

Information Handbook 2018



Albert Park Preschool

18 Dundas Place Albert Park | www.albertparkkinder.com.au

Information Handbook

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Welcome to our Kindergarten

We warmly welcome you to Albert Park Preschool. We hope that you will have a wonderful time with us gaining new experiences and making new friends. We are dedicated to providing a kind and nurturing environment where the wellbeing of all is valued and where all can contribute to the life of our Kindergarten.

We are a community Kindergarten with a long and proud history. The former City of South Melbourne opened some of the first Kindergartens in Victoria in the early 1900s. Our Kindergarten opened in 1948 and many children who attended here have returned in recent years as parents. Families have always played an important role in the success of the Kindergarten and since 1996 our Incorporated Association has been governed by a voluntary Parent Committee of Management. Our organisation is licensed to provide a registered kindergarten program by the Victorian State Government in accordance with the National Quality Framework *Education and Care Services National Law* & associated Regulations.

The day to day operation of the Kindergarten is the responsibility of our dedicated staff whose experience and expertise provides the platform for quality early childhood education.

We value the support we can give each other over and beyond your time here. Kindergarten is a special place in the life of families where lasting friendships are formed for both you and your children.

Our Partnership with Families

Early childhood education is very much about partnerships between families and teachers. Through working together as a team, better understanding and relationships are developed between staff and families which, most importantly, will benefit your child.

We recognise that you, the families, are the children's first and most influential teachers. We know that each child is very different and you are the ones who know your child best. We invite you to offer suggestions, ask questions and discuss with us your child's interests. This helps us to understand each child better and to teach more effectively. Together, we can develop a Kindergarten culture where we celebrate diversity and honour differences in histories, languages and lifestyle choices of families. Together, we can help children appreciate that we are all connected and dependent on one another for our wellbeing and learning. When we value each other's knowledge of each child, when we trust each other and when we participate in shared decision-making, we are actively engaged in promoting high quality education for our children.

Our Partnership with Community

Our partnerships within our community are key to our success and continuous strengthening as a service. We particularly acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which the Kindergarten is located – the Boon Wurrung. We promise to nurture and care for this land as they do – with love and respect, to protect the rivers, the creeks and the waterways as they are the blood of this land and to observe the wisdom of Bunjil – to care for the children.

Our Commitment to Quality

Committee, staff, families and children collaborate to set a shared vision and goals which are articulated in our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). We invite families to view and contribute to our QIP copy in the foyer at any time. We value lifelong learning and reflective practice and these values influence all elements of our organisation.

We have 3 main goals guiding our practice in 2018:

- To achieve becoming an energy neutral Kindergarten
- To become a “healthy” Kindergarten as recognised by the Healthy Together Achievement Plan
- To continuously pursue excellence as a service



Contact Details and Session Times

We are open: Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5pm

You will find us at: 18 Dundas Place Albert Park

Our postal address is: PO Box 209 Albert Park Victoria 3206

Our web address is: www.albertparkkinder.com.au

Our contact details are: Telephone: 03 9209 6379 | Email: office@albertparkkinder.com.au

Our session times are:

3 year old

- Wallabies
 - Tuesday 8.30am - 11am
 - Friday 8.30am - 11am

- Koalas
 - Monday 8.30am - 11am
 - Wednesday 8.30am - 11am

4 year old

- Wombats
 - Monday 11.30am - 5pm
 - Wednesday 11.30am - 5pm
 - Thursday 1pm - 5pm

- Kangaroos
 - Tuesday 11.30am - 5pm
 - Thursday 8.30am - 12.30pm
 - Friday 11.30am - 5pm

Our 2018 fees are:

3 year old

- \$550 per term

4 year old

- \$650 per term



Our Philosophy

Along the meandering path of childhood, children find joy in great and small things. In childhood, children become aware of the wonder of life and the incredible marvel of being human.

In the presence of others, among gentle, smiling people, children discover lovely surprises each day. To learn self-control, to develop honesty and integrity, to grow in empathy and become a happy, caring human being, a child needs time and space to play.

