

Annandale After School Centre Inc



Information for Parents & Carers

2008

Welcome to Annandale After School Care Centre (the Centre), a community-based centre providing care for children aged 4-12 years for almost 30 years.

We recognise that you have entrusted to us your most precious possession - your child. Your child's safety and happiness is our first priority.

To assist us in maintaining the high standard that you expect from us, please read this booklet carefully and keep it for future reference. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the Co-ordinator or a member of the Parent Management Committee.

It is a condition of enrolment that families accept and abide by the policies of the Centre. This booklet provides an overview of the Centre, its policies and operation. It also outlines some of the responsibilities of parents and children.

This booklet is for information only, and does not constitute a statement of policies and procedures. Parents and carers are welcome to refer to the Policy and Procedures Manual at any time, available at the Centre. These policies are constantly under review, and parents and carers are encouraged to make suggestions and provide input to the policy development and review process.

If you have any suggestions for improvement or modification of this booklet, or of the Centre's policies and procedures in general, we welcome your ideas.

We hope your child enjoys their time at the Centre, and look forward to building a positive relationship with you and your family.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Children are a valued and important part of our community. At Annandale After School Care Centre, we aim to provide a safe, caring and fun environment for children.

We value the relationship between children, staff and families, and the needs of children are central to the planning and management of our centre.

We support learning through a range of planned and spontaneous activities that are developmentally and culturally appropriate and based on individual and group needs.

We respect the privacy of families and staff, and take seriously our responsibility to protect their personal information.

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Our goals

- To provide a safe, caring and fun environment for children
- To provide a reliable, flexible facility that families can utilise with confidence, and that suits their work and family situation.
- To encourage the social, emotional, creative and physical development of children through stimulating, interesting, challenging and age appropriate equipment and activities – both structured and unstructured.
- To employ and retain quality staff who are committed to providing a caring, interesting and challenging environment for the children in their care.

Hours of operation

7.30 – 9am, and 3.00pm – 6.00pm Monday to Friday during school term. The Centre is closed on public holidays and pupil free days.

The Centre provides before and after school care for children ages 4-12 years, generally those attending Annandale Public School and Pre-school.

The Co-ordinator is available for brief meetings with parents during opening hours. If more detailed discussions are sought, a meeting should be arranged outside opening hours.

Centre management

The Centre is an Incorporated Association led by a volunteer parent-based Management Committee that is responsible for the financial affairs, staffing, and general operation of the Centre. All parents and carers are encouraged to attend the monthly management meetings, and to get involved in management of the Centre.

We work closely with Annandale Public School, and with the P&C Association, although the Centre operates autonomously and independently from the School.

We are committed to providing a quality service, and are accredited under Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance for outside school hours care services. 29th August 2007.

Family involvement

This is a community-based Centre. Parents and carers are encouraged to take an active role in the operation of the Centre through the Management Committee, and to discuss any issues of concern in relation to the Centre's policies/practices, or the experiences of their child, with the Coordinator. We also welcome parents and carers with special skills or interests to contribute to the Centre.

Communication with families

Regular updates on the Centre's program and activities are circulated through the school newsletter.

A "pocket" (labelled for each family) is located on the wall near the sign-in table. Fee statements, receipts, and other notices will be available here for collection. Please check your pocket regularly! A noticeboard above the sign-in desk provides information and reminders, and there is a Parent Information File near the sign-in desk.

Centre policies and procedures

Detailed policies and procedures have been developed to cover all aspects of the Centre's operation. They are constantly under review, and parents and carers are encouraged to make suggestions and provide input to the policy development and review process. A copy of the Centre's policy handbook is available for parents to view at any time.

Staffing

The Centre aims to operate at staff to child ratios that are better than the National Standard of 1:15. Our average ratio is closer to 1:10.

The Centre Co-ordinator is qualified in OOSH (Out of School Hours), and staff are qualified and experienced in childcare, particularly OOSH childcare. We encourage staff to undertake ongoing professional development, and they undertake a variety of relevant training courses each year to keep up-to-date with safety, programming and activities for children.

