



# WILD CHERRY SCHOOL

For Waldorf/Steiner Education

The beginning of the kindergarten year marks a big step for both parent and child as the door opens to a world filled with new people and challenges. Our kinder class is a stepping-stone into that world.



## The Kindergarten Program

### A Day in the Kindergarten Class

As you come into our space, come in softly and leave the outside world behind. Please help your child by guiding them to put their bag on the veranda hook. It is important that you arrive on time each day, so your child is entering with other children and being welcomed into the morning as one. Then play and more play is what the day is all about.

**What to bring** (Please label all items clearly with your child's name):

- Hats are compulsory for terms 1 and 4. Please supply a labelled hat to be left at Kinder on your child's bag hook.
- If you would like your child to use a particular brand of sunscreen please supply it labelled with your child's name.
- A backpack for belongings, including at least one spare set of clothes.
- A healthy morning tea that includes fruit and vegetables. Please no sweets or pre-packaged foods. As part of our cooking program, each morning we also bake a shared morning meal to share. A separate morning snack box please.
- A nutritious wholefood lunch and afternoon snack. It helps to pack morning tea and lunch items separately. This helps children eat only their morning tea in the morning and keep their lunch for lunchtime. Please provide an icepack in warm weather, we cannot refrigerate food items. We do not heat food, so a food flask works well if you are providing hot food.
- A reusable bottle for drinking water.
- Gumboots for wet weather.
- Indoor slippers and beanies for terms 2 and 3.

## Arriving and Departing

**Attendance book:** Children must be signed in the attendance book on arrival by the parent or guardian who brings them in, with the time of arrival and the name of the person who will be collecting your child at the end of the day. Children must also be signed out at departure, noting the time they are leaving. Only persons you have nominated on your child's enrolment form, can collect your child.

### **Sunscreen**

In Term 1 and 4 please apply sunscreen on your child before arriving at Kinder. There will also be some available at Kinder that you are welcome to use on arrival. We will reapply sunscreen later in the morning.

### **Rhythm**

Creating a daily and weekly rhythm is central in the early childhood classroom. It helps the children to feel secure and nurtured. As the day and days of the week unfold, songs and verses mark the different activities. Rhythm brings discipline as the children find their own way from one activity to another. It is the framework of the day.

### **Festivals**

We celebrate the season with a festival at the end of each term. It is a special time to come together as a community and celebrate nature, family and friends, share food, song and special activities. Please join us for these community events.

### **Birthday Celebrations**

Children's birthdays are very special events. We warmly welcome family members (parent, grandparent, sibling) to join us for the birthday story. Please see your child's teacher as the birthday approaches to discuss the celebration. We honour your child and their place in our group with a simple ceremony and tell a birthday story. During the story you will be asked to share something from your child's journey for each year of her or his life. This can be very simple like 'she learnt to walk, his first word was, etc'. We make a birthday cake to be shared at morning tea.

### **Art & Craft**

Since most of our activities are play-based, there will be little to bring home each day. Most art and craft will be kept until the end of each term; however, you are welcome to look at your child's work at any time.



### **Family Contribution**

When permitted, we warmly welcome your participation in our program and will work with you to design an appropriate plan. Please let us know if you have any particular talents or skills that you are willing to share. There are many ways to be involved in kindergarten and school life from parent engagement group, craft group, spring fair organising committee, development committee, board membership, and more. We also welcome any helping hands in these areas:

- Garden and grounds maintenance (watering, weeding, raking, sweeping, etc)
- Equipment maintenance (repairing, cleaning, polishing toys, indoor equipment)
- Fresh flowers (a bunch of fresh flowers from your garden to cheer our room)
- Washing children's hand towels, etc

All our families are expected to participate in our fund-raising activities and working bees. Not only does this strengthen our Wild Cherry community, but it also helps families to get to know each other and foster friendships. To volunteer your time in our program you are required to hold a current working with children check (WWCC). Please present your WWCC at the office for verification and

making a copy for filing. WWCC can be obtained free of charge for volunteers from <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/>.

