



ACACIA KINDERGARTEN

POLICIES HANDBOOK

www.acaciakgn.sa.edu.au

Reviewed 20/6/2022

Please follow the link to access policies on the DfE
Website

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/search/department%20policies>



Healthy Food Supply and Nutrition Policy

Staff at this preschool aim to promote nutritional eating habits in a safe, supportive environment for all children attending this preschool. We believe that early childhood is an important time for establishing lifelong, healthy eating habits and can benefit the children in three ways:

1. Short term: Maximises growth, development and activity whilst minimising illness.
2. Long term: Minimises the risk of diet related diseases later in life e.g heart disease, strokes, some cancers and diabetes.
3. Advice from speech pathologists and dentists indicates that children should be eating *crunchy foods* such as vegetables (carrots, celery, beans) and fruit (apples, cucumber).

Curriculum

Our preschool's food and nutrition curriculum:

- o Includes activities that provide children with knowledge, attitudes and skills to make positive healthy food choices and learn about the variety of foods available for good health.
- o Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills for example, growing, maintaining, preparing and cooking healthy foods.
- o Integrates nutrition across the curriculum where possible.
- o Is part of our involvement in the Department of Health's Eat a Rainbow and Obesity Prevention and Active Lifestyle (OPAL) the Early Years Learning Framework, and the National Quality Standards Area 1 and 2.

The learning environment

Children at our preschool:

- o Have fresh, clean filtered tap water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly through the day.
- o Are encouraged to bring their own named water bottle.
- o Eat in a positive, appropriate, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours.

Our preschool:

- o Understands and promotes the importance of breakfast for children.
- o Teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum.
- o Is a breastfeeding friendly site.

Food supply

Our preschool:

Has the following guidelines for families for food brought from home:

HEALTHY SNACK TIME:

Parents and carers are asked to supply fresh fruit and vegetables at healthy snack time to:

- o Provide children with important minerals and vitamins.
- o Encourage a taste for healthy foods.
- o Encourage chewing which promotes oral muscle development.

FOODS UNSUITABLE FOR HEALTHY SNACK TIME: include packaged foods, cakes, sweets, cordials and sweetened fruit juices, fruit lollies.

We are a NUT AWARE site

Educators monitor allergies at enrolment and across the year through discussions with families. This policy will be regularly reviewed and updated to meet the health and safety needs of children at all times.

PACKED LUNCHES: Children who are here for lunch are expected to bring their own packed lunch

A healthy lunch box might include a sandwich, fruit, yoghurt, vegetable sticks etc. The kindergarten will encourage parents and families to NOT include chocolate, muesli bars, roll ups and other processed foods. Families are asked to pack food in reusable containers to minimise waste disposal, as part of our focus on sustainability.

Our kindergarten will ensure a healthy food supply for preschool activities, celebrations, and events, limiting availability of high fat, high sugar, or processed foods like chips, pastries, cakes, lollies, and soft drinks, in accordance with the Healthy Eating Guidelines.

We celebrate children's birthdays at kindy by singing 'Happy Birthday', using our wooden birthday cake and the birthday child blows out the candles. They receive a sticker and a card. We ask that families DO NOT send cakes, lollies or other items on birthdays as these conflict with our nutrition policy and can cause problems for children with food allergies.

Parents are encouraged to follow the above guidelines and ask staff if they have any questions.

Food safety

Our preschool:

- Promotes and teaches food safety to children during food learning/ cooking activities.
- Encourages staff to access training as appropriate to the *Healthy Eating Guidelines*.
- Provides adequate hand washing facilities for everyone.
- Demonstrates and supervises correct hand washing procedures with children.
- We cook healthy options regularly with children as part of our Eat a Rainbow program and provide tastings for children.
- Educators follow safe food handling procedures.

Food-related health support planning

Our preschool:

We will liaise with families to ensure a suitable food supply for children with health support plans that are related to food issues. We will seek advice from health professionals, for example, dietician, speech pathologist, occupational therapist, paediatrician when required.

