthly in advance by direct transfer. Fees are payable in advance for every day that your child is enrolled at the service. This includes pupil free days, sick days and family holidays but excludes periods when the service is closed.
- Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is available to all families who are Australian Residents. To find out their eligibility, families must contact the Family Assistance Office.

A receipt will be issued via your weekly statement for all fees. This will include the child/children's full name/s, date of care, date of payment, amount, etc. If the incorrect amount is paid, change will not be given but will be credited to the families account.

A \$50.00 security booking fee is required once place has been accepted. This fee is non-refundable if you do not follow through with place at our service. This booking fee will be taken as part of your security deposit and will come off your fees once your child has commenced place at our Service.

If any changes occur to our Fee structure, parents will get a minimum of two weeks' notice.

## **Overdue Fees**

Any family who is one or more weeks late with their fees will receive a **Friendly Fee Reminder**. Families can make appointments to speak with the Director regarding payments if there is a need to do so. Continually not paying fees will put your child/children's place/s at the Service in jeopardy.

Fees are required to be paid two weeks in advance at all times. If your child's fees are not paid, your child's enrolment may be terminated. At Blue Gum we do not keep money on the premises and fees must be paid by direct transfer.

Should you wish to end your child's place at the service or should management make the decision to terminate your child's place, 2 weeks written notice is required from the ending/terminating party. If this does not occur, 2 weeks fees will be billed to you.

### **Booked Days**

On enrolment you are required to inform the service of permanent days required.

Please speak to the Assistant Director or Director if you need to change these days.

Some notice may be required as it is not always possible to change the days due to Service demand.

### **Orientation**

We encourage you to bring your child in for orientation sessions prior to commencing at Blue Gum.

This enables you and your child to become familiar with their new surroundings and Educators.

Please allow sufficient time to meet your child's Room Leader and Educators in the room to welcome your child into the group.

We understand that it is difficult for Parents to leave their child for the first time, and encourage Parents to call throughout the day to check on their child's progress.

Here are some suggestions to assist you:

- Say "Goodbye"
- Don't prolong the farewell
- Say "I am going now. I'll be back this afternoon"
- Give your child a kiss and a hug before you leave
- Always let the Staff know that you are leaving. This will signal the staff to give a little extra support to your child should they need it

Parents and children need time to adjust.

Allow time so that your child can show you things and places that interest them on arrival and departure.

### **Parent Participation**

We strive to give consistent loving care to your child and provide them with a happy environment.

Please feel free to look into our busy, happy rooms and see your child at play.

By working together, Parents and our Educators can help each child develop to their full potential.

We encourage Parent consultation and suggestions for our service policies, philosophy and parent information documents.

Blue Gum has a non-discriminatory and non-biased policy. Children from non-English speaking backgrounds and children with additional needs will not be discriminated against.

Parents can participate in our program and curriculum by sharing their special skills, also by collecting recycled materials for art and helping at social functions.

If you would like to become a member of our Committee, please speak to the Director or Assistant Director.

### **Parent Grievances/ Complaints**

The service will address grievances/complaints promptly with an emphasis being placed on resolving issues in a professional and ethical manner.

All matters are considered confidential and will be handled appropriately.

Please discuss minor concerns with a Supervisor of the service as soon as possible, so that they can be dealt with immediately.

If the grievance is more serious, parents need to put their grievance in writing and discuss with the Director. The Director will investigate and complete the grievance register, keep the parent informed of the action being taken and the outcome.

If the parents are not satisfied with the outcome, or they feel that it has not been properly addressed, they should contact a member of the committee, either in writing or verbally, who will conduct their own investigation and assess how it should be handled.

### **Newsletters**

Every 6-8 weeks you will receive a newsletter by email.

The main aim of the newsletter is to keep you informed of current events at Blue Gum, the work that is being done by your child in their room and current topics or areas of interest to the children.

### **Celebrations**

We encourage Parents to let their children share special celebrations with us at the service. If you would like us to celebrate any occasion with your child, please talk to your child's Room Leader.