We would also encourage you to donate to the development of our new Early Learning Centre and School building fund. All donations, of any size, are tax deductible and can be made to BSB:633 000 ACC: 194 600 433.

### **Behaviour Support**

Discipline for the young child means learning to fit in with the group and flow along with activities. Mostly this happens naturally through the rhythm of each day's session. Each activity is introduced with a particular verse or song to develop familiarity and comfort. Caring, sharing and developing positive relationships are gently modelled by our educators.

Occasionally a child may struggle with fitting in, and may interrupt play, or hurt another child. In such instances we look for an inner cause and try to remedy that reason. Sometimes however a child may need a little bit of time away from the others helping and working alongside the teacher. Gentle redirection and the opportunity for the child to be the helper offer much remedy. Each child will always be offered respect, patience, and the opportunity for understanding and learning when any conflict or difficulty arises. Through modelling empathy, care, and love for each other through actions, thoughts and words, the children grow in their confidence to feel part of the group.

We choose to work together with parents. Our educators may request a conversation time with you or from time to time or the other way around. Children may be helped by a change in diet or routine. You may have a question or wish to discuss a particular matter. Always inform our educators of any changes at home, particularly if they could have an effect on behaviour. Good communication between teacher and parents is of the utmost importance. The best time to talk with our educators is at the end of each day after the session.

### **Toys**

We ask that children leave home toys at home. They can easily get damaged or broken and can also create a diversion from our program. We love to receive offerings of flowers or natural treasures, a pretty stone, shell, or feather, for our nature table. Your child may bring something from nature to show and share anytime.

### **Clothing**

Sunny, happy colours suit children. We request that children do not wear black items or clothing with commercial logos and prints. This can impact their imaginative play. During terms 1 and 4 ensure your child wears sun protective clothing with shoulders covered. We love to immerse in messy play outdoors. Please dress your child warmly when the weather is cooler as we spend much of our time outside in all kinds of weather. Beanies and gumboots are essential. Always supply spare clothing in your child's bag and a spare bag for soiled clothing. Particularly in winter, warmth helps children stay healthy and allows their inner organs to develop and grow. Children that are underdressed easily catch colds and use vital energy to stay warm. We recommend writing your child's name in their clothing to ensure items don't get lost as easily.

### **Screen time and the young child**

Studies show that the presence of television and other electronic media such as smart phones, iPads and gaming consoles etc. in a child's early life can have very damaging effects to their development. The strong influence electronic devices and media have upon children is visible in many ways. A child will express that by saying 'I am bored'. They may seem stuck or unable to engage in creative play but can only think of superheros or monsters. More subtle changes may be noted in a child who cannot sit still during a story, making it a distressing time instead of a time of wonder and delight. There are many well-documented effects of screen time on young children; for example, hyperactivity and lack of attention span, or inability to complete tasks. Perhaps the greatest loss is the dimming effect it has on the child's imagination. We fully recognise that screen time is a common feature of family life and that it is up families to decide what's best for their child, however we ask that children DO NOT have screen time in the morning before attending and that screen time at night be strongly limited to ensure the child has a healthy and sound sleep.

## **Wellbeing**

We respect that parents know their child best and will know when their child is unwell. Our lively kindergarten is not a soothing environment for a child who is unwell. Please make arrangements so that your child can stay home in a quiet and restful environment when unwell. If your child presents sick or becomes unwell during the day, we will contact you immediately to collect your child. If your child is sick or will be absent for any reasons, please notify the school office in the morning of your child's absence.

In an emergency, we will use the information you have provided in the enrolment form. If parents or guardians can't be reached, your signed consent will allow us to attend to any medical intervention your child might need. If your emergency contact details change, please let us know timely.

