Macedon Ranges Shire Council | Early Years Services

Kindergarten Handbook

Information For Parents and Carers



Our Kindergartens

Kindergarten	Address	Phone	Kindergarten Contact
Kyneton Kindergarten	49A Edgecombe Street, Kyneton 3444	(03) 5422 1463 - Golden Wattle (03) 5422 2157 - Silver Banksia	Vanessa Gray
Lancefield Childrens Centre	76A High St, Lancefield	(03) 5429 2547	Rebecca Hey
Macedon Kindergarten	55 Bruce Street, Macedon 3440	(03) 5426 1877	Nicole Mezzatesta
Manna Gum Family and Children's Centre	71 Robertson Street, Gisborne 3437	(03) 5421 9516 - White Gum (03) 5421 9517 - Ribbon Gum	Jodie Dyer
Riddells Creek Kindergarten	23 Mahoneys Road, Riddells Creek 3431	(03) 5428 7207	Georgie Brown
Romsey Kindergarten	32-48 Main Street, Romsey 3434	(03) 5429 5294 Bunjil (03) 5429 6076 Waa	Kym Bates
Swinburne Avenue Children's Centre	8 Swinburne Avenue, Gisborne 3437	(03) 5428 3731 - Burrow (03) 5428 3697 - Blue Gum	Amy Clarke
Woodend Kindergarten	10 Nicholson Street, Woodend 3442	(03) 5427 1421 - Pin Oak (03) 5427 2730 - Banksia	Paulette Maskell



Early Years Vision

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is on Dja Dja Wurrung, Taungurung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Countries. We respect their elders past and present and welcome Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who attend or visit our services. Children participate in acknowledgement of country before group activities, at all our kindergartens. This is a way of integrating Indigenous culture into our educational program. Council are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children.

Macedon Ranges Shire Council is a child safe organisation. Child safety is everyone's responsibility and Council prides itself on being a child safe organisation with zero tolerance for child abuse. This means creating environments where all children and young people are heard, valued and protected from harm.

Important dates

Key Dates

Date	Day	Activity
29 January and 1 February	Friday or Monday	Orientation (booking times will be emailed)
2 February	Tuesday	Full sessions begin
17 March	Wednesday	Child free day
6 May	Thursday	Child free day
8 June	Tuesday	Child free day
12 July	Monday	Child free day
16 December	Thursday	Last day of kindergarten sessions running for 2027

2027 Term dates

Period	Start	Finish
Term 1	From 2 February	25 March
Term 2	12 April	25 June
Term 3	12 July	17 September
Term 4	4 October	16 December (Friday 17 December is a child free day)

2027 Public holidays and child free days

Date	Day	Holiday
27 January	Wednesday	Child free day (staff set up)
28 January	Thursday	Child free day (staff set up)
8 March	Monday	Labour Day (public holiday)
17 March	Wednesday	Child free day (staff professional development)
26 March	Friday	Good Friday (public holiday)
6 May	Thursday	Child free day (staff professional development)
8 June	Tuesday	Child free day (staff professional development)
14 June	Monday	King's Birthday (public holiday)
12 July	Monday	Child free day (staff set up)
24 September*	Friday	Friday before AFL Grand Final (*date TBC)
2 November	Tuesday	Melbourne Cup – all kindergartens closed except Kyneton
3 November	Wednesday	Kyneton Cup – Kyneton Kindergarten closed only
17 December	Friday	Child free day (staff pack up)

Preparing for kindergarten

Orientation

Orientation in 2027 will take place across 2 days:
Friday 29 January or Monday 1 February.

- Sessions run for 75 minutes and are usually split (two per day)
- Parents/carers must be in attendance with their child if attending an orientation session.
- Families will be sent an email with more information about attending orientation.

What to expect at orientation

- Meet educators and other families
- Explore the classroom and facilities
- Learn about the program and curriculum
- Discover routines and expectations
- Ease children into the room through play-based activities
- Share information about your child, or organise another time to further discuss

Things parents can do before doing orientation.

- Write down questions and any concerns about your child's transition.
- Read the kindergarten social story mailed out during the holidays with your child.
- Take a walk past the kindergarten so your child can see the building and surroundings.
- Watch the virtual tour on our website for an extra way to get familiar with the environment.