Children are at the centre of their learning, discovering the pleasure of independence through encounters with people in supportive, respectful environments. Learning takes place when ideas, concepts and theories are shared with others.

To clearly see, to absolutely hear, to truly feel, children need clarity, acceptance and generosity from their teachers and parents. Children grow upward and outward through action and joy towards friendship, happiness and the discovery of the unknown.

At Albert Park Preschool we believe:

- young children learn best through play, that play is life and that life is learning.
- children learn when they are free to explore, to make choices, to develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.
- children are motivated to learn when they and their families are accepted and respected.
- children learn best when they feel valued socially, emotionally and intellectually.
- children develop positive dispositions towards learning through supportive interactions with adults and peers.
- creativity emerges when children are given the time and space to freely explore the world around them in an atmosphere of mutual trust.
- children benefit from a connection to Nature and can help lay the foundations for a happy, healthy, sustainable future for our community.

Our view of the child

We view the child as a competent individual seeking understanding of the world and their place in it.

We see children as individuals capable of devising creative ways of knowing, understanding and making connections and meaning.

We see each child as a unique identity dependent on relationships and a sense of belonging to others.

Our hope for the future

We hope for an Australian future of compassionate and educated citizens who have equal opportunities to contribute to and engage happily with all facets of life.

We hope to develop in our young children a strong sense of identity and a sense of belonging to a diverse community.

We hope that children develop strong dispositions for learning throughout their lives and that they will be happily engaged, socially functional, optimistic, curious and resilient into adulthood.



Our Health Charter

At Albert Park Preschool Centre we believe in the wonder of life and the incredible marvel of being human.

Our Vision

We strive to create a welcoming, caring, safe and supportive environment that assists all members of the Kindergarten community to experience "health" - defined by the World Health Organisation as a "State of complete physical, mental, and social wellbeing, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity."

We embrace a "whole of centre" approach to the promotion of health and wellbeing, along with adopting a holistic approach to all aspects of health.

To become a health promoting Kindergarten we are committed to working together to:

- encourage and support healthy lifestyles for children, staff, families and the community in which we live and play.
- set clear goals around our vision to be a health promoting Kindergarten that are developed in partnership with our community and pursued collaboratively.
- engage children, families and staff as active participants in the promotion of health and wellbeing
- encourage staff and families to be positive role models for healthy choices and lifestyles
- support children to engage physically, mentally, emotionally and socially with their surroundings, peers and teachers.
- provide children with the tools and techniques to develop emotional literacy, accept and navigate challenge, and be optimistic, curious and resilient into adulthood.
- incorporate opportunities for physical activity, mindfulness and learning about healthy choices into the planning of program that empower children to take action to enhance their health and wellbeing.
- provide an environment that supports and encourages healthy choices and lifestyles, provides opportunity for calm and quiet, and complements health messages delivered in the program.
- celebrate the beauty in our natural environment, clean air, fresh water, the growing of food and our interconnection with nature.
- ensure staff, children and families are supported to access resources, tools and training to enhance their knowledge, compassion and capacity to promote health and wellbeing.
- build partnerships with local health professionals, services and the wider community to enhance health promotion capacity.
- ensure all our policies and procedures support and reflect the values contained within this Health Charter.
- identify boundaries to the delivery of health promotion and supporting each other to overcome them with a commitment to ongoing improvement.

Our Commitment

Albert Park Preschool Centre is committed to ensuring this charter is visible in the day-to-day practice of our Kindergarten. We are committed to ensuring respect, fairness and equality are promoted and modelled, and a sense of belonging is fostered for all.

At Albert Park Preschool we believe:

- that creating a healthy Kindergarten will improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all members of our community both now and in the future.
- that children are competent and capable and can appreciate the importance of their own health and wellbeing – and others - when they see the values of health, wellbeing and respect modelled at home, at Kindergarten and in the general community.
- that creating a healthy Kindergarten will support children to have the best possible start in life, helping them to flourish, and to contribute to a happy, healthy, sustainable future for our community.