Working with families, health services & industry

Our preschool:

- Invites parents and caregivers to be involved in the review of our food and nutrition policy.
- Invites health professionals to be involved in food and nutrition activities with the children.
- Provides information from health professionals to families and caregivers on the *Healthy Eating Guidelines* through a variety of media such as:
 - Newsletters
 - Facebook page
 - Seesaw
 - Policy development/review
 - Information on enrolment
 - Pamphlet/Poster display

More information can be found at:

Department of Health and Ageing

<http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources>

OPAL

<http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/wps/wcm/connect/public+content/sa+health+internet/healthy+living/healthy+places/where+we+live+and+play/opal>

Eat Well Be Active

<http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/branches/health-promotion/ewba/resources-healthy-food.htm>

Eat a Rainbow

<http://www.communityfoodies.com/Eat%20a%20Rainbow>

Skin Protection Policy

Rationale

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world. Skin damage, including skin cancer, is the result of cumulative exposure to the sun. Sun exposure in the first ten years of life determines, to a substantial degree, the likelihood of skin cancer developing later in life.

Cancer Council SA advises people protect their skin at times when the ultraviolet (UV) radiation level is 3 and above—this is when it is strong enough to cause damage to unprotected skin and when sun protection is necessary. Cancer Council SA also recommends that particular care should be taken between 10.00 am – 3.00 pm, when the UV radiation levels are at their highest.

It is important to balance sun protection with safe sun exposure for the production of vitamin D for bone growth and development. When the UV radiation level is below 3, sun protection for most people is not necessary.

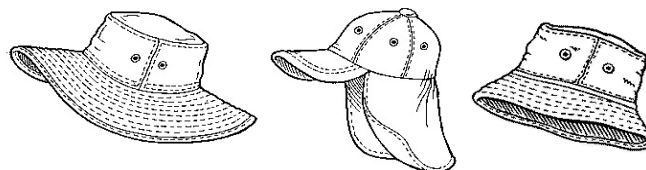
Aims

The aims of the Acacia Kindergarten Sun Smart policy are to promote among children, staff and parents:

- Positive attitudes towards skin protection.
- Lifestyle practices which can help reduce the incidence of skin cancer and the number of related deaths.
- Personal responsibility for and decision making about skin protection.
- Awareness of the need for environmental changes in our centre to reduce the level of sun exposure when the UV radiation level is 3 and above.

Implementation

- **This policy is for implementation all year.**
- It is an expectation that all staff, students and parents of Acacia Kindergarten will use the following skin protection strategies:
 - Take care to protect the skin when the ultraviolet radiation level is 3 (moderate) and above. Extra care should be taken between 10.00 am and 3.00 pm when UV radiation levels are highest. Educators check UV rating each morning from the weather website.
 - Use the shade of trees, pergolas, umbrellas and tents whenever outdoors. The further provision of shade areas is a priority for the service.
 - Wear appropriate clothing which protects the skin. Children, staff and parents will be expected to wear a broad brimmed hat, legionnaire style hat when they are involved in outside activities. Staff will use professional judgement when it is not appropriate to wear a hat outdoors, for example, in times of wet, windy weather. Children not wearing a hat will be expected to play indoors. Children who do not have their hat with them will be offered one of the kindy hats unless their parent has specifically forbidden them to borrow a hat (and has let staff know this in writing).



- Children will be encouraged to wear shirts with collars and with sleeves and longer style shorts/skirts.
- Families are asked to apply sunscreen on their child before arriving at kindergarten. Staff will re-apply sunscreen at the middle of the day. The site will supply sunscreen, but parents may supply their children with their own sunscreen if they wish to use a particular type.
- Staff and children can wear protective eye wear (sunglasses) if they choose.
- Staff will incorporate sun and skin awareness activities into our teaching programs.