This service complies with the Working With Children Check as required by the Commission for Children and Young People, and all staff and volunteers undergo screening checks.

Centre program

We aim to provide children with a fun environment. A range of interesting and varied activities are offered to cater for the special needs of different age groups, as well as the interests of individual children.

A copy of the weekly program is posted on the noticeboard. The program changes every week, and is designed in consultation with the children. It includes a range of interesting and challenging activities such as art, craft, cooking, etc. Children are also supported to engage in unstructured play inside or outside the Centre.

Specialist visiting staff organise physical activities on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. This is designed to promote fitness and physical activity, and all children are encouraged to participate.

All parents (and children) are encouraged to make suggestions and become involved in the design of the program.

Daily routine

Before school, children have breakfast, and can then engage in free play, complete homework or project work, or join in organised craft activities, before proceeding to school or pre-school at 9am.

After school, all children must proceed to the Centre immediately at 3pm, except for Pre-school and Kindergarten children who are met by a member of staff at their classroom and escorted to the Centre. On arrival, the children are “signed in” by staff. They then have free play inside and immediately around the Centre until afternoon tea is served at around 3.20pm.

Organised activities (sport, art, etc) commence at 3.30pm, and children can join in or organise their own unstructured play. Pack-up and clean-up time is 5pm, or later in summer time. After cleaning up, children may watch TV or videos, or play board games or other quiet activities inside.

Children who wish to complete their homework are provided with a quiet area and supervision is provided.

Fees

Before school

Permanent	\$10.50 per child, per session (full time or part time)
Casual	\$12.50 per child, per session
Emergency care	\$20 per session

After school

Permanent	\$15 per child, per session (full time or part time)
Casual	\$17 per child, per session
Emergency care	\$20 per session

A \$15 annual registration fee is payable for each child (including casuals). This covers registration and helps to cover insurance costs. It is non-refundable.

A fee bond of \$50 per family is payable when a child is enrolled for the first time. This bond applies to both permanent and casual bookings and will be refunded (less any outstanding fees and other charges) when the family cancels its enrolment at the Centre. The bond can be “rolled over” into the subsequent year for continuing enrolments.

A late fee is charged for any child not collected by 6pm, at the rate of \$1 per minute per child, with a minimum of \$10.

Fee assistance

We are an “Approved Centre” for Child Care Benefit purposes. Most parents should qualify for some assistance if they are working, looking for work or studying, or if they are receiving a Centrelink allowance (single parents, disability pensioners, etc). The Centre can offer parents a reduction in their fees corresponding to the amount of benefits they are eligible for. For example, if the fee is \$16, and a family is eligible for \$2.40 in benefits, the Centre charges the parent \$13.60.

Parents and carers should contact Centrelink (Family Assistance Office) to check their eligibility and payment options (136 150 or www.familyassist.gov.au). Our provider number that you’ll need to provide to Centrelink is 555 066 666H.

Payment arrangements

The Centre is entirely funded by the fees paid by parents, and receives no regular funding from other sources. We aim to keep fees as low as possible to enable all parents and carers to access the service.

A registration fee (\$15 per child) and fee bond (\$50 per family) must be paid on the first day of attendance. This applies to both permanent and casual bookings.

A statement of fees will be provided at the beginning of each term to families with permanent bookings. Fees for permanent bookings should always be paid 2 weeks in advance.

Casuals must pay ON THE DAY OF ATTENDANCE.

Payments may be made by cash, cheque, credit card, EFTPOS or through On-Line Banking. NO CREDIT is available. Receipts will be provided for all payments.

Families eligible for Centrelink funding may have their Centrelink payments paid to the Centre, thereby reducing the fee they pay.

Families experiencing any problems paying fees or settling outstanding accounts should advise the Co-ordinator as soon as possible to make appropriate arrangements. Don’t wait until it becomes a problem!