The Curriculum

Our Values

- We value the development of warm and trusting relationships between educators and children.
- We recognise the importance of open-ended experiences for young children.
- We know that the unexpected is sometimes better than anything planned. This is the joy of working with young children.
- Every day is a surprise as we follow children's interests to form the basis of our program.
- We understand the importance of time in nourishing relationships to build strong foundations.
- We know the importance of listening to children so they can lead us and others in different ways of learning.
- We know that each child is unique with different interests and various ways of expression.
- We respect children as capable and curious beings with abilities to discover their own realities through communication, collaboration and exchange with adults and peers.

Pedagogy and Practice | The Reggio Emilia Approach

Early childhood educators draw on a range of theories and research to develop their teaching practice. Our centre is particularly inspired by the Reggio Emilia Approach where children and their interests are at the centre of their learning and teachers are learners alongside children.

The poem "*hundred languages of children*" written by Loris Malaguzzi, the founder of the Reggio Approach, is displayed in our foyer. The poem refers to the many ways children have of expressing themselves and its words serve to remind us that children are curious, competent and capable of extraordinary things!

The Early Years Learning Framework

Our curriculum is based around a number of key concepts and principles that reflect the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), entitled ***Belonging, Being and Becoming***.

The **key principles** that guide the EYLF and our own understandings focus on creating an environment where the following are embedded in our practice:

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships with children, families and colleagues.
- Partnerships with families, children, early childhood educators and the community.
- High expectations and equity where every child, family and teacher is valued and catered for.
- Respect for diversity where difference is acknowledged and celebrated in respectful ways that enhance our understanding.
- Ongoing learning and reflection where we as teachers take the time to reflect on what and why we do what we do and what might change and why.

The 5 key learning outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.



What does this look like? What will my child learn?

Our curriculum is built around a play-based program focussed on the interests of the children together with the intentional planning undertaken by teachers.

Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. Play and learning are entwined in such a way that it is difficult to separate. When children play with each other they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each other's thinking and build new understandings. During play, children use complex language to extend their ideas.



What do early childhood educators do?

The teacher's role is to create supportive environments where children can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. We will engage in sustained, shared conversations with children to extend their learning. We will ask questions that will stimulate thinking and we will nurture and foster the engagement of the mind.

We will embark on sustained projects to engage children in hypothesising and problem-solving. We will encourage positive dispositions for learning and creative thinking by developing learning environments that encourage children to explore and construct in imaginative ways. We will provide balance between teacher-led and child-initiated learning experiences.

Our routines and play experiences will provide children with a sense of security and stability, enabling children to predict what will happen next, building confidence and a sense of self.

We will work with children to promote and model positive ways to relate to others. We will use strategies to help children recognise when play is unfair and we will offer constructive ways to build a caring, fair and inclusive learning community.

The teachers keep confidential developmental records of every child, charting their progress in all areas – cognitive, physical, social and emotional – to build a picture of the growing child. They do this by observing the children at play, and documenting their actions, their language and the ways in which they interact with others. From this information, the teacher individualises a learning plan for every child with strategies designed to encourage further learning and development.

We will provide opportunities for your child to:

- be cuddled, loved and listened to in a safe and secure environment with people who care and understand their individual ways of being and knowing.
- be creative with music, language, drama, movement, dance, puppetry and many other experiences that contribute to learning.
- take risks, challenge their thinking and extend their ideas.
- engage in dramatic play and role play with and without props.
- experience a wide range of sensory materials.
- enjoy quiet times and times of intense concentration with and without others.
- challenge themselves physically and intellectually.
- build friendships and engage in reciprocal relationships.
- develop understandings of fair play.
- develop confidence and positive self-esteem.

We will work with families to guide our children into becoming fair and empathetic individuals who respect each other and the world around them.



The Program

The program includes all the experiences and activities that the teacher prepares based on observations of individual children, their interests and developmental level.

Your child's day at Kindergarten



At the start of the session, your child will be welcomed into the playroom by the educators. The children may choose to play indoors or outside and can freely move between the spaces as their play and interests dictate.

The children are encouraged to choose their own activities from the carefully designed learning centres. They are encouraged to seek new ways of interacting with and using materials. They are free to choose materials and props for their play from a wide selection of natural and non-natural fabrics.

