

PRESCHOOL CONTEXT STATEMENT

Updated: 09

Centre number: **6534**

Centre name: **Melaleuca Park Kindergarten**

1. General information

- Centre name
:Melaleuca Park Kindergarten
- Centre number
:6534
- Preschool Director
: Ms Sharon Devlin
- Postal address
:65 Boandik Tce Mt Gambier
- Location address
:As above
- Telephone number
:08 87 23 55 13
- Capacity (per session)
:45
- Centre Ownership
:DECD
- Access for children and staff with disabilities
:Yes
- Fax number
:08 87 23 98 15
- e-mail address
:sharon.devlin448@schools.sa.edu.au
- Department of Education
:Blue Lake Partnership
- Geographical location – ie road distance from GPO (450km)

Enrolment/Attendance

Census data has shown enrolments have remained constant over the past 2 years. The pattern of attendance is consistent with previous years and highlights a growing trend in the transient population in our local area. Enrolment and attendance of aboriginal children into occasional care and sessional kindergarten has increased.

Co-located

Melaleuca Kindergarten work collaboratively, sharing facilities across the campus. On site are Melaleuca Park Primary School. The Melaleuca Park Community Hub is collocated on site.

Local Community Description

Melaleuca Park Kindergarten is a DECD public preschool facility providing education and care to all our families with young children. Melaleuca Park Kindergarten is a full time Preschool situated in the Mount Gambier east area, co-located with the Melaleuca Park