

Information Handbook

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Margaret Lohmeyer Kindergarten

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES:

Niina Marni! (Hello, are you good?)

Welcome to the Margaret Lohmeyer Kindy Community! Our kindy is a place for playing, learning and growing. We aim to create a learning community where children, families and educators all feel safe and supported to build connections and develop strong, respectful relationships.

Our fabulous staff team are:

Director: Kelly Klau

Teachers: Cheryl Macklin

Jessica Heathfield

Megan Jackson (Fridays)

Early Childhood Educator: Tania Peake

Session Times

Kindergarten sessions are offered Monday to Friday.

Children can access up to 15 hours of kindergarten per week. This is made up of two full days and two 5 hour sessions twice a term. To support children's friendships and continuity of educators, children attend in set groups: *Kuula* and *Wartu*. *Kuula* means 'koala' in Kurna language and *Wartu* means 'wombat' in Kurna language.

Kuula: Monday & Tuesday - 8:30am – 3:30pm. 2 x Friday sessions a term from 8:30 - 1:30pm.

Wartu: Wednesday & Thursday - 8:30am – 3:30pm. 2 x Friday sessions a term from 8:30 - 1:30pm.



Kindy Fees

Fees are payable at the beginning of each term.

The Department for Education provides minimal funding for the centre, which contributes towards, but does not cover the costs of operating the kindergarten. Fees are necessary because there is a shortfall between the level of government funding and the costs of operating a viable and quality service. Fees will be set by the Governing Council on an annual basis. Governing Council may review and change fees during the year if the financial viability of either the programs or the kindergarten is at risk.

- Kindergarten costs \$200.00 per term (includes incursions & transport costs for excursions).

In case of financial difficulty, please consult the Director for confidential arrangements.

Kindy Bank Details

Account Name: Margaret Lohmeyer Kindergarten

BSB: 105 075

Account number: 293215040

Flow of the Day

- 8:30am: Children arrive and choose inside/outside learning experience
- 9:30am: Morning Meeting – Acknowledgement of Country
Discussion about the learning experiences available and what's happening in our Learning Community. Songs and focussed inquiry
Reminder to have Morning snack – fruit or vegetables
Children are welcome to have their morning snack at any time during the morning.
Educators support at the snack table
- 10:00am: Inside/outside learning experiences
Sunscreen reapplied when the UV is 3 or above
- 12:00pm: Group time – inquiry topic/songs/music/circle game
- 12:30pm: Lunch (*Sunscreen reapplied when the UV is 3 or above*)
- 12:50pm: Relaxation/Story
- 1:00pm: Inside/outside learning experiences
- 2:45pm: Packing up time inside and outside
- 3:15pm: Afternoon Group time - sharing children's learning/mindfulness/group games
- 3:30pm: Goodbye

The day is flexible and often changed to maximise children's learning and suit the weather conditions.



Starting Kindergarten

On arrival all children must be signed in on the Daily Sign-in Sheet located under the verandah at the entrance. All children must be signed out again at the end of their session.

Starting kindergarten is an exciting time, but it can be a little scary too and children can experience some big feelings (as can some adults! ☺) Be prepared for them to be a little apprehensive or anxious to begin with. Some children take longer than others to settle, and however much your child may be looking forward to going to kindergarten, it is a new experience and a very big step in their lives:

It may be that:

- the learning environment is different
- there are new children and adults to get to know
- there are new resources and play experiences to try out
- there is a need to share toys and adults with other children

Try not to worry. Your child may begin happily but have anxious moments a few days later. This is normal too. Rest assured our educators are here to support you and your child.

The first big separation from a parent or caregiver is a major step in your child's life. Learning to deal with changes such as this is something all children need to learn. In the kindergarten setting educators are committed to making the change as smooth as possible for your child and help them with this new learning.

Some important things to remember to support a positive 'goodbye':

- Start a goodbye ritual before starting kindergarten that you can use once they begin to keep farewells consistent and familiar. The ritual might be a special hug, handshake, fist bump or saying that signals, 'bye for now!' (but see you soon!) Predictability reduces anxiety.
- Be prepared to stay initially to help them settle in. You may like to choose an experience to do together that you may have already agreed on (e.g. "Let's do a puzzle together and then I will go to work") When they are sad about separating, acknowledge this by naming their feelings and empathise with comments like, 'you're sad, you want me to stay. I understand.' The more you respond in an empathetic way, the sooner they'll move through this feeling.
- Next, draw your child's attention to the next point of connection. Just like we often say, 'let's catch up soon' to friends we are saying goodbye to, children are comforted by knowing they'll see you again soon too. Comments like, 'I can't wait to hear all about your day when we go to the park tonight' helps them see ahead to the next time they see you. Then make that goodbye short, sharp and shiny. Be confident in leaving. Please seek out an educator for support when leaving if you or your child are feeling worried or anxious - we are here to help!
- Be reliable and on time when you pick up your child – this can be an anxious time if your child is the last to be collected.
- You are welcome to ring during the day to see how they are going and if your child is having difficulty separating from you, we will call once they are settled in to reassure you.



