

## PARENT HANDBOOK

### **WELCOME TO MERINO COURT CHILDCARE CENTRE**

#### **Philosophy**

We At Merino Court Childcare centre strive to provide a high quality service which meets the needs of the families and children associated with it. We believe in the importance of well trained staff and promote this within the working team.

Merino Court Childcare Centre focuses strongly on providing a home like environment where the relationships that children have with their families are complemented by the relationships the children have with each other and the staff. We achieve this through having a consistent staff base where all staff interacts with all children on a regular basis. We promote family input into our policies, programs and day-to-day experiences and encourage families to be involved in any way possible.

We at Merino Court Child Care recognise the importance of the wider community in exposing children to people from other cultures, belief systems and abilities, understanding that many of these have originated from other countries. We aim to foster equity, tolerance and inclusiveness in our children through involvement with our local community the culture of Merino Court Child Care comes from the backgrounds and beliefs of our staff. It is ever changing and embraces the diversities of the local community.

We at Merino Court Childcare Centre believe that children "become" by learning through their play and as such, we provide a mix of experiences that foster their curiosity, challenge them to explore, provide opportunity to master skills in their own time, promote independence and above all, develop the ability to communicate and for strong relationships with those around them.

We have a strong focus on sustainability and embrace the responsibility to improve our social, economic and environmental performance without impairing future generation's ability to enjoy the same conditions that we do today. To this end, we will implement strategies to reduce, reuse, recycle and turn-it-off so that through our actions the children will also develop a desire to embrace environmental responsibilities.

In order to achieve these goals, the staff at Merino Court Childcare Centre will treat all users of the service with respect and will challenge unfair and /or discriminatory behaviours. We will maintain confidentiality, be professional at all times and monitor our practices to ensure the safety and emotional wellbeing of the children is maintained to the highest standard.

#### **Family Involvement**

We believe that fundamental to a successful service is the relationship between families, children, carers and management. Here at Merino Court, we appreciate that your time is precious however, we would strongly encourage you to be involved in the life of the centre. We have information boards which will outline your child's day as far as food, sleep and toileting, however to really know how your child is going, it is important that you spend time in conversation with the carers. Our programming, planning and policy review is reliant on input from you so if you have any concerns, ideas or suggestions, please speak to a staff member or put a note in the fees/suggestion box. We would also like to extend an open invitation for you to visit the centre at any time. We have an open

door policy should you want to look in to see how your child is going. However, if you would like to be involved within the program, prior notice would be beneficial so that we can prepare a special experience for you and the children to enjoy together. We look forward to working with you to make your child's stay with us a positive experience.

### **Times and Days of Opening**

Merino Court Childcare Centre is licensed from 6:30am to 6:30pm, Monday to Friday. The centre is closed on public holidays. Please be aware that the Centre is not legally responsible for children left at the Centre outside normal operating hours. Please refer to the Arrival/Departure policy in this handbook for more information.

### **Staffing**

Merino Court Childcare Centre is licensed for 32 children each day. We maintain the following ratios of staff to children:

0-3 year olds	1:4
3-6 year olds	1:10
School Children	1:10

### **Centrelink**

In order for Centrelink to pay CCB (childcare benefit) to us, thereby reducing your fees, it is necessary for you to make sure you give us the correct CRN numbers and birthdates of your child/ren as well as for the carer/parent who is registered with centrelink. Please ensure you have register your child for CCB with centrelink.

### **Fees**

Accounts are issued by email each fortnight and payment is by Direct Debit on the last Friday of the account period. Fees are payable for **all** days the children are booked in regardless of whether they attend or not, this includes sick days, school holidays, family holidays and public Holidays.

#### **Direct Debit**

Families are to nominate their desired account and sign the authority below. Your account will only be debited the amount owing on the selected date. This is not a set amount and will reflect your usage over the nominated period.

Fees associated with Direct Debit are passed on to the family. They are:

• Bank Account	per transaction	\$0.75
• Visa/Mastercard	Calculated on transaction value	0.90% + \$0.75
• Amex	Calculated on transaction value	3.85% + \$0.75
• Failed transaction	Per failed or returned transaction attempt	\$2.75
• Claim/Chargeback	Only charged when payment is reversed	\$33.00
• Refund	Per refund (credit/debit card only)	\$2.75

I agree to the terms and conditions governing the debit arrangements between Merino Court Childcare Centre and myself and acknowledge the fees associated with this. For the full Service Agreement, please go to the Hubworks site <https://hubhello.com/docs/DDRSA.pdf>

Fees are charged at the following rates:

All children	Daily	\$100.00
Before school	Daily	\$52.00
After school	Daily	\$63.00
Before and after school	Daily	\$80.00
School Holiday	Daily	\$100.00

### Mealtimes

Whilst at the centre, we will provide morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea for the children present. We have a balanced menu which follows the Start Right Eat Right guidelines. While every effort is made to cater for allergies, health or religious restrictions, we are unable to provide alternative food based on particular likes/dislikes. Children are encouraged but not forced to eat the meals provided.