Preparing for kindergarten

What to bring to kindergarten

Please clearly label all your child's belongings.



Backpack



Lunchbox



Water bottle



Change of clothes



Broad brim hat



Winter Clothing



Gumboots



Pull ups (if required)

What to wear

Clothing should be comfortable and weather appropriate. Kindergartens provide smocks for messy activities, but clothes still get wet or dirty. Please pack extra clothes in your child's bag. Our Kindergartens are SunSmart so please do not dress your child in singlets, sleeveless dresses, thongs or crocs.

Our kindergartens have uniforms which are not mandatory. Uniforms can be ordered through:

Beleza School Uniforms - Gisborne
42C Aitken Street
Gisborne VIC 3437



Preparing for kindergarten

Lunchboxes

Families will need to provide food and a water bottle for the kindergarten day.

Some of our kindergartens have progressive snack times, which means children eat when they choose. But as a guide:

You should be for packing:

- A drink bottle (water only) that can be refilled during the day
- Lunch
- 2 x snacks for morning and afternoon tea.

Nutrition and discretionary foods

Our kindergartens promote a variety and adequate amount of nutritious food and drink at regular intervals. These foods are colourful, high in fibre and vitamins, varied in textures, colours, flavours and are culturally diverse.

Discretionary foods are high in sugar and saturated fats. We encourage families to limit packing these foods in lunchboxes. Children will be active during the kindergarten day and need food that will help sustain energetic play.

Our teachers talk about the importance of a balanced diet with children in the program. They keep discussions about food open and free of judgement or shame for young people.

Allergen Awareness

Many children have serious food allergies. We ask that you are mindful about common allergens like nuts, seeds, eggs and wheat. You will be notified if there is a severe anaphylaxis child in your kindergarten group. You may be asked not to bring that product to kindergarten.



Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Preparing for kindergarten

Activities to practice with your child

- Dressing themselves
- Using tissues
- Washing their hands
- Opening their lunchbox
- Carrying their own bag

Toilet Training

Children are not required to be toilet trained before they start kindergarten but here are some tips to get your child started.

- teach your child words for going to the toilet like ‘wee’, ‘poo’ and, ‘I need to go’.
- let your child try sitting on the potty or toilet to help them feel comfortable with using a toilet.
- use positive encouragement if the child attempts to use the potty/toilet.
- in summer start trialing putting cloth underpants on your child to help them understand the feeling of wetness.

Visit Raising Children Network for more tips and advice,
raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/health-daily-care/toileting/toilet-training-guide



Staying in touch

Teacher and educators

Call your service directly to advise if your child will be absent or have a contagious illness. Parents can discuss anything with their teacher or educators including concerns and feedback. You can:

- speak with them before or after session **or**
- arrange a 1:1 meeting.

Kinderloop

Teachers and educators will use **Kinderloop** to provide updates on your child's time at kindergarten. Updates will be linked to the curriculum outcomes. You will be set up with a Kinderloop account closer to your child's start date.

Enrolment or personal information

For enrolment and registration matters we will communicate with you by email. Some emails may go to spam folders so please check these folders regularly.

Please contact our Enrolment Officer at **kinderenrolment@mrsc.vic.gov.au** or on (03) 5422 0239 to amend any registration details if you or your child's circumstances have changed. **Please ensure your details are kept up to date.**

General information

Our Early Years Communication Team will send key communications during the year including:

- Term updates
- Illness, health, or road safety advice
- Enrolment reminders

For general enquiries you can contact **earlyyearscommunications@mrsc.vic.gov.au**

Transition Statements

Transition statements are developed for each child attending a Four-Year-Old kindergarten program in preparation for school Term 1. Visit the Department of Education website for more information, https://www.vic.gov.au/transition-school-resources-families

Staying in touch

Helping in the classroom

There are a range of ways parents and/or guardians can get involved in our kindergarten. Talk to your child's educators to find out how you can be involved.

Parent/carer helpers, are required to have a Victorian Working with Children's Check (WWCC) or Victorian Teachers Registration (VIT), and adhere to Child Safe Standards and Child Safety and Wellbeing Policies, and the Child Safety and Wellbeing code of conduct signed upon enrolment. **You will be sent a Parent/carer helper form at the end of Term one.**

Concerns and complaints

For any concerns or complaints, please follow our procedure:

- Discuss concerns or complaints with the teacher or educators.
- If you would like additional support, contact the Regional Team Leader.
- If your concern is not resolved, contact Coordinator Early Years services.