Vision Statement

To be an inclusive community in which children and their families come together to wonder, explore, build relationships, and develop strong foundations for lifelong learning.

Statement of Philosophy

Educators provide engaging learning environments that encourage children to:

- Explore, be challenged and take risks.
- Wonder, ask questions and develop strategies for finding out answers.
- Develop positive dispositions for learning and a growth mindset.
- Make connections with each other, the educators and the natural world.
- Develop meaningful relationships that demonstrate care, empathy and respect.

We are committed to:

- Engaging with Kurna elders to provide a program that explores Kurna culture and language. Embedding reconciliation into our practice.
- Being active listeners who value children's individual interests, thoughts and opinions.
- Respecting the diversity of children's cultural beliefs and family values, and planning learning experiences that reflect our multicultural community.
- Encouraging children to develop their independence and self-confidence while ensuring their well-being.
- Work with families and the broader community to promote health and physical wellbeing of children.
- Demonstrating an ongoing commitment to caring for the natural environment and fostering environmental awareness and responsibility in children. Engaging in sustainable practice.
- Working collaboratively with families, acknowledging their role as the first educator and supporting their involvement in their child's learning at kindergarten.

Updated Term 1, 2021



Curriculum

Young Children Learn best through Play.

Play is critical for children's learning, growth and development. Play experiences develop pathways in the brain, build complex language and social skills, develop imagination and enable children to develop high level thinking skills.

Margaret Lohmeyer Kindergarten uses the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia to guide our planning and programming. *Belonging, Being and Becoming* is the National Framework for Children from Birth to Five years. The Early Years Framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming:

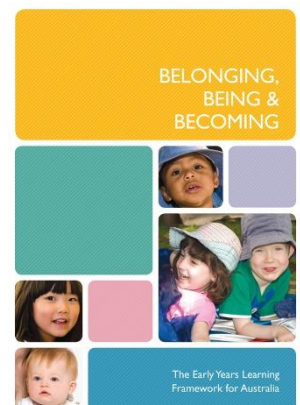
Belonging: is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.

Being: is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be' - time to play, try new things and have fun.

Becoming: is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

The Framework consists of 5 Learning Outcomes:

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



At Margaret Lohmeyer Kindergarten, children are seen as competent and capable, and the curriculum is developed with the children to ensure that their questions and wonderings are explored, and their interests followed. The children are challenged to notice, think deeply, to reflect on their learning and to develop a growth mindset – to keep trying even when something seems 'tricky' at first.

There is a strong focus on literacy, numeracy, music, sustainability, as well as developing resilience and collaborative learning.



Teachers Facilitate Children's Learning by...

- Working in partnership with families and other professionals.
- Respecting and building upon children's ideas and interests.
- Asking open ended questions, providing feedback and supporting children to test their ideas and theories.
- Encouraging children to explore and take risks in their learning.
- Providing stimulating learning experiences, indoors and outdoors.
- Listening, observing, recording, planning and responding to children's ongoing learning needs.
- Being a co-player, modelling play, supporting children to enter and exit play situations.
- Teaching by modelling, demonstrating and explaining.

All they do at Kindy is Play!

Department for Education kindergartens and preschools value learning through play. Our programs provide children with extended periods of time to engage in a broad range of play-based learning opportunities, for individual children and for small and large groups of children.

Teachers are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their planning and teaching for learning through play. They support children to develop a broad range of understandings and skills as they build on children's current ideas and interests. They use information from parents and children (including observations of children at play) to facilitate each child's ongoing learning.

When children are absorbed in their play, they are learning to focus their attention and persist with challenging tasks. They are also learning to seek out new information, to find things out for themselves. Children are learning to be self-motivated learners who love to learn. Learning through play lays the foundation for children's later academic and social success.

Family Involvement is Invaluable!

You are welcome in the kindergarten at any time to share in the children's learning experiences. We value developing strong connections with you and your extended family members. Families can participate by contributing to the program in various ways for example by reading stories, leading an art/craft experience, playing musical instruments, singing with the children, cooking, sharing hobbies, listening and talking with children, assisting with gardening, helping with excursions, visiting to tell the children about their employment, involvement in fundraising, or by becoming a member of the Governing Council.