Learning takes place as children interact with other children and staff. Activities and interest groups evolve according to the interests of the children. Staff encourage conversations and help each child to be an active and happy participant in all facets of Kindergarten life.

Group Times

Small groups form and re-form throughout the session, sometimes because the teacher has something specific to talk about with the children and sometimes because the teacher sees a “teachable moment” having recognised that something of importance is taking place. Large groups involving all the children will be part of the day, such as at the end of the session or during transitions from play to lunch.

In these sessions, the children will engage in musical experiences such as playing instruments and singing, movement, drama and literacy experiences such as finger-rhymes, puppetry and stories.



Portfolios & Program Plans | Making Learning Visible

Children's learning is documented and celebrated at the Kindergarten in the form of individual portfolios, the program planning cycle and displays. Within the Kindergarten room, wall displays capture the children's learning, their interests and projects in progress.

The children's individual portfolios are available for families to access online via the Storypark secure portal. On commencement at the Kindergarten you will receive an e-invitation from the Kindergarten providing the steps to follow to gain access. A hard copy of your child's portfolio is also located within the Kindergarten room so that children can readily access them. We invite you to look through your child's portfolio at any time and celebrate their learning with them. The hard copy portfolios are yours to keep at the end of the year as a record of your child's learning journey with us. The Storypark online portfolio is also yours to retain. It belongs to your child and can be added to as their learning journey continues. For more information about Storypark please visit www.storypark.com

In addition to the portfolios, we regularly post program plans in the foyer and the Kindergarten room. We invite you to contribute to the planning documents either online (via Storypark) or in the room (through our post-it note system). This is an important way in which you can update us on your child's interests throughout the year.

We also create project books to celebrate many aspects of Kinder. Our books range from a Community Book (to acknowledge those we regularly see at Kinder), to specific projects we are exploring together. These books are kept in the Kindergarten room so the children can reflect on their learning and add to them over time. We invite you to take a look at these books throughout the year.



Projects

Projects are opportunities for engagement of the mind, collaboration, and a way to involve children, families and members of the community. During projects, teachers will assist children in directing the research and compiling the knowledge they have gleaned to make their learning visible.

All about children | Positive relationships & wellbeing

We seek to develop warm, responsive and trusting relationships with all children. We deliver programs that develop a sense of wellbeing and identity, connection to community, and provide skills for lifelong learning.

Our approach to guiding behaviour is outlined in our Interactions with Children Policy which is available to read in full on our website. We assist all children to self-manage their behaviour and develop a strong sense of wellbeing through positive interactions.

Educators respect the rights of all children and work collaboratively to:

- encourage children to express themselves and their opinions.
- allow children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem.
- maintain the dignity and the rights of each child at all times.
- offer positive guidance and encouragement to support behaviour.
- support the cultural and family values, age, and the physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for.

Arrival & Departure

When you arrive, please support your child to place their bag on their allocated hook in the foyer and their water bottle in the tub provided inside the Kindergarten room.

The doors into the Kindergarten are accessed by keypad with a code for safety. All families will be advised of the code at the beginning of the year. We ask that you wait in the foyer until the teacher opens the door at the beginning and end of the sessions, unless otherwise instructed. At the end of the long sessions parents can access the playroom as needed to collect your child. As a courtesy, however, please try to let the staff know if you will be coming early.

Signing in and out of the Attendance Book

For safety and security reasons, children are required to be signed in and out of their sessions. This is a legal obligation under the Education and Care Services Regulations. The arrival and departure time of the child must be documented and initialled every session. Please do not fill in the departure time until you have collected your child and please do not allow the children to write in this book.

Please remember to sign your child in and out every session.

Our Supervision of Children Policy

The safety and wellbeing of children is our paramount concern – in particular at arrival and departure times when we rely on families to support our efforts to ensure adequate supervision of children. The responsibilities of families at arrival and departure times are outlined in our Supervision of Children Policy and summarised in this Handbook under the section headed “Safety at our Centre”.