You can also make a complaint directly to the Department of Education through an authorised officer from your local VECRA regional office.

Contacts and queries

Enrolment and Registration Early Years Enrolment Officers	(03) 5422 0239 kinderenrolment@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Early Years Communications	Phelon Manski earlyyearscommunications@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Regional Team Leaders	Kylie Golz 0408 113 604 or Kate McDermott 0418 511 052 eyregionalleader@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Coordinator Early Years Services	Samantha Waymouth 0428 238 894 swaymouth@mrsc.vic.gov.au
Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority	North-Western Victora Region Loddon Mallee 03 4433 7502 7-15 McLaren Street, Bendigo 3552
Reporting suspected child abuse Commission for children and young people	North Division Intake 1300 664 977 After hours 131 278
Maternal & Child Health Services	(03) 5422 0281 mchadmin@mrsc.vic.gov.au

Kindergarten drop-off and pick-up

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- completing the authorised nominee section of their child's enrolment form before their child attends the service. You can add authorised nominees at any time of the year
- ensuring educators are aware a child has arrived at or left the service
- collecting their child on time at the end of each session
- alerting educators if they are likely to be late collecting their child – you can call the centre directly (see Service contact numbers)
- supervising their own child before signing them in and out of the program.
- supervising other children in their care, including siblings, whilst at the service.

Please do not let other children out of the gates as you enter and exit.

Multi-age groups

Our kindergarten groups are all multi-age. Multi-age groups are a mix of 3- and 4-year-old children. In these groups, ages can range from 3-6 years old, allowing:

- Leadership opportunities for older children
- More complex play opportunities for younger children
- Reduced separation anxiety
- Consolidating knowledge
- Patience and empathy

Rotational groups

A rotational model is where a larger group (e.g. Echidna) is made up of a numbered sub-group (e.g. 1,2,3). Each child is allocated to a small group (e.g. Echidna 1) and will share the kindergarten program with either of the other groups on each day.
Example timetable below

Monday 8.30 – 4.00pm	**Tuesday 8.30 – 4.00pm**	**Thursday 8.30 – 4.00pm**
Echidna 1	Echidna 1	
Echidna 2		Echidna 2
	Echidna 3	Echidna 3

School Readiness Funding

Victorian kindergartens can use School Readiness Funding (SRF) to fund activities, training or programs throughout the year. In 2027 our kindergartens will be using funding for the following:

Breakfast Club

Breakfast club provides children with access to nutritious food at the beginning of the day, including fruit and/or toast. The program promotes healthy eating habits, wellbeing and inclusion, while helping children arrive settled, energised and ready to learn. It also creates opportunities for children, families and educators to connect in a welcoming environment, strengthening relationships and supporting positive engagement in the kindergarten program.

Coaching on slow pedagogy

Slow pedagogy coaching gives educators practical strategies to observe children more closely and respond thoughtfully to their ideas, interests and cues.
This approach values unhurried routines, sustained play and deeper engagement, allowing children the time and space to explore concepts, build relationships, solve problems and develop confidence. Through reflection and intentional planning, educators can create calmer, more responsive learning environments that strengthen children's agency, wellbeing and readiness for school.

Additional educators

School Readiness Funding is being used to provide additional educators in the classroom, strengthening support for children's learning, development and wellbeing. In Term 1 increased staffing allows educators to work with smaller groups, respond to individual needs and create more meaningful learning experiences as children transition into the new kindergarten year.

Inclusion and Support

Our Approach to Inclusion

At Kindergarten we believe that every child is unique and deserves an inclusive environment where they can thrive. Our approach to inclusion focuses on celebrating diversity and creating a welcoming space for all children. Our rooms are a place to open discussions with children about equality and respect regardless of background, gender, experience or religion.



Here are some ways we incorporate inclusion in our kindergarten programs.

Equity and Respect Kits

Equity and Respect Kits are a collection of physical books, learning modules, lesson plans, and teaching tools to support anti-bias practices, gender equality, and cultural safety.