Communication

We believe that communication between educators and families should be on-going. Please check the noticeboard and your child's pocket regularly. You will receive newsletters regularly via email. Educators report on children's progress to parents in a range of ways: through the newsletters, our kindy private Facebook page, informal chats, and formal discussions. We encourage families to have regular conversations with their child's teachers, and that if you do have any concerns, to please arrange a time for a more formal discussion with the teacher. If your child's teacher has concerns, they will arrange to discuss these with you at a mutually convenient time. Please contact teachers if you have any updates to your information, questions or concerns. This can be done in person, by telephone or email



Assessment and Reporting

Children's Learning Journals:

A child's learning in the early years is dynamic and fluid. As early childhood educators we value the process of learning – the noticing, thinking, communicating and problem-solving that children demonstrate when they interact with peers, materials and adults. Your child's learning journal documents the formative assessments educators make, through observing and monitoring children's development, knowledge and understanding, to make their learning 'visible' to you. It also drives educators to ensure our curriculum is supporting optimum learning and ensure our accountability as teachers.

Your child's Journal will include a variety of evidence of their development/or highlights of their development. The Journal may include the following:

- Written observations
- Work samples
- Photographic documentation
- Your child's comments and conversations
- Teacher interpretations

The Learning Journal is sent home in the last week of each term, so the children can share their achievements with the whole family. We ask that the journal is returned to the kindergarten as soon as possible at the beginning of the following term. At the end of the preschool year your child will be presented with their journal to recall many of their special kindy memories. The journals are kept on the shelf inside for the children to revisit at any time during their time at kindergarten. You are welcome to come and view them with your child at any time.

Individual Learning Plan:

Your child will have an individual learning plan (ILP) by the end of the first term at kindergarten. This learning cycle is linked to the Learning Outcomes stated in the Early Years Learning Framework for Australia "Belonging, Being and Becoming." The learning plan identifies areas of strengths, interests, goals for each child and strategies to be implemented by the educator. Parents are invited to participate in a 'Learning Conversation' with your child's focus teacher to create this plan as it will become a working document that educators use to plan for and support your child's learning.

Statement of Learning:

The Statement of Learning will be written at the end of the preschool year. This statement reflects the five outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework, as well as your child's Literacy and Numeracy development. The Kindergarten will then forward the statement to the school your child is enrolled in. Parents will also receive a copy to keep.



What to Bring

Your child needs to bring the following to kindy each day:

- A *bag* that they can easily manage (named on the outside please)
- A *hat* (named please)
- A *change of clothes* for when they get sandy, muddy, wet (named please)
- A '*wet bag*' or plastic bag for putting wet or soiled clothes in
- A piece of fruit or vegetables *for morning snack* (in a separate container from their lunch please)
- A lunch box with *lunch* inside that doesn't require re-heating. Suggestions include sandwiches/rolls, wraps, salad, meat, vegetables, yoghurt, cheese, crackers, fruit.
Please do not send foods such as: muesli bars, chocolates, chips, roll-ups and anything that may contain nuts. These include peanut butter and Nutella.
- A *water bottle*
- Make sure children have *suitable clothing for play* and are dressed for the current weather.

Children must have a hat and sunscreen for outside play when the UV rays reach 3 or above (staff will reapply sunscreen after lunch).



Drinking Water

Children are encouraged to drink water regularly throughout the day. Educators talk to children about why water is a good drink and set good examples by drinking plenty of water themselves. Children need to bring their own labelled drink bottle. Educators will refill their bottles with filtered water as needed.

Healthy Eating at Kindy

Children are encouraged to bring along foods that are low in sugar, fat and salt. Please ensure your child brings at least two healthy snacks to kindergarten per session. Snacks are packed in a container separate from their lunch so that they can access them when they are hungry. Lunch time is held at the same time each day. Children need to have a substantial amount of healthy food packed in their lunch boxes for lunch time. We recommend that you include an 'ice pack' and an insulated lunch bag to keep lunchboxes cool.