Attendance

If your child is absent, please notify the Kindergarten via telephone (03 9209 6379) or by sending an email to office@albertparkkinder.com.au

Calendar of Events

We organise various events throughout the year. A Welcome Night is held for each group at the beginning of the year for all parents, children and staff. During the year, our class representatives will organise regular social gatherings. At the end of the year we celebrate with an all of Kinder picnic in St Vincent's Gardens.

Fundraising also plays a significant role in supporting the Kindergarten and our fundraising events receive wonderful support from both parents and the broader community.

Our calendar of events is available to view on our website www.albertparkkinder.com.au

Celebrations

Throughout the year we will invite parents into the program for special celebrations such as cultural events or performances by the children.

We celebrate:

- Birthdays
- Easter
- Christmas
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Seasons
- Our support of Balibo Kindergarten, East Timor
- Transitions
- Cultural Days
- Families and individual successes
- The staff
- The volunteer Committee of Management
- Our groups
- Our community
- Each other

We celebrate the birthdays of children very simply. The child makes a birthday crown and parents are invited to come to Kindergarten to be part of the celebration. We sing "Happy Birthday" and a photo will be taken to capture the special memory.

Class Representatives

Each group has a Class Representative who will organise social events for your group throughout the year. The Class Representative plays an important role in hosting a positive experience for all families at Kindergarten and celebrating the wonderful community in which we work, live and play.



Communication

Discussing progress

Your child's progress at Kindergarten is very important to us. We recognise that you are your child's first teacher and we seek to learn from you so we can best support your child's learning journey. Our teachers want to share information about your child with you and will try to talk with you about your child regularly.

We encourage you to regularly check in with your teacher to discuss progress. If you have any concerns regarding your child's progress, please bring this to the attention of your teacher so that we can best support you at Kindergarten. Please let your teacher know if you would like to make a meeting time for a discussion in private.

Parent Teacher Interviews

Parent teacher interviews are conducted at both year levels during Term 2. The interviews take place at the Kindergarten with some evening meeting times made available to support the attendance of working families.

Keeping in touch

We always welcome family feedback which plays such an important role in the growth of our Kindergarten. We value effective communication and will keep in touch with you regularly.

Reminders, news, notices and permission slips will be forwarded to you by email or SMS via our ParentPaperwork online communications system. Your child's learning and experiences at Kindergarten will be shared via the Storypark online portfolio system and we encourage you to comment and share stories from home and holidays.

Community

Balibo Kindergarten, East Timor



We support the Kindergarten in East Timor established by the Balibo House Trust in memory of the five Australian journalists who died there in 1975. Shirley Shackleton is a local resident who has actively fought to discover the truth about the death of her husband, Greg. Shirley is a member of the Trust with other families of the Balibo 5.

Our children are introduced to philanthropy through our association with Balibo Kindergarten. We raise money at the end of each term when children are invited to wear a dress up from home and bring a gold coin donation to support the children of Balibo.

Concerns | Our commitment to ongoing improvement

We are committed to ongoing quality improvement and feedback from families plays a vital role in helping us to achieve this. We aim for all families to feel welcome to share concerns at any time.

If your concern relates to our policies, procedures or the Kindergarten in general, please contact our Administration Director.

If you have any concerns or queries regarding your child progress, please make a time with your teacher for a confidential discussion. Alternatively, you can raise your concern directly with our Administration Director who can be contacted by email at apkinderoffice@gmail.com.



Creative Arts

The creative arts are essential to a quality education. Music, movement, art and drama provide children with an opportunity to express themselves creatively.

Art

Children are provided with a wide variety of materials and media in the art program from which they can freely choose to create.

Drama

During their time at Kindergarten, children will have the opportunity to dramatise songs, favourite stories and those they create, by performing in small plays or with puppets.

Music & Movement

At Kindergarten the children are introduced to a developmental music program which includes movement and the development of concepts such as rhythm, beat, tempo, volume, tone and melody. Nursery rhymes, familiar from birth, are our cultural heritage and are a beginning point for much of our music and language programs.