Books are available to children in the classroom throughout the year and teachers in the classroom will use books and other materials to discuss equality in an age-appropriate way. The books have been organised into eight themes (see list below) and the books in each set vary in which age-group they are most appropriate for.

- All abilities
- Body safety and consent
- Challenging gender stereotypes
- Emotions
- First Nations Perspectives
- Gender diversity
- Human rights and diversity
- Respectful relationships

Kindergarten Inclusion and Transition Support Officer (KITSO)

The Kindergarten Inclusion and Transition Support Officer (KITSO) support teachers and educators to create inclusive kindergarten programs for children with disabilities, developmental differences and/or vulnerabilities. The KITSO visits all kindergarten groups and assists teachers and educators to identify additional needs, access inclusion funding, connect with allied health and early intervention services, develop inclusion strategies, and support positive transitions into kindergarten and on to school.

Inclusion and Support

Preschool Field Officers

Preschool Field Officers (PSFOs) provide short-term guidance and coaching to early childhood educators to help children with additional needs. The program operates within kindergarten programs and does not deliver direct intervention to a child.
Support to educators may include:

- providing
- information, resources and strategies
- assisting educators in identifying additional needs
- modelling of specific skills, suggestions, and strategies with educators

Your child's educator will submit a referral for PSFO support should they need additional coaching or guidance. If you have any questions or would like to know more about the Preschool Field Officer program you can speak with your child's educator.

Children with developmental delays

We are committed to supporting any child who has a developmental delay. If your child needs assistance, please ensure that your enrolment form identifies this and that you add supporting documentation. For further information, call our Enrolment Officer on (03) 5422 0239.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Funding

The Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS) program provides resources for educators to deliver an inclusive program for children with additional needs to support their learning and development



Omnia Community Health

Omnia Community Health is a not-for-profit community health organisation providing a comprehensive range of free and low-cost health, wellbeing and community services.
Omnia Community Health works with our kindergartens delivering programs like the Smiles 4 Miles and allied health services through School Readiness Funding.

Maternal and Child Health

The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) service is free and supports your child's health and development from birth until school age.
Outside of the Universal program, the MCH team can provide enhanced support and address additional concerns. A 24-hour helpline (13 22 29) is available for children up to the age of 5.

Medical Conditions and Plans

If your child has a medical condition, we follow a strict protocol relating to policies and procedures developed in alignment with The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011 (*Regulation 168*).
If your child has a health care need, allergy or relevant medical condition, families will be required to work with your kindergarten team on:

- the appropriate management of medical conditions
- providing a medical management plan
- developing an appropriate risk minimisation and communication plan
- providing chemist labelled medication

Please note your child will not be able to commence kindergarten until the appropriate medication and medical plans have been received.

Medication

Medication (including prescription, non-prescription, over the counter and homeopathic medications) can only be administered to a child at a service with the authorisation of a parent/guardian or person with the lawful authority to consent.

All medications including prescription, non-prescription, over the counter and homeopathic medications need to have a chemist label. The instructions and use-by dates must also be visible.

Non-prescription medications and over-the-counter products (for example, sunscreen and nappy cream) must be clearly labelled with the child's name. The instructions and use-by dates must also be visible.

Paracetamol is not supplied by Council kindergarten. The administration of paracetamol will be in line with the administration of all other medication

Your child's teachers and educators follow strict guidelines when administering which you can read in detail as part of the Early Years Policy - Administration of Medication