The following recommendations from the *"Right Bite guide to healthy food and drink supply for South Australian schools and preschools"* are promoted:

GREEN – CHOOSE PLENTY	AMBER – SELECT CAREFULLY. Check labels against nutrient criteria	RED – UP TO TWICE PER TERM AS PART OF A WHOLE COMMUNITY EVENT
Bread, cereals, vegetables, fruit, reduced fat dairy products, lean meat, fish, poultry and alternatives, water.	Full fat dairy food, some savoury commercial products like pizza, pasta, processed meats, spreads and oils, sauces, snack food bars, cakes, muffins, biscuits, ice-cream, dairy desserts, some fruit juice, some breakfast cereals.	Sweetened drinks, soft drinks, chocolate, confectionery, deep fried foods, crisps, chips, chocolate-covered ice creams, icy poles, croissants, doughnuts, pies, pasties, sausage rolls.

We are a 'Nut Aware' Kindy

Due to the increasing incidence of severe allergies to nuts in children, the kindergarten is a NUT AWARE ZONE. This means that no nuts of any kind are to be brought to kindergarten, to ensure the health and wellbeing of all children. Please do not send any foods containing nuts, including peanut butter, Nutella or other nut-based products.

If a staff member discovers that a child has brought food containing nuts, the food will be removed and put aside until pick up time. The child's parent or caregiver will be consulted and reminded of the "Nut Aware Policy".

Occasionally, children with different severe allergies may be attending Margaret Lohmeyer Kindergarten. If the allergy is life threatening, similar procedures to those described above will be implemented, to ensure the child is kept safe. All families will be informed if this situation arises.



Food Safety and Hygiene

Children are encouraged to:

- Wash hands before and after eating
- Sit down while eating
- Help clean up after eating
- Look after their own lunchboxes by packing them away when they have finished eating
- Make appropriate decisions about when and what they eat

Preparation of foods will be included in learning activities. Foods will also be used to introduce children to other cultures. Children will learn about where food comes from and how it is grown.

Behaviour Guidance Policy

Documented guidelines regarding behaviour and guidance for children help ensure that children, families and staff have a safe environment, and consistency and clarity around acceptable behaviour and guidance measures that will be implemented.

As a staff team we believe:

- All children have the right to feel secure and to learn and develop in a psychologically and physically safe, environment.
- Children have a right to express their feelings and to be supported to develop positive behaviours that underpin the development of relationships with peers and adults.
- Effective communication and learning occurs when families and educators work together to develop common goals for a child's well-being, learning and development.
- That the consideration of children's individual, and contextual needs is crucial to successful learning and the development of positive behaviours.
- That family consultation is valued and their individual perspectives respected.
- Children have the right to be supported by educators who model appropriate behaviours and ensure consistent limits are set.
- No child should be made to feel rejected, insecure, embarrassed or ashamed.

As a staff team we promote positive behaviour and interactions by:

- Planning for and providing an environment that promotes a sense of belonging, being and becoming and provides enhanced opportunities for learning through play.
- Ensuring that limits set are reasonable and understood by all children and adults.
- Providing an enriching and engaging program that enables each child to experience success, a sense of well-being and gives opportunities to express feelings through sensory and other forms of play.
- Using positive verbal and non-verbal guidance.
- Demonstrate empathy and sensitivity to each child being mindful of the variety of factors that influence behaviour
- Planning opportunities for the development of skills including resilience, agency, entry and exit skills when playing, appropriate risk taking, conflict resolution, independence, leadership, respect for others and communication.
- Interacting positively, using positive language and acknowledging and modelling respectful behaviour.



- Valuing children as individuals within their family and cultural context.
- Involving children in goal setting, developing group norms and the development of behavioural expectations and consequences
- Intentional teaching of appropriate behaviours and play skills, building on each child's strengths and achievements and providing choices when possible
- Encouraging open communication with families to ensure that each child's rights are met.

We will respond to challenging behaviours by:

- Reminding children of expectations and limits and the reasons for these.
- Supporting children to problem solve, negotiate, find resolutions and manage emotions appropriately.
- Redirecting children to another learning space or experience if the undesired behaviour continues.
- Using Restorative Justice practices that support children to empathise with others and restore relationships.
- Communicating with and involving families at the earliest opportunity to work together positively to assist the child's well-being and learning.
- Assessing individual children's learning and development and reflecting on and reviewing our planned program and how the active learning environment supports positive behaviours.
- Planning, implementing, monitoring and reviewing individual behaviour plans in partnership with families and support services.
- Being aware of our limitations and seeking assistance when required.
- Withdrawing children when they are at risk of hurting themselves or others, ensuring that an adult is with them all the time.

Centre Policies and Procedures

A complete folder of all centre policies and procedures is available for parents to read. These are also available on the kindergarten website: <https://www.preschools.sa.gov.au/margaret-lohmeyer-kindergarten>. Copies of any policies or procedures can be emailed to you on request.