## **Healthy Food**

Good nutrition is vital in the early years. Good healthy wholesome food helps children grow, sustain good health, and leads to positive cognitive development. Please provide your child with a healthy morning tea snack and a healthy lunch in separate containers and a snack for the afternoon. **Please NO sweets or pre-packaged food.** They are often high in sugar and salt, and the packaging is environmentally unfriendly. For guidance on what to pack check out <https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/nutrition-fitness>. If you're struggling with ideas, talk to our educators or ask other parents for some recipe ideas. Unperishable foods are preferred or please pack an ice pack for cooling as required. We cannot refrigerate or heat children's food.

We provide the children with a wholesome morning meal each day, to compliment the morning snack from home. Biodynamic and organic food is used whenever possible. The weekly menu is displayed on the noticeboard on the veranda. If your child has specific dietary needs, please alert the teacher before your child's first day of attendance, particularly if your child has food allergies. The Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) have created templates that must be filled out by your GP. You can find more information here <https://www.allergy.org.au/>.

Risk minimisation strategies and management plans must be discussed with our educators and signed. Please ensure all information is up to date and reviewed regularly.

## **Additional Support**

### **Pre School Field Officer**

A Pre School Field Officer is available to support the inclusion of all children in kindergarten programs. If you have any concerns about any area of your child's development, we can assist you in setting up a meeting with the Pre School Field Officer.

### **Kindergarten Inclusion Support (KIS)**

Additional support is available for the inclusion of children with disabilities. If your child has additional support needs that may require inclusion support, please contact us prior to enrolment to discuss a KIS application for your child.

## **Administration and Safety**

### **Safety and Emergency Procedure**

A copy of the school's emergency management plan is stationed in each room. Procedures for evacuation and evacuation drills are practiced with the children at regular intervals.

## **Medication**

If your child has a diagnosed medical condition, asthma or is anaphylactic, a medical action plan must be completed by a medical practitioner (GP). A copy needs to be provided before your child's first day at Wild Cherry and the medical action plan must be discussed by the parent/guardian and teacher and co-signed as part of our medical risk minimisation and communication plan.

Our educators and staff are required to work within regulations when administering medication.

**Important: Medication must be given directly to a staff member and not left in the child's bag for self-administration.**

The following procedures must be followed:

1. Prescribed medication must be accompanied by clear, written instructions and discussed verbally with staff.
2. The parent must complete and sign the medication form at the service.
3. The parent must give details of the time and date of the last dose of medication.
4. Medication must be administered from its original container bearing the original label with the child's name, instructions and use-by date.
5. One staff member will prepare the correct dosage of medication, check it with another staff member, and then administer the medication to the child, and record details on the child's medication form.
6. To verify the recorded details of any medication administered, the parent must sign the medication book at the end of the day.

### **Parent/Teacher Conversations**

At the start of the year educators will meet with families for an interview about your child's life from pregnancy to the present, to develop a strong understanding of your child. Families of kindergarten children will also be able to meet periodically for parent/teacher conversations during the year.

### **Policies**

A manual of all kindergarten and school policies is held in the school office, available for viewing at any time.

### **Newsletter**

Kindergarten news is included in the school newsletter. Please take the time to read the newsletter and note event dates. Newsletters are distributed via email.

### **Group Journal**

The Kindergarten program and the Children's learning journey is documented weekly. These are located on the veranda and are available for viewing at all times.

### **Notice Boards**

General notices and program details are placed on the kindergarten notice board on the classroom veranda.

### **Contact Details**

Please contact your child's educators or the school office at any time, if you have any questions or need any assistance in any matters. We are here to assist you in any way we can.

Our office is attended Mon-Fri 8:30am – 3:30pm.

Telephone 03 5152 1966 or mobile 0490 966 541.

Email [admin@wildcherry.vic.edu.au](mailto:admin@wildcherry.vic.edu.au).

### **Wild Cherry Staff 2023**

Early Childhood Teacher – Cyndie Bignell

Early Childhood Co-Educator – Nicola Hutchins

Kindergarten Inclusion Support Assistant – Carolyn Borland

School Leader – Johanna Camm

Business Leader – Carissa Johnston