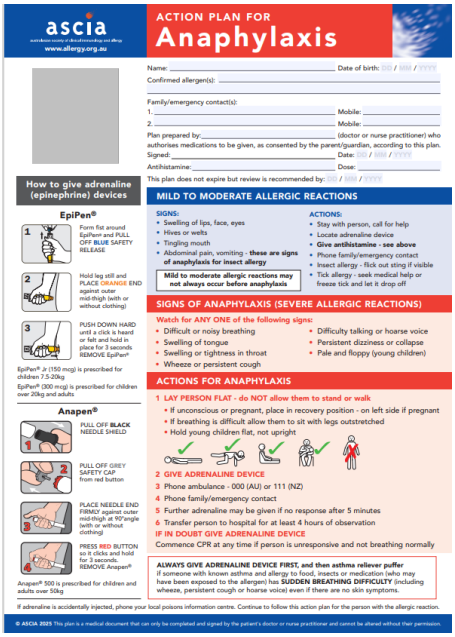
Epilepsy and Diabetes

Medical conditions are managed in strict accordance with policies and procedures. Our staff aim to understand the individual child and manage the condition in accordance with medical Management Plans. Epilepsy training will need to be conducted prior to your child commencing kindergarten. Please ensure you communicate this during enrolment processes to ensure your child can commence kindergarten at the start of the year. Please find more information here:
Early Years Policy - Epilepsy
Early Years Policy - Diabetes

Medical Conditions and Plans

Anaphylaxis and Allergy Action Plans

There are different types of ASCIA action plans:


ascia
www.allergy.org.au

ACTION PLAN FOR
Anaphylaxis

Name: Date of birth: DD / MM / YYYY
Confirmed allergen(s):
Family/emergency contact(s):
1. Mobile:
2. Mobile:
Plan prepared by: (doctor or nurse practitioner) who authorises medications to be given, as consented by the parent/guardian, according to this plan.
Signed: Date: DD / MM / YYYY
Antihistamine: Dose:
This plan does not expire but review is recommended by: DD / MM / YYYY

How to give adrenaline (epinephrine) devices

EpiPen®
1 Form fist around EpiPen® and PULL OFF BLUE SAFETY RELEASE
2 Hold leg still and PLACE ORANGE END against outer mid-thigh (with or without clothing)
3 PUSH DOWN HARD until a click is heard or felt and hold in place for 3 seconds. REMOVE EpiPen®
EpiPen® Jr (150 mcg) is prescribed for children 7.5-20kg
EpiPen® (300 mcg) is prescribed for children over 20kg and adults

Anapen®
1 PULL OFF BLACK NEEDLE SHIELD
2 PULL OFF GREY SAFETY CAP from red button
3 PLACE NEEDLE END FIRMLY against outer mid-thigh at 90°angle (with or without clothing)
4 PRESS RED BUTTON so it clicks and hold for 3 seconds. REMOVE Anapen®
Anapen® 500 is prescribed for children and adults over 50kg

If adrenaline is accidentally injected, phone your local poisons information centre. Continue to follow this action plan for the person with the allergic reaction.

MILD TO MODERATE ALLERGIC REACTIONS

SIGNS:
- Swelling of lips, face, eyes
- Hives or welts
- Tingling mouth
- Abdominal pain, vomiting - these are signs of anaphylaxis for insect allergy

Mild to moderate allergic reactions may not always occur before anaphylaxis

ACTIONS:
- Stay with person, call for help
- Locate adrenaline device
- Give antihistamine - see above
- Phone family/emergency contact
- Insect allergy - flick out sting if visible
- Tick allergy - seek medical help or freeze tick and let it drop off

SIGNS OF ANAPHYLAXIS (SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTIONS)

Watch for ANY ONE of the following signs:
- Difficult or noisy breathing
- Swelling of tongue
- Swelling or tightness in throat
- Wheeze or persistent cough
- Difficulty talking or hoarse voice
- Persistent dizziness or collapse
- Pale and floppy (young children)

ACTIONS FOR ANAPHYLAXIS

1 LAY PERSON FLAT - do NOT allow them to stand or walk
- If unconscious or pregnant, place in recovery position - on left side if pregnant
- If breathing is difficult allow them to sit with legs outstretched
- Hold young children flat, not upright

2 GIVE ADRENALINE DEVICE
3 Phone ambulance - 000 (AU) or 111 (NZ)
4 Phone family/emergency contact
5 Further adrenaline may be given if no response after 5 minutes
6 Transfer person to hospital for at least 4 hours of observation

IF IN DOUBT GIVE ADRENALINE DEVICE
Commence CPR at any time if person is unresponsive and not breathing normally

ALWAYS GIVE ADRENALINE DEVICE FIRST, and then asthma reliever puffer
If someone with known asthma and allergy to food, insects or medication (who may have been exposed to the allergen) has SUDDEN BREATHING DIFFICULTY (including wheeze, persistent cough or hoarse voice) even if there are no skin symptoms.