Food & Healthy Eating | Towards Zero Waste

Our Nutrition & Active Play Policy is guided by the Department of Health publication entitled “*Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood.*” Our Policy includes lunchbox tips and recipe ideas for families developed in consultation with local Nutritionist, Lisa Minton. In consideration of those children with life-threatening allergies, please do not send any food to Kindergarten that contains nuts or traces of nuts. Commercially prepared food is discouraged at Kindergarten. Please do not give your child any “treats” in their lunch-box; save them for home.

We encourage re-use and recycling, care for the environment and care for our friends with allergies. This is an important message to children about sharing spaces with others. By avoiding packaging we model good environmental practices and support our towards zero waste objective.



Morning Tea (Koalas & Wallabies)

Please send a healthy snack in a named container and a bottle of water for morning tea.

Lunch (Kangaroos & Wombats)

Preparing food and the table, then eating together, is an important social ritual for us all. Sharing this pleasurable experience is part of the long day sessions where all the children will have the opportunity to participate in the organisation of mealtime. We sit together at the table and children are encouraged to share stories and enjoy their food. Please send healthy food and avoid packaged or processed food. We suggest that you provide a sandwich and yoghurt or fruit.

Afternoon Tea (Kangaroos & Wombats)

The contribution and preparation of afternoon tea in our long sessions is one of many ways we encourage the participation of families. Each week our Kangaroos and Wombats families are invited to contribute fruit and vegetables to the collection basket in the foyer suitable for use in our shared afternoon tea platters. We invite families to participate with the children in the preparation and serving of afternoon tea by way of a roster. This helps us to encourage pride in sharing with others and reinforces our approach to healthy eating.



Health & Attendance

Regular attendance is important for all children; however children who are unwell recover best at home. Requests cannot be made for children to remain indoors. Please also be considerate of the other children and staff at Kindergarten. If your child has been ill in the night, please keep them home the following day even if they want to come to Kindergarten.

Medical Condition Management

Management of medical conditions is taken very seriously and all staff are fully trained in First Aid and the use of Asthma Medication and EpiPens. We currently have children enrolled at the Kindergarten with Anaphylaxis and we do not allow nuts into the Kindergarten nor any products or packaging that may contain traces of nuts. We will communicate with all families in the relevant groups about specific allergies, if any, in the group.

If your child needs medication at Kindergarten you will be required to give written permission on our Medication form. Please note: We cannot legally give medicine to children unless authorised in writing.

If your child has an infectious disease, please let us know so we can inform others. If you are wondering how long they need to stay at home, the following table produced by the Department of Health & Human Services provides that information:

<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>

Immunisation

Legislation introduced into the Victorian Parliament during 2015 requires children to be to be fully vaccinated in order to attend childcare and Kindergarten as of 1 January 2016. The only exemption to this is for children who have a documented medical reason supporting why they cannot be fully immunised.

To fulfil our obligations under the legislation, proof of immunisation in the form of an Immunisation History Statement must be provided prior to finalising enrolment at our Centre. We remind families to please provide an updated copy for our records when vaccinations are added. More often than not, the schedule provided to us on enrolment will alter during your time with us to reflect the vaccines due at 4 years of age so please remember to keep us updated.

To obtain a copy of your child's Immunisation History Statement please visit:

<http://www.immunise.health.gov.au/internet/immunise/publishing.nsf/Content/imm-history-statements>

How can families participate?

The Kindergarten welcomes support from families in a number of ways that are both enjoyable and valuable.

You are invited to:

- stay and play during a session.
- join us on excursions.
- let us know of your culture and help us celebrate with you.
- share your knowledge with the children or staff in a presentation.
- let us know your skills and interests so you can be involved in the program.
- be part of the voluntary Parent Committee of Management or you can offer assistance to the Sub-Committees that are for a specific purpose such as Fundraising, Policy & Quality, Environment and Wellbeing.

Stay and Play

We extend an open invitation to families to “stay and play” with us. The children love having you spend some time in session. If you would like to “stay and play” at any time simply let your teacher know in advance.