### Helpful hints for a smooth transition...

- **All children need to be signed in and out each day. This is a licensing requirement and families who constantly forget to sign the book, risk losing their fee reductions.**
- Children are entitled to 42 absent days each financial year. After a child has reached their limit, they are no longer entitled to fee reductions for any days off and will therefore be liable to pay full fees. Approved days (sick days with doctor's certificate, rotating roster days and public holidays) will still receive fee reductions.
- Each day your child attends, they will need to bring; nappies and wipes, hat, spare clothes (labeled) and bottle (if required). Our daily routine includes regular nappy changes so if your child is still in nappies please provide at least **four** nappies. If your child requires more nappies and/or wipes than you supply, a fee will be added to your next account. A note will be placed on the board in the Possum's room when our supplies are getting low for your child.
- If your child has any food allergies, please let us know the details so we do not feed them the wrong foods.
- We would suggest that children be dropped off before 10:30am. This is the time when the children play and interact. After this time, the children are eating and sleeping. It is very hard and unrealistic to expect children to come into the environment and have to sit and sleep without having a chance to play first. If you cannot get here before 10:30am, you could consider dropping them off at 2:00pm, after rest time.
- Parents are asked to stay no longer than 10 minutes when they drop their child off as it makes the separation harder and interferes with the routine. If your child has trouble separating from you, it is usually easier if you hand them to a carer and leave quickly. You are always welcome to ring at any time to check on your child.

- It is important that you allow time in the morning or afternoon to speak with your child's carers so that they can pass on any messages.
- Fees need to be paid regularly and kept two weeks in advance. Accounts that run more than two weeks behind risk losing their child's position in the centre.
- If your child is sick, they need to stay at home. Staff cannot care for children who are not well when there are so many other children. If your child becomes sick during the day, and we contact you, you will need to collect your child within the hour.
- All children should arrive at the centre in clean clothes, bathed and in a clean nappy.

### **Policies**

Here is a brief summary of some of our policies. All of our policies are available on the Merino Court website ([merinocourtchildcare.com.au](http://merinocourtchildcare.com.au)). All families are expected to read the policies and sign the policy form before enrolment is complete. Thankyou.

### **Accident**

- At least one staff member with a current first aid certificate will be on the premises at all times.
- Parents are required to give written authority for staff to seek medical attention for their child if necessary and costs incurred will be the responsibility of the parent. This information is in the parent registration form.
- Accident forms will be completed for parents to read and sign.

### **Positive Guidance of Children's Behaviour**

- Children are encouraged to settle their differences in a peaceful manner.
- The centre does not accept bullying of any type from children, staff, families or visitors.
- No child will receive any form of corporal punishment.
- Limits and expectations of children will always be developmentally appropriate.

### **Health and Hygiene**

- The centre cannot care for sick children as it reduces the level of supervision for the other children.
- Sick children will be sent home and will not be accepted back until they are well. In the case of infectious diseases, a letter from the doctor will be required stating that the child is no longer infectious.
- Children who are sick or have head lice, will be sent home. Parents are to arrange for the child to be picked up within one hour of us contacting you. Children will be checked before returning to the centre.

### **Immunisation**

- All staff and children are encouraged to maintain their immunisation.
- If an outbreak of an immunisable disease occurs at the centre, children who are not immunised or do not have up-to-date immunisation records at the centre will be considered unimmunised and therefore excluded until the outbreak has concluded. It is the families responsibility to ensure our records are kept current.

### **Orientation**

- If there is concern about transitioning, New children will be to attend for half days until staff believe they are ready for full days. In most cases, this is 1-2 visits.
- Families will be encouraged to phone and check on their child or stay for a while should they feel concern.

### **Program**

- The centre provides a quality program developmentally appropriate to the ages of the children.
- The program includes activities to promote and stimulate your child's physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive (thinking) development.
- The program is based on regular observations of the children's development and their interests and family and child input
- Upon enrolment, families will be emailed a link to download the KeptMe Programming App.

### **Aggressive visitors or those arriving under the influence of drugs or alcohol**

- At all times, the safety of the children and staff are first priority.
- Visitors will not be allowed into the centre until their manner has been assessed.
- Visitors with inappropriate behaviour will be asked to leave the premises.
- Visitors will be told that we can not let them take a child while they are under the influence and that we will arrange for someone else to collect the child.

### **Equity, Bias and Discrimination**

- Merino Court ChildCare Centre respects diversity in the social and cultural backgrounds and in the abilities of all people. Children and families will be treated with respect and where possible, we will accommodate their diversity.
- Issues regarding equity, bias and discrimination will be added into the program to develop children's understanding and awareness.
- Merino Court Child Care Centre will not accept any discrimination or bias towards any of the children, families, staff of visitors attending the centre.

### **Safety**

- Children will be constantly supervised by a staff member.
- A qualified staff will always be on the premises, as well as at least one qualified first aid person.
- All potentially dangerous products will be clearly labeled and stored in a locked cupboard out of reach of all children.

### **Nutrition**

- The centre will provide a balanced diet that meets the dietary needs of the children. Meals will provide a variety of colours, temperatures, tastes and textures. While children are encouraged to try new foods, they are not forced. Cultural and religious beliefs will be respected and catered for where possible.
- In following with the dietary guidelines, children will not be permitted to eat lollies, soft drinks etc. while at the centre. Furthermore, children will be encouraged to drink water or milk in cups or bottles. It is the parent's responsibility to ensure that the staff are made aware of any



allergies or food restrictions. In some cases, parents will be asked to provide special foods for allergy needs.

- Parents will be invited to provide cakes or biscuits for their child's birthday.

Please be aware that acceptance of your enrolment form by us, is subject to your agreement to abide by the guidelines and policies set by the management. Please feel free to approach the staff if you have any other questions and we will do all we can to assist you.