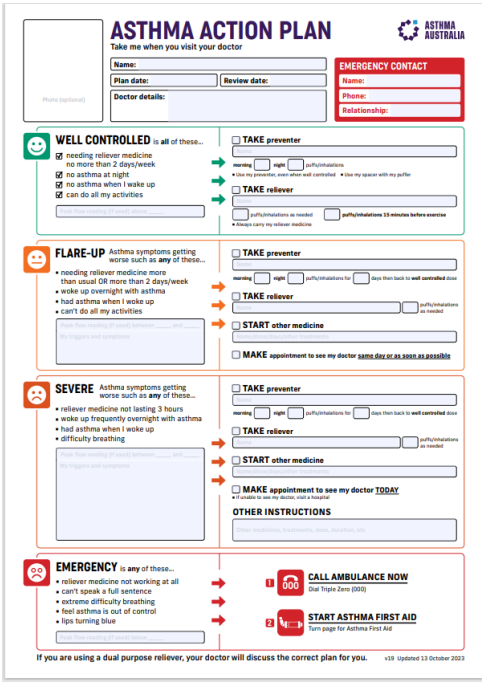
© ASCIA 2023 This plan is a medical document that can only be completed and signed by the patient's doctor or nurse practitioner and cannot be altered without their permission.

Please ensure:
- This form is **completed in full by a doctor**
- Includes **doctor's signature**
- Provide a **colour** copy to staff.
- All child's details are correct and up to date
- A clear and recent photo of your child is attached
- Includes a review date (within 12 months)
- Action plans are to be provided alongside all chemist labelled medication. (e.g., EpiPen, etc.)

All action plans will be reviewed by your child's teacher and kindergarten regional team leaders.

Asthma Action Plans

The Asthma Australia plan is the preferred medical plan as recommended in our policy


ASTHMA ACTION PLAN
Take me when you visit your doctor
ASTHMA AUSTRALIA

Name:
Plan date: Review date:
Doctor details:
EMERGENCY CONTACT
Name:
Phone:
Relationship:

WELL CONTROLLED is all of these...
- needing reliever medicine no more than 2 days/week
- no asthma at night
- no asthma when I wake up
- can do all my activities

TAKE preventer
TAKE reliever

FLARE-UP Asthma symptoms getting worse such as any of these...
- needing reliever medicine more than usual OR more than 2 days/week
- woke up overnight with asthma
- had asthma when I woke up
- can't do all my activities

TAKE preventer
TAKE reliever
START other medicine
MAKE appointment to see my doctor same day or as soon as possible

SEVERE Asthma symptoms getting worse such as any of these...
- reliever medicine not lasting 3 hours
- woke up frequently overnight with asthma
- had asthma when I woke up
- difficulty breathing

TAKE preventer
TAKE reliever
START other medicine
MAKE appointment to see my doctor TODAY
OTHER INSTRUCTIONS

EMERGENCY is any of these...
- reliever medicine not working at all
- can't speak a full sentence
- extreme difficulty breathing
- feel asthma is out of control
- lips turning blue

1 CALL AMBULANCE NOW
Dial Triple Zero (000)
2 START ASTHMA FIRST AID
Turn page for Asthma First Aid

If you are using a dual purpose reliever, your doctor will discuss the correct plan for you. v19 Updated 13 October 2023

Please ensure:
- This form is **completed in full by a doctor**
- Includes a **doctor's signature**
- Provide a **colour** copy to staff.
- All child's details are correct and up to date
- A clear and recent photo of your child is attached
- Includes a review date (within 12 months)
- Action plans are to be provided alongside all chemist labelled medication (e.g. Ventolin, spacers etc.)

All action plans will be reviewed by your child's teacher and kindergarten regional team leaders.

Illness, immunisation and first aid

Illness, infections and absences

If your child is unwell, please keep your child at home until they are well and advise the service of their absence. The kindergarten will contact you to collect your child if they become unwell at kindergarten. **Please ensure your phone contact details are up to date.**

Infectious Diseases

If your child has an infection, please notify the kindergarten as it may be necessary for the service to contact the Communicable Disease Section Unit - Victorian Department of Health who are responsible for advice relating to infectious diseases including common infections like gastro, influenza, whooping cough, headlice and hand, foot and mouth disease.