Dropping & Collecting Children

Please note our kindy start time is 8:30am and we ask that you do not enter the kindy yard before this time, as educators are busy setting up ready for your child's learning.

Please collect children promptly at the end of their session as children tend to get upset when parents are late. Educators have other duties directly after the session and often have meetings held at other kindy locations. Repeated late collections *will* result in an additional fee. If someone else is collecting your child, please phone in advance or write the details on the Daily Sign in sheet. When you collect your child at the end of the session you must sign them out.

Sick Children

Please do not send sick children to kindergarten. If your child vomits they need to be kept at home for 24 hours from the last episode. If children have a temperature or are obviously unwell they need to be kept home even if they want to come to kindergarten. This is not a decision for children to make. When children are sick they need to be with their parents, and it is unfair to other families to send a sick child to kindergarten. We have neither the staff nor the facilities to give sick children the attention they need.



Birthdays

We celebrate your child's birthday with a "pretend" cake with candles, singing "Happy Birthday" and a special birthday sticker and card. There is no need to send along additional treats for the children to share as there are several reasons why some children are not able to join in – the most alarming is that some children are highly allergic to certain foods and latex in balloons. We also have Nutrition Guidelines based on Government Policies which are quite specific about the food and drink that can be distributed at kindergarten.

"Margaret Lohmeyer Kindergarten" Logo Clothing

We have a range of good quality children's clothing available at a reasonable cost, all with the kindergarten logo on them. The clothing options, price list and ordering are available online at Eduthreads. Click on the link below:

<https://eduthreads.com.au/collections/margaret-lohmeyer-kindergarten>

or go to : www.EduThreads.com.au and search for Margaret Lohmeyer Kindergarten.

The kindy clothing is by no means compulsory; however, some families like to have a 'kindy uniform' to make 'getting dressed' slightly easier in the mornings, especially if your child has older siblings that are also putting on their school uniform.

Fundraising

We undertake fundraising every year to ensure the kindergarten facilities and resources are up to date.

Governing Council

The Governing Council, together with the Director, has responsibility for:

- Setting future goals for the centre
- Contributing to the Curriculum program and planning
- The financial management of the centre budget (including fundraising)
- Managing WHS practices
- Developing site policies and practices
- Managing centre maintenance
- Upholding Department for Education policies and guidelines

Membership on the Governing Council provides an opportunity to get to know other parents and to work with them towards common goals. The Governing council is elected at the Annual General Meeting in February each year. Please let us know if you are interested.

Toys

Please do not bring toys from home to kindergarten. If a child has something special to share they can show it to us at the beginning of a session and then it can be taken home. It is distressing for children and families to have toys lost or broken.



Health and Safety

Please keep us informed of any medical conditions, allergies or infectious diseases that your child develops. If your child suffers from Asthma, Allergies or any other health issues, a Health Care Plan and/or Medication Plan may be required from your doctor. The kindergarten will also prepare a Health Support Agreement and Safety and Risk Management Plan in partnership with you. Please let the Director know of any concerns when enrolling your child.

Please let us know if your contact details change, in the event we need to contact you urgently.

Medication

Staff are not able to administer medication without a consent form signed by a doctor that clearly states the name of the medication, dosage and frequency. You will also need to sign a Medication Agreement form for us to administer prescribed medication during the kindy session. Staff will only administer medication that has been previously taken (i.e. NOT the first dose – to minimise the risk of a reaction). No over the counter medication will be administered.

Health Screenings

Every child has the opportunity to have a 4-year-old health screening prior to commencing school. These screenings are conducted by nurses from the Child and Family Health Service and a parent or guardian will need to be present. We usually have the opportunity for the nurse to conduct appointments at our kindy twice a year. If you are unable to book in, you are encouraged to make an appointment at your local CaFHS location once your child has turned 4 and 3 months. The closest location to our kindy is:

Child and Family Health Service – Edwardstown (*next to Castle Plaza*)
2 Furness Avenue
Edwardstown SA 5039
1300 733 606

SA School Dental:

The School Dental Service offers expert oral health care to eligible children at clinics throughout South Australia. All preschool, primary school and secondary school students, aged under 18 years, are eligible for oral health care with the School Dental Service. All dental care is free for toddlers and preschoolers. The closest clinic to Kindy is located at:

Mitcham Primary School
Elphyn Road
Kingswood SA 5062
(08) 7425 8400

Support Services

Department for Education provides access to a team of specialists in speech pathology, social work, psychology and special education, who are available to meet the needs of children or families who might be experiencing difficulties in specific areas. These services are free of charge through the department. If you have concerns about your child's development in any of these areas, please speak to an educator.