More information can be found at: www.sunsmart.org.au

Hot Weather Policy

Rationale: *Children are at a greater risk of suffering from heat illness than adults.*

"Children sweat less and get less evaporative cooling than adults. In warm and hot weather, they have greater difficulty getting rid of heat: they look flushed, and feel hotter and more stressed than adults"
Source: Sports Medicine Australia

Acacia Kindergarten's outdoor area has many large trees and structures which provide shade to most areas during the day. During periods of hot weather, the following **strategies have been developed to reduce the risk of heat illness** in young children:

- Activities conducted in periods of hot weather, especially in the middle of the day, are to be undertaken in **shaded areas**.
- Children are to be frequently reminded to **drink water** from their water bottles or from the water container, which is always accessible to children.
- The Centre is **air conditioned** and is serviced regularly. If the cooling system breaks down, staff will plan for children to have water play under shaded areas.
- Parents are encouraged to pack food with an insulated brick or frozen water bottle to keep food cool.
- There is a fridge available for children to keep their lunches cool.
- Parents are encouraged to dress their children in **clothing** that minimises heat gain, in layers that can be removed and are **sun safe**. (No tank tops, tops with shoestring straps or midriff tops)
- Educators will include in the program, **teaching strategies** that help children understand how to keep cool and safe in hot weather, eg drink lots of water, play in the shade, and keep very active play to a minimum.

Sources: DfE "Guidelines for developing a Preschool Hot Weather Policy"
Anti-Cancer Foundation of SA.

Illness Policy

We aim to maintain the health of all children, staff, and their families, ensuring a healthy environment and minimising cross contamination and the spread of infectious illnesses.

We understand that it can be difficult for families when their child is sick, however, it is imperative that families focus not only on the well-being of their own child but also on the well-being of other children and staff at kindergarten.

The need for exclusion and the length of time a person is excluded depends on how easily the infection can spread, how long the person is likely to be infectious and how severe the disease can be. To protect the health of all children and staff, it is important that children and staff who are ill are kept home for the recommended time.

If your child is unwell:

- Please text the kindergarten mobile, ring the kindergarten or message on Seesaw to inform educators that your child will be away sick.

If children become ill at Kindergarten:

- Families will be contacted and asked to come and collect their child
- Educators will monitor and document a child's symptoms

- A child who has diarrhoea/vomiting will be sent home and may only return after 24 hours free from symptoms
- Children will be placed in a quiet area (library) to rest whilst being supervised

If children arrive at Kindergarten unwell:

- If educators notice that a child is unwell or may have a contagious illness, they will ask the family to take their child home.

Notification of an infectious illness:

- Families are asked to inform the kindergarten if their child has been diagnosed with a contagious illness.
- Educators will inform families that there has been a reported case of a contagious illness by placing information regarding the illness at the welcome desk, notice board and on Seesaw.
- All information will be held confidentially for families' privacy.

Exclusion periods for illness

<i>Illness</i>	<i>Reportable</i>	<i>Exclusion time</i>
Common colds		Exclude until the child is well
Chicken Pox	Yes	Exclude for 5 days or until blisters have dried
Conjunctivitis	Yes	Exclude until discharge has stopped
COVID	Yes	Following as per SA Health directives
Diarrhoea/Vomiting		Exclude for 24 hours after symptom free
Hand, foot and mouth	Yes	Exclude until blisters have dried.
Head Lice		Notify Family of child and families to inform of a case
Influenza		Exclude until the child is well
Slap face	Yes	No exclusion as it is not infectious once the rash has appeared

Interactions with Children: Site Behaviour Support Policy

At Acacia Kindergarten we believe that a child's behaviour is a form of communication and is driven by a need for emotional connectedness. Children need an emotional connection with adults as a secure base to go and explore the world, and a safe haven to come back to when needed. Children need educators who are present, consistent, bigger, stronger, wiser, and kinder.

At Acacia Kindergarten we recognise that

- Children come with varying cultural backgrounds and home environments.
- Children come with learning differences and have learning rights.
- Children are learning about different values and expectations when they attend kindergarten.