### **Birthdays**

**No food or drinks may be brought onto the premises** with the exception of babies' formula. This is because of allergies and intolerances. You are welcome to order a birthday cake with our Food Coordinator. The birthday cake can only be ordered if your child's birthday is on the same day that they attend Blue Gum. Please give our Food Coordinator

at least two weeks' notice and your request must be placed in writing and addressed to the office.

### **Personal Toys**

It would be appreciated if children did not bring toys or valuables from home unless they are required for a special event. Comfort toys are always welcome.

Toys from home can become lost or broken and it saves a lot of heartache if items are left at home.

We encourage children to bring nature items and other items of general interest.

### **Lost Property**

Please label all items including socks, shoes and underwear etc. in order to assist the educators to locate the owner.

### **Change of Details**

Please ensure that you notify the service of any changes to your child's information.

It is important for our service to maintain up to date contact details at all times.

### **Our Policies**

The service policies and procedures can be found in the front foyer or on our website.

We recommend that you take the time to read these policies.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to speak with the Director

### **Behaviour Guidance**

It is the policy of this service to focus on encouragement and self-regulation through positive guidance, rather than discipline.

We try to recognise why a child behaves in a certain way, and encourage more acceptable forms of behaviour.

Children will be offered reasonable choices when guiding behaviour, which may include redirection and alternative play choices.

### **Health & Hygiene**

#### **Immunisation**

The service is required to maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children attending.

Parents are requested to supply proof of immunisation by supplying us with a copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement.

Please advise the service of any updated immunisations.

## Sun Smart

We aim to promote a positive attitude towards skin protection and take effective measures to ensure the children's safety from the sun,

We will ensure that each child is covered with sunscreen and have a suitable hat on before going outdoors.

Please provide a wide brimmed or legionnaires hat for your child each time they attend.

Should your child be allergic to common brands of sunscreen, we ask that you send specific sunscreen for your child.

## Appropriate Clothing

During the day your child will participate in many different experiences and it is important that they are dressed in appropriate clothing.

Remember, children are hard at "work" while they are with us and often the most beneficial learning comes from messy play.

We have aprons available for children if they wish to use them.

We encourage children to come in comfortable casual clothes, which are suitable for an active day. Please do not send your children in thongs/flip flops.

All children are encouraged to take shoes off for climbing activities.

Overalls and braces are not recommended as children find them difficult to handle and will not be able to get in and out of them easily when they go to the toilet.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SEND AT LEAST ONE CHANGE OF CLOTHES EACH DAY

## Medication

If your child requires medication while at the service, you must complete the Administration of Authorised Medication Consent Form, as well as the Medication Administration Form detailing the following important information:

- Name of medication
- Dosage
- Time medication is to be administered
- Time of last dose
- Parent signature

The forms can be found on our website to enable you to complete them at your leisure. You can then bring in the completed forms along with the medication when you drop your child at Blue Gum in the morning.

The responsible Educator will sign the form to indicate that the medication has been administered. A second Educator will witness the administration of the medication.

Under no circumstances will the Service administer higher than the recommended dose.

The Medication Administration Form must be completed on a daily basis, even if the medication is required for more than one day.

The medication must remain in its original named container.

If the medication is prescriptive, please ensure that the container is clearly marked with the Doctor's instructions.

Any medication must be handed directly to an educator in charge of your child's room, so that it can be stored in an area inaccessible to children.

Parents are requested to collect medication from this area on departure.

Please ensure that no medication, creams etc. of any kind are left in your child's bag.

Please speak to the Director or Assistant Director for further information on the Service's Medication Policy.

### **Illness/Communicable Disease**

We are committed to providing and maintaining a healthy environment to safeguard children and staff from infection.

The service reserves the right to send home, or refuse attendance to, any child that is considered not well enough to attend.

If your child is unwell or showing signs of an infectious or contagious disease, we will contact you immediately and you may be required to collect them from the service.

**We will only administer Panadol/Nurofen in case of emergency where a child has a high fever and the parent is on their way to collect them from the service. We will not administer Panadol/Nurofen for any other reason without written authorisation from a medical practitioner.**

Please do not send your child if they are unwell. If your child has experienced vomiting, diarrhoea or had a temperature, please do not bring them into the service until 24 hours from the last episode of vomiting, diarrhoea or temperature has occurred.