If fees are overdue for 2 weeks, parents and carers will be asked to immediately settle their accounts. Those with fees overdue for more than 2 weeks will incur an overdue account fee of 10%. Parents and carers with fees overdue for more than 4 weeks risk losing their \$50 fee bond, and having their child suspended until the fee is settled, at which time a further fee bond will be required.

Bookings, absences and cancellations

Permanent: The Centre accepts permanent bookings for 1 to 5 sessions per week. Permanent bookings may be suspended, or changes made to days of attendance, if notification is given to the Co-ordinator 1 week in advance. Fees are payable for any unavoidable absence (sickness, etc) of up to 2 days if notice cannot be provided.

Casual: - Fees for casual bookings **MUST BE PAID ON THE DAY OF ATTENDANCE** or in advance. The Co-ordinator must be informed **EACH DAY** a child is to attend on a casual basis. Casual bookings may be made by phone at any time up to 7.30am (before school) or up to 3pm (after school) on the day of attendance. A message may be left on the Centre's answering machine with the child's name, class, time and date. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure the child (and if necessary, the school) is aware that they are to attend the Centre that day. Casual bookings must be cancelled before 7.30am or 3pm, otherwise a fee will be charged even if the child does not attend.

Emergency – Children that arrive at the Centre without a booking will be charged an emergency fee that is payable on the day.

Arrival, transition from school, and sign in/sign out procedures

We take the security of children very seriously, and will contact parents and carers immediately if a child booked to attend the Centre does not arrive.

Parents must deliver their children to the Centre for before school care , and must sign the attendance book.

After school, Pre-school and Kindergarten children are met by a member of staff, and escorted to the Centre. Other children must proceed to the Centre immediately after school.

Government regulations require parents and carers to sign attendance records as proof of attendance. When collecting children, parents/carers must sign the attendance record located near the office. Parent and carers who do not sign when they collect their children may be penalised by losing Childcare Benefits.

Children will only be released from the Centre to persons nominated by the parents/guardians on the enrolment form. Parents and carers must advise the Centre when someone different will be picking up a child. They must also advise of any custody arrangements or court orders that impact on the collection of children.

Children must not leave the Centre unaccompanied unless written permission is provided in advance.

Health, hygiene, accident and medication

The Centre is unable to accept responsibility for sick children. If a child is unwell on arrival at the Centre, or becomes ill, parents will be contacted and must arrange to collect their child as quickly as possible.

At enrolment, parents are invited to give consent enabling Centre staff to administer First Aid, or call for medical staff, when a child is in need of urgent attention.

In the event of serious illness or accident, the parent/carer (or other emergency contact) will be contacted, and medical staff/or ambulance will be called to attend or transport the child. In this event, a member of staff will remain with the child until a parent/carer arrives. Parents are responsible for any costs involved. A record is kept of all accidents involving injury to children, staff or others.

Children with an infectious disease will be excluded from the Centre during the contagious period. Immunisation information must be provided at enrolment (this is a requirement for Child Care Benefit). Where information is available about the occurrence at the Centre of an infectious disease, that information will be made available to parents/carers

The Centre will not administer non-prescription medication, and will only administer prescription medication with full written consent from parents and carers. In an emergency, medication will only be administered with the permission of a medical practitioner, and with the prior written consent of parents/carers. Records are kept of all information in relation to accidents and medications.

The Centre's aim is to ensure that all children and staff observe hygiene practices, and that staff have access to current information to minimise health risks to children.

Sun safe policy

The Centre has a "no hat – no play" policy, and all children should bring a hat with them. Sunscreen is provided, and children must apply sunscreen and wear a hat when playing outside, except (at the discretion of the Co-ordinator) when it is safe not to do so (early morning, late afternoon, winter months, etc).

Behaviour and discipline

Acceptable standards of behaviour are maintained to ensure the physical and emotional wellbeing of all children and staff. The support of parents in maintaining these standards is an important component of behaviour management.