At Acacia Kindergarten we believe that

- Everyone has a right to feel secure in a safe learning environment.
- The consideration of children's individual and contextual needs are crucial to successful learning and the development of positive behaviours.
- Children are more likely to explore and engage positively with others when they have a strong sense of belonging, and have formed strong, secure attachments with trusted educators.
- Children are developing personal responsibility, self-regulation and are learning how to organise and regulate their emotions and sensory needs.
- Children are learning and practicing social skills. This includes sharing, turn taking, conflict resolution, effective communication, and play skills. Children need time to practice these skills, and some need more support from educators than others.

At Acacia Kindergarten we will promote positive behaviours and interactions by:

- Forming positive, secure, and trusting relationships with children and their families.
- Be warm and responsive, providing a secure base for children when needed and encouraging them to explore their world.
- Interacting positively.
- Modeling respectful interactions between adults and families.
- Plan for and provide opportunities that promote a sense of belonging, being and becoming in a playful learning environment.
- Intentionally plan for, teach, model and reinforce safe behaviours and social skills.
- Intentionally plan for, teach, model and support children to recognise and understand feelings of themselves and others.
- Use various communication methods, including the use of clear consistent visuals to support children's understandings.
- Take time to understand a child's emotional needs and respond appropriately to it.
- Using positive verbal and non-verbal guidance.

We will respond to challenging behaviours by:

- Using a simple thumbs up or thumbs down gesture to clue the child(ren) into whether their behaviour is acceptable or not.



- Supporting children to problem solve, negotiate, find resolutions, recognise feelings, and manage emotions appropriately.
- Observe closely and intervene when needed to ensure the safety of all children.
- If the problem persists a child is unable to settle, we may need to give children the choice of
 - staying safely at the experience

- re-directing the play or
- re-directing the child.
- Providing calming areas that give children an opportunity to unwind and settle. Locate these in places where the child can see others, yet the attention of others is not drawn to him or her. We provide sensory tools and visuals to support children to self-regulate
- For staff to be aware of their own limitations and seek assistance when required.
- Educators use Circle Of Security (COS) and Berry Street Education Model strategies to be with children to assist them to co-regulate/self-regulate during times of dysregulation.

Unacceptable/dangerous behaviours that are repeated or prolonged, require considered intervention.

- Educators will work with parents/guardians and share information, strategies and offer support to ensure a consistent approach is maintained between kindergarten and home expectations.
- Further support and intervention may be required. This may involve DfE Support Services or other agencies.
- A Behaviour Support Plan will be developed by educators, parents, and DfE Support services.

This policy has been guided by: the Early Years Learning Framework, National Quality Standards, Respect Reflect Relate, Circle of Security, Berry Street Education model, Health professionals, DfE policies, Protective Practices, and the DfE Code of Conduct.

Before and After Kindergarten Care Policy

At Acacia Kindergarten we acknowledge that, at times, families may need to access Kindergarten earlier or later than our normal operating times. To accommodate our families, we offer within the Kindergarten, the opportunity to access before and after kindergarten care.

Bookings for this service are essential and the service is available to families who are either:

- Working or studying
- Other occasions as deemed appropriate by the Director

Before Kindy care runs from 8.40am till kindergarten starts at 9.00am.

After Kindy care runs from 3.00pm until 3.30pm.

The cost of the service is \$5.00 per session and is required to be paid on the day of use. Invoices for Before Kindy care will be issued separate to fees.

A record of children booked into the service is kept in the office and is checked off daily.

Children are required to stay inside the kindergarten, with a staff member, while here for before/after care. Educators are on site by 8.30am, therefore no Before Kindy care is available before this time. The service can be accessed on a regular or casual basis.