- Staying healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services - 6th Edition
- Exclusion table for infectious disease at children's services

Immunisation Requirements

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation an early childhood education service cannot confirm enrolment of a child unless the parent and/or guardian has provided an up-to-date copy of the child's Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). The statement shows the child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule and is on track with the catch-up schedule
- has a medical exemption not to be vaccinated.

If your child is not up to date, council runs regular immunisation clinics. To view the timetable and make a booking please go to Immunisation - Macedon Ranges Shire Council

Parents and/or guardians can print a copy of their child's Immunisation History Statement by:

- accessing their MyGov account
- calling the AIR on phone 1800 653 809
- visiting a Medicare or Centrelink office

First Aid Kits

All teachers and educators are trained in first aid. First aid kits are kept at each kindergarten and available for parents' information. First aid kits can be inspected on request.

Safety and sustainability

SunSmart kindergartens

Sun protection is used whenever UV levels are 3 or higher. All children are required to wear a SunSmart approved hat that protects their face, neck and ears.
These include:

- Legionnaire
- Broad brim
- Bucket hat

Peak caps and visors are not considered a suitable alternative. Children without a hat on a high UV day, can play in a shaded area.



SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is provided at the service, however families can provide an alternative sunscreen to be left at the service if their child has sunscreen sensitivity.

We encourage children to wear sun protective hats and clothing when travelling to and from kindergarten. Visit the SunSmart website for more information sunsmart.com.au

Keeping kindergartens green



At each of our kindergartens, we are:

- no longer using single-use plastics
- buying in bulk to reduce packaging
- encouraging reuse and upcycling
- using the four-bin system correctly
- recycling soft plastics, stationery, craft items

Families can get involved by considering things like:

- what food and snacks are packaged in
- choosing plastic free when possible
- using reusable and not single-use plastics e.g. reusable yoghurt pouches, beeswax wraps or foil for snacks.

Learn more about reducing waste by visiting mrsc.vic.gov.au/waste-reduction or downloading the MRSC waste app

Water Safety

Council kindergartens adhere to water safety practices as outlined in the Early Years Water Safety policy. Families can read more about water safety: https://kidsafe.com.au/water-safety/

Policies

Our policies reflect our vision and are ensure high quality education and care for the children who attend our services. Policies are on Kinderloop or here: MRSC Early Years Policies

Sleep and rest

We provide children with a safe, secure environment for rest at kindergarten. Educators will respond to the unique needs of each child, considering conversations with parents, home circumstances, and the child's overall health and wellbeing. There are no fixed sleep routines; instead, educators will respond to each child's requirements. We ensure there are sufficient quiet areas for children with appropriate lighting, airflow, and noise levels to facilitate rest, relaxation, quiet time, or sleep when necessary. We encourage parents to communicate their child's specific needs with our educators.

Celebrations

To ensure celebrations are appropriate, educators and regional team leaders will consider:

- The context of the service
- Planned activities are appropriate to the development of the children
- The event is relevant, meaningful, inclusive and welcoming
- Parents/Carers have been consulted
- Children have input and choice to participate or not participate
- It is safe (Risk Management Plan has been completed)
- It is culturally safe, inclusive and respectful

We respect that not all celebrations will be appropriate for your group or your service. The safety and wellbeing of children will always be our main priority in any celebration or event.

Gifts

Kindergarten staff follow a strict Code of Conduct to ensure fairness and integrity in their work. Staff cannot accept cash or cash equivalents (gift cards, vouchers, scratchies etc.), and any gift that could be seen as influencing their professional duties is not permitted. If a gift is offered, staff are required to report it to their manager and, in some cases, complete a disclosure form.

Please note that gifts of significant value (over $500 from the same source within five years) are considered “disclosable” under the Local Government Act. If you wish to show appreciation, a card or a small token is always welcome.

Keeping children safe

Our role as an organisation

Council follows the Child Safe Standards and the Reportable Conduct Scheme, which create distinct sets of responsibilities for organisations, but have been designed to complement one another. For more information visit Child Safe Standards Reportable Conduct Scheme or refer to our Early Years Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy.

In line with the Council's commitment to child safety, all kindergarten volunteers and students are required to have a Victorian Working with Children's Check.