Incursions & Excursions

Throughout the year, the program is enhanced by performers and specialists coming into the Kindergarten to involve the children in something special such as a puppet show, a drama workshop, or a science lesson. On other occasions, we will take the children by bus to venues outside Kindergarten. On both occasions, we welcome parents and carers. You will be asked to sign permission slips for all excursions and will be notified in advance of the details.

Walking Tours

Each term the children will participate in walking excursions which will include visits to the library and local community. An annual permission slip will be distributed on enrolment and once again, parents will be notified in advance of the details and invited to accompany us on our walks.

The Working with Children Check

We are committed to providing a safe environment for all children and request that all adults accompanying children on excursion have a valid Working with Children Check. There is no application fee applicable to volunteers and you can apply online at the following link:

<http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/>

Messy Play | Active Play | Water Play | Clothing



We encourage and support the children to be physically active at Kindergarten in all weather – both indoors and outside. We also encourage children to be messy because sensory experiences are essential to learning in young children. Children will play in the mud, in sand, with paint and many wet substances. We provide smocks for the children when painting but often their creative urge is stronger than staying clean. Water play provides a relaxing and explorative medium for children and is always available. Please do not ask us to prevent your child playing with water or in the mud and please do not ask your child to keep clean. Kindergarten is a messy place because young children learn through making mess!

Please send your child to Kindergarten in clothes that can take mess and shoes suitable for climbing and active play (please, no thongs). We also ask that you pack a spare set of weather appropriate clothing in your child's bag each session.

Our Policies & Procedures

Our Policy Manual helps guide the operation of our Kindergarten and outlines what families can expect from us. Policies provide information about what we do and in some cases, what we cannot do. Many of our policies exist to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in our care such as:

- Interactions with Children
- Emergency Management and Evacuation
- Management of Medical Conditions

Our Policy Manual is regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with families. A complete set of our policies is available to view on our website at: <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/policies.php>



Respect & Wellbeing for all

We actively promote respect and acceptance amongst the children, staff and parents. We hope that as adults we model respectful behaviours and attitudes in our dealings with each other. We expect parents to respect each other and the staff who are dedicated to providing a warm and nurturing environment for us all. Our Kindergarten has a Code of Conduct Policy which is available to read at the following link:

<http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/policies.php>

Safety at our Centre

We are dedicated to providing a safe and secure environment and to do that we need the support of families for we are all responsible for the safety of children. Our Supervision of Children Policy outlines the responsibilities of families with regard to providing a safe environment for children as follows:

Parents/guardians are responsible for:

- *ensuring educators are aware that their children have arrived at or departed from the service*
- *ensuring that doors and gates, including playground gates, are closed after entry or exit*
- *being aware of the movement of other children near gates and doors when entering or exiting the service*
- *enabling educators to supervise children at all times by making arrangements to speak with them outside program hours*
- *supervising their own children before signing them into the program and after they have signed them out of the program*
- *supervising other children in their care, including siblings, while attending or assisting at the service.*

We thank you for your support in helping us to ensure the safety of children at Kindergarten.

Settling In

Most children will have a time when they feel insecure leaving their parents. Separation anxiety is treated with support and respect at Kindergarten. You are encouraged to stay with your child for as long as it takes to settle them. We are happy to discuss different ways of settling your child that will suit both of you. We are dedicated to making your child's day at Kindergarten happy and will contact you if we are unable to achieve this.

Staff

We are committed to attracting the very best educators to implement our educational programs and we support the lifelong learning of all staff with opportunities to pursue professional development both in Australia and overseas. Our staff are fully qualified and undertake ongoing training to continue to develop their practice.

SunSmart

We are a SunSmart Kindergarten which means that we use a combination of sun protection measures for all outdoor activities when UV levels reach 3 and above (the level that can damage skin and eyes). One of these measures is the requirement for children to wear hats when outdoors from 1st September through to the 30th of April so please remember to pack a hat with your child's belongings during that period. We ask that you apply sunscreen to your child before the session but we also keep a bottle in the foyer if you forget at home. The playground is covered with sun-shades during the warmer months as a further precaution against the harmful rays of the sun. In addition to protecting children and staff from the harmful effects of the sun's ultraviolet radiation, we are also committed to ensuring children and staff have opportunity for healthy UV exposure to maintain vitamin D levels.