Parent Concerns and Complaints Procedure

At Acacia Kindergarten we believe parents are partners in the education of children. Regular two-way communication between parents/carers and the preschool is essential in helping children achieve their potential. Our preschool is committed to ensuring that anyone with parental responsibilities for a young person can raise a concern or complaint, with confidence that it will be heard and responded to in an appropriate and timely fashion.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Safety of children is always the priority. Our procedures are underpinned by the following principles:

- 1) The *Acacia Kindergarten* community including children, parents, staff and volunteers have the right to be treated with respect and courtesy in accordance with the preschool's values.
- 2) Parents have the right to raise concerns and make enquiries or complaints about any aspect of preschool life.
- 3) Information about how, where and to whom complaints can be made should be visible and accessible through preschool procedures.
- 4) Complaints will be acknowledged and addressed promptly within specified timelines.
- 5) Individual complaints will be assessed objectively and without bias using principles of natural justice.
- 6) The rights and responsibilities of all parties will be considered and balanced in attempting to find a mutually acceptable outcome to complaints.
- 7) The confidentiality of all parties will be maintained wherever possible.

Step 1: Talk to us

If your concern or complaint relates to an issue concerning your child's education or experiences, you should talk to the teacher as soon as possible.

You may prefer to organise a mutually convenient time to meet the teacher rather than discuss the issue via a telephone conversation. You are welcome to bring a support person with you, if you wish. The role of the support person is to provide advice and support during the process and not to answer questions on behalf of any of the parties or interfere with the discussion.

Our staff will, following a direct complaint:

- Listen to the complaint
- Record what you say
- Identify actions to resolve the concern
- Let you know what will or has been done
- Get back to you to see how things are going
- If appropriate, refer the matter to the preschool director

If your concern has not been resolved following discussions with the staff member, you should contact the preschool director.

The preschool director will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint as soon as reasonably possible (within 5 school days)
- Listen to you
- Provide support to you if necessary while the complaint is being considered
- Investigate, consider and determine the most appropriate way to resolve the issue fairly and promptly
- Consider relevant legislation, DfE policy and guidelines, preschool procedures
- Inform you if there is a delay in the process
- Ensure your complaint and the outcome is documented
- Ensure that the outcome of the process is communicated to you verbally and, if appropriate, in writing including the right to refer the matter to the *Limestone Coast, Mount Gambier Regional Office*.

Please note:

Interpreters and Aboriginal Education Coordinators are available to assist parents in communicating with us. Please contact 08 87245300 for assistance.

Step 2: Contact our local DfE Regional Office

If the complaint is about the director of the preschool or you are not satisfied with the outcome you may contact our local DfE Limestone Coast, Mount Gambier Regional Office.

Mt Gambier Regional Office
64 Commercial Street West

Phone: 08 87245300
Fax: 0887257575

The Regional Office will:

- Provide written acknowledgement of receipt of your complaint within five working days,
- Clarify and record the nature of the complaint, including what expectations you have in relation to outcomes
- Investigate, consider and determine the most appropriate way to resolve the issue fairly and promptly
- Refer, where appropriate, any complaint that has not been raised at the preschool level back to the preschool
- Inform you if there is a delay in the process
- Ensure your complaint and the outcome is documented
- Ensure that the outcome of the process is communicated to you verbally and, if appropriate, in writing.

Step 3: Contact the Parent Complaint Unit

If your complaint remains unresolved after working together with our preschool, regional personnel and Regional Director, you should submit, in writing, your complaint to:

Manager, Parent Complaint Unit
Level 6 / 31 Flinders Street
ADELAIDE SA 5000
Ph: 1800 677 435

Or via online form from: <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/departments/about-department/contact-department/feedback-and-complaints-about-school-or-preschool>

You should include information about the complaint, including why it remains unresolved and an outline of what actions have been taken to resolve the complaint. You should also outline what you think a reasonable solution would be.

The Parent Complaint Unit, on behalf of the Chief Executive, will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the complaint
- Assess and make a recommendation to the Head of Schools or the Head of Child Development that:
 - 1) A review is not warranted and that you should be advised that no further action is considered necessary, and that the complaint is now concluded; or
 - 2) A review is necessary; or
 - 3) The complaint should be referred to an external agency for investigation or review.