Privacy of complaints is maintained, and information is only disclosed as required by legislation. Permission is not required from parents/carers of a child to make a report where any abuse is suspected.

Information sharing scheme

The Child Information Sharing (CSI) Scheme is legislation that allows authorised organisations and professionals working with children and young people (0-18) to share information without parents' permission in circumstances that promote a child's wellbeing or safety. A person's safety takes preference over someone's privacy. Generally, your information will not be shared without your consent. But if there is a serious threat to an individual's life, health safety or welfare, your information may be shared without your consent to lessen or prevent this serious threat.
Authorised organisations can request and share confidential information if the Child Information Sharing Scheme threshold is met. The disclosing information entity must reasonably believe that sharing the information may assist the receiving information sharing entity to carry out one or more of the following activities;

1. making a decision, an assessment or plan relating to a child or group of children;
2. initiating or conducting an investigation relating to a child or group of children;
3. providing a service relating to a child or group of children
4. managing any risk to a child or group of children.

For more information visit https://www.vic.gov.au/child-information-sharing-scheme.

eSafety for Children under 5

The eSafety Early Years program is free for parents and carers and provides advice on how to support young children to have safe and enjoyable experiences online.
Children under 5 | eSafety Commissioner

Keeping children safe

Mandatory reporting of child abuse

The following professional groups are required to make a report to Child Protection where they form a reasonable belief that a child has been or is at risk of significant harm, as a result of physical or sexual abuse, and the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from that abuse:

- Registered medical practitioners
- Nurses including midwives
- Victorian police officers
- Registered teachers and school principals
- Out of home care workers (excluding voluntary foster and kinship carers)
- Early childhood workers
- Youth justice workers
- Registered psychologists
- School counsellors
- People in religious ministry.

As a mandated reporter, Council is legally obliged to:

- make a report to Child Protection if a Teacher or Educator believes on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection from physical injury, emotional or sexual abuse
- make the report as soon as practicable after forming that belief
- make a report each time they become aware of any further grounds for their belief.

In addition, any person who believes on reasonable grounds that a child needs protection can make a report to Child Protection. Child Protection will decide when follow up is required and how to classify the report. This may mean providing advice to the reporter, progressing the matter to an investigation, or referring the family to support services in the community, or taking no further action.
More information can be found by clicking here Child Protection

To report any concerns regarding a child, call North Division Intake 1300 664 977 during business hours or call the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 13 12 78

To report concerns about the immediate safety of a child after hours, call the After-Hours Child Protection Emergency Service: 13 12 78.

Emergency management

Our kindergartens implement an SMS emergency text system to notify parents, carers and staff of emergencies including total fire ban days, emergency incidents and relocation destinations. Please be aware that Emergency SMS will be sent to Parents 1 and 2 on your child's enrolment. Other forms of communication such as Kinderloop and email may be used in times of need. Other forms such as socials may be used to inform the wider community if relevant

Kindergarten closures

In the event of High ratings, all services operate as usual.

- All services will be closed on a **'Catastrophic'** day.
- Macedon Kindergarten will be closed on any days that are declared **'Extreme'** or **'Catastrophic'** and days declared as '**Total Fire Ban**'.

Kindergarten	Location	On Bushfire at Risk Register	Pre-emptive Action			
			Total Fire Ban	High	Extreme	Catastrophic
Macedon Kindergarten	in township, one way access/exit	YES	CLOSED	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED	CLOSED
Kyneton Kindergarten	in township	NO	OPEN	Open unless specific threat	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED
Woodend Kindergarten	in township	YES	OPEN	Open unless specific threat	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED
Lancefield Kindergarten	in township attached to MCH	YES	OPEN	Open unless specific threat	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED
Romsey Kindergarten	in township, attached to MCH	NO	OPEN	Open unless specific threat	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED
Riddells Creek Kindergarten	in township, attached to MCH	YES	OPEN	Open unless specific threat	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED
Swinburne Avenue Children's Centre (Gisborne)	in township	YES	OPEN	Open unless specific threat	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED
Manna Gum Family and Children's Centre (Gisborne)	in township, attached to MCH and EY office	YES	OPEN	Open unless specific threat	Open unless specific threat	CLOSED