The Centre adopts similar discipline policies to those in operation at Annandale Public School, so all children should be aware of the requirements. Centre rules are posted in a prominent position, and in regular group meetings, all children are reminded of the Centre's behaviour rules and discipline procedures, including the use of "time out".

Children are encouraged to understand and participate in the development of appropriate rules and expectations for behaviour, including the planning of positive behaviour strategies and strategies for unacceptable behaviour.

All incidents are documented, and parents/carers will be advised of any incidents involving their child. They will be involved in discussing situations in relation to serious or recurring behaviour or discipline problems. Bullying, violence and other misbehaviour will not be tolerated at any time!

Safety policies and procedures

The Centre is committed to providing a safe environment for children. A number of procedures have been implemented to ensure this:

- Children are always supervised by a member of staff whether inside or outside
- Children only play in the primary playground (near the basketball court and climbing equipment) and within view of a staff member supervising the outside area.
- Yellow paint marks the boundary of play, and children are not permitted to move outside this area of the playground, or into car parks
- Children are not permitted to play within 1.5 metres of any boundary fences
- Children must be inside or on the veranda before dark

Food and nutrition

We aim to provide nutritious and varied food of good quality, and children are encouraged to develop good eating habits.

Before school, children are provided with a nutritious breakfast – cereal, toast, and fruit.

After school, children are provided with a nutritious snack soon after arriving from school. Fruit and vegetables are always provided, and children may choose from healthy snacks that change daily – sandwiches, sushi, soup, and pasta. Weekly menus are posted near the kitchen and sign-in book. Water is freely accessible to children at all times. Fruit and other food is available later in each session, particularly for those that stay late. A fruit juice ice block is usually provided after clean up.

Smaller children are supervised to encourage them to eat and drink. We endeavour to accommodate any special dietary requirements or allergies.

Concerns or complaints?

We aim to ensure that parents feel free to communicate any concerns they have in relation to the centre, staff, management, programs or policies without fearing negative consequences. A formal policy is in place to handle grievances, but in general, parents who have a concern are encouraged to talk to the Co-ordinator who will arrange a time to discuss their concern and come to a resolution to address the issue.

If the complaint is not handled to the parent's satisfaction at this level they should discuss the issue with a representative of the Management Committee, either in writing or verbally. The Committee will discuss the issue with the Co-ordinator and develop a strategy for resolving the problem. The parent's complaint will be recorded and dated indicating the issue of concern and how it was resolved.

Confidentiality

The information parents/carers provide to the Centre is confidential and will not be released to authorities or other parents (including the Management Committee) unless requested by a person with a legal right to the information. In the event of access being required to documents held by the Centre, a court order is generally required for persons other than the authorised carer of the child.

However, staff will share information concerning individual children in order to ensure their safety (particularly in the case of medical conditions or allergies), and to provide appropriate programs and activities. They will not share this information with other children or parents.

Children's property

The Centre takes no responsibility for clothing, toys, sporting equipment or other property that children bring to the Centre. We suggest that all clothing be labelled with the child's name, and that children do not bring valuable or special toys or other belongings. A lost property box is maintained in the Centre.

Remember!

- ✦ Check that your emergency contact details are always up to date
- ✦ Don't forget to sign in (before school) and sign out (after school) your child
- ✦ Let us know if your child **will not** be attending the Centre
- ✦ Pick up your children **before 6pm**
- ✦ Fees **MUST** be paid in advance (or on the day for casuals)
- ✦ Let us know if you need further information, or if you have any concerns
- ✦ We encourage all families to become involved in their Centre



Co-ordinator: Martha Rochas

Martha joined us in mid-2004 after more than 3 years, in out of school care in another local school. Martha has formal qualifications in out-of-school hours care (OOSH), combined with great enthusiasm, and a caring and nurturing attitude to children.

Contact Martha if you have any queries about the Centre.

Address and contact details

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Co-ordinator: Martha Rochas

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