Sustainability – Caring for our world

Our philosophy reflects our understanding that children benefit from a connection to nature. Caring for our world is a key strength of our program. Children in all groups will be delivered a sustainability program. This will include gardening, cooking and participating in our aim to become an energy neutral Kindergarten. We provide opportunities for young children to appreciate and understand the natural environment and encourage them to take positive action to develop strategies and skills for a sustainable future.

Toys & Treasures

While we encourage children to bring found objects, their stories, photos and comforters to Kindergarten, we discourage toys from home. It is challenging to look after special toys during session, the loss or damage of which can cause distress.

Kanga and Wally

We have some special toys at Kinder that the children in our 4 year old groups will each have the opportunity to take home with them for a sleepover. Kanga and Wally the Wombat love spending time at home with you and have a special diary recording their many adventures.

Treasure Box

Throughout the year, the children will have the opportunity to take our treasure box home with them to select something special to put inside and bring back to Kinder to show the group.

Transition to School



Parents and teachers want children to be ready to embrace the new experiences and challenges they will face when they begin school. Components of school readiness generally include children's social-emotional competence (cooperation and self-control), their language (verbal and comprehensions) and their motor coordination and physical health. The development of these skills starts early in a child's life. Readiness for school is a developmental process that depends on the rate of each child's mental and physical maturity. Parents are central in providing the environment in which such competencies can develop.

Kindergarten prepares your child for school, not by teaching the alphabet or through structured sheet-work, but by encouraging the development in each child of positive dispositions to learning that will hold them in good stead for the rest of their lives.

Before the children transition to school, they will have learnt how to co-operate, how to lead and how to follow, how to listen to other points of view and how to make a friend. They will be confident in their identity and will know the good feeling of belonging to a group and a supportive community. They will be on their way to becoming excellent communicators in a variety of modes and they will have the basic understandings necessary for further learning in literacy, mathematics and science.

Each school delivers their own Orientation Program to Kindergarten children. We provide the schools with a confidential Transition Statement about your child to assist the Orientation process. The Transition Statement is a document compiled by both teacher and parents at the beginning of Term 4.



Reading and Writing

Most children are interested in learning to read and write and all children will accomplish these skills by Year 2 (unless there are developmental delays).

At Kindergarten we encourage interest in literacy and numeracy by providing an environment rich in opportunities that lay the foundations of later competency; for example, drawing and painting, physical activities that improve coordination, stories, songs and rhymes, magazines, posters, games, name writing and letter writing to friends and family.

The most important activity parents and carers can do with children to encourage and support these skills is to read to them.

What to bring to Kindergarten?

The start of Kindergarten is an exciting time. It is important that you come prepared.

We have put together a checklist of things that you need to bring with you each time you come:

- a named bag
- a named drink bottle containing water
- a named hat (bucket or legionnaire style)
- a named change of seasonally-appropriate clothing (including socks and underwear)
- a named lunch-box containing your food



A reminder to please send your child to Kindergarten in clothes that can take mess and shoes suitable for climbing and active play (no thongs).

We thank you for your choosing Albert Park Preschool as part of your child's learning journey and we look forward to our time together.



Where to go for more information

Web References:

- Our Policies <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/policies.php>
- Our Calendar of Events <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/calendar/>
- Latest News <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/news/>
- Placing your child on our wait list <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/enrolment/>
- Our Annual Reports <http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/>
- All about the National Quality Framework www.acecqa.gov.au
- The National Quality Standard (updated 2018)
<http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/NQF/RevisedNQSHandoutA4.pdf>
- Belonging Being and Becoming – Information for Families
http://files.acecqa.gov.au/files/National-Quality-Framework-Resources-Kit/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf
- More about the Reggio Emilia Approach <https://www.reggioaustralia.org.au/>
- When your child has an infection, the following table from the Health Department will tell you if you can come to Kindergarten
<https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>

You can download a copy of the latest version of this Booklet on our website at the following link:

<http://www.albertparkkinder.com.au/about/>