It is the policy of the service not to admit any child who has a communicable disease.

We will advise parents of an infectious disease at the service by email and/or Storypark and place a notice in each room. Please keep your email address current and up to date.

### **Hygiene**

Strict hand washing procedures are implemented at Blue Gum.

Children are encouraged to wash and dry their hands before and after meals, after using the toilet and after messy experiences.

## **Safety**

### **Evacuation Procedures**

An emergency evacuation plan is displayed in each room.

Once every 3 months, the service conducts a drill. The aim of these drills is to ensure that in the event of a real emergency, the children can be evacuated as quickly as possible.

If you are present at the service during the drill, you are legally required to participate in this procedure.

### **Accidents, Incidents, Injuries and Trauma**

Any accidents, incidents, injuries or trauma which may occur at the service is recorded on the relevant report form. If your child has been injured during the day you will be required to sign the relevant report, indicating that you have been informed.

If necessary you will be contacted to collect your child.

If you cannot be contacted and your child requires medical attention, we will take the necessary required steps.

Any medical expenses incurred will be the parent's responsibility.

### **Collection of Children**

We will only allow parents or persons stated in writing on the enrolment form to collect your child/children from the service.

Please take your child into the service on arrival and acknowledge your arrival and departure to educators.

Under no circumstances is your child to be left in the foyer or at the front door.

If you are unable to collect your child from the service, you will need to ring, or notify the service in writing.

This person must be at least 16 years old, and an authorised person on your child's enrolment form.

Photo identification will be required.

### **Custody Arrangements**

If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining arrangements, please provide the service with a copy for our records.

Parents are requested to notify the Director or Assistant Director immediately if these legal circumstances change.

## **Child Care Subsidy**

To get Child Care Subsidy you need to meet certain criteria.

This subsidy is paid directly to Blue Gum Early Learning & Child Care Centre to reduce the fees you pay.

You may be eligible if you or your partner:

- care for your child at least 2 nights per fortnight, or have 14% care
- are liable for fees for care provided at an approved child care service, and
- meet the residency rules

Your child must also:

- meet immunisation requirements, and
- not be attending secondary school unless an exemption applies

In these circumstances, you must provide evidence as to why your child can't be unsupervised. You also need to confirm an adult is unable to care for the child during this time.

Each person that is liable to pay child care fees will need to apply for this subsidy. To be eligible, each person needs to meet these criteria.

Full fees will apply until the centre receives notification stating that you are eligible for Child Care Benefit.

Parents are required to inform the FAO of any changes that may affect their assessment.

More Information about the Child Care Subsidy can be found on

[www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy)

## **Holidays**

Please let us know in writing if you are taking holidays. We request if you decide you can no longer take the holiday, that you are to please give us 48 hours' notice.

## **Allowable Absences**

Each family is entitled to 42 days of absence per year while claiming Child Care Benefit.

An absence may be identified as: a sick day, holiday, occasional absence or a public holiday.

Once the 42 days allowable absence have been taken, full fees will apply for subsequent absences, as Child Care Benefit cannot be claimed for these additional days.

If your child is absent due to illness and has a medical certificate, these absences will not count towards the allowable absence total after you have reached the total of 42 allowable absences.

## **Sick Days & Public Holidays**

Please notify the service if your child is sick or unable to attend. If your child has been absent for more than two weeks without notification, we are unable to hold the position.

Public holidays and absences must be paid for and there are no make-up days.

## **Attendance Records**

You are required to sign your child in and out each time they attend the Service.

This is a legal requirement. You will also need to confirm any absences on the Kiosk System to qualify for the CCS on those days.

Full fees will be charged for any unsigned attendance or absence, as Child Care Subsidy cannot be applied for these days.

## **Late Fee**

If a child is left at the centre after 5.45 p.m., a late fee of \$20.00 for the first five minutes and then \$15.00 for each 5 minutes thereafter (or part thereof) will be charged.

Reviewed and updated: 8<sup>th</sup> July 2020