The Head of Schools or the Head of Child Development will review the advice and decide that the complaint (in full or in part):

- Can be resolved (all parties agree on an appropriate response)
- Should be dismissed (complaint is either unsubstantiated, vexatious, outside of reasonable expectations in relation to confidentiality, cooperation, courtesy and respect or is orientated towards conflict)
- Remains unresolved and that an independent review by an external agency is required

Please Note:

Any written or verbal complaints that contain personal abuse, inflammatory statements, and comments of a threatening nature or intended to intimidate will not be addressed and the parent will be advised accordingly. Parents can call the Parent Complaint Unit hotline at any stage on 1800 677 435 for information, advice, and support.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate that a concern or complaint is escalated directly to Parent Complaint Unit. In these instances, the parent will be advised of where the matter will be referred to and why. Parents can also contact the Education and Early Childhood Services Registration and Standards Board of South Australia (EECSB) Ph: 1800 882 413 or the State Ombudsman: www.ombudsman.sa.gov.au for information, advice, support and in circumstances where the complaint remains unresolved.

Requesting your identity to remain confidential

Parents may request that their identity remain confidential when making a complaint. In this situation, every effort will be made to keep the parent's identity confidential, but this may limit options for negotiating a resolution. (For example, an apology is unlikely to be forthcoming if the identity of the complainant is not known.) These circumstances also raise issues in relation to procedural fairness for those who have a complaint made about them as they have a right to know the particulars of the complaint.

While every effort will be made to comply with a request to keep the parent's identity confidential. Freedom of Information requirements may result in a parent's identity becoming known.

Anonymous complaints

Acacia Kindergarten will assess every complaint that is made. The extent to which an anonymous complaint can be investigated will be limited, as preschool staff cannot liaise with the parent about the complaint. Anonymous complaints also raise issues in relation to natural justice for those who have a complaint made about them as they have a right to know the particulars of the complaint.

The Director will determine upon receipt of an anonymous complaint to what extent the complaint will be investigated. Where the complaint is in relation to a Director, the Assistant Regional Director will make the determination and for Regional Directors, the Head of Schools or the Head of Child Development will make the final decision.

Approaches that may be used to resolve a parent complaint

Our preschool may take one of the following approaches to resolve a parent's concern or complaint:

- An acknowledgement that the complaint is valid and is worthy of investigation (overall or in part)
- Identification of areas of agreement between the parties involved
- Opportunities for all the parties involved to express their concerns, explain their point of view and clarify any misunderstandings
- Acknowledgement that the situation could have been better handled (this does not constitute an admission of negligence)
- An opportunity for an apology
- Recognition that the situation presents an opportunity for changes or alternate arrangements to be made to resolve the complaint
- Discussion with the parties about the steps that will be taken to ensure that the event complained about will not reoccur
- An undertaking to review school policy, procedures, or practices.

Additional Information

These procedures apply to parent concerns and complaints in relation to *Acacia Kindergarten*. These procedures do not apply to matters where there are legislated requirements or existing policies and processes of appeal, such as:

- Concerns and allegations of misconduct by staff, volunteers, and service providers (criminal matters, child protection, corruption, etc)

- Employee disputes and grievances. (Employees should refer to HR17 Complaints resolution for employees 2000 for these types of complaints.)
- Complaints or appeals relating to student suspension and expulsion
- Duty of care or mandatory reporting responsibilities
- Occupational Health, Safety and Welfare related issues
- Health support planning.

For more information

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/department/about-department/contact-department/feedback-and-complaints-about-school-or-preschool>

Please follow the link to access policies on the DfE Website

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/search/department%20policies>

All policies and procedures will be reviewed every year in consultation with families, educators, and governing council.

Last Review: 20/6/2022

Directors: Fiona Scott & Jane McDonald

Governing Council Chairperson: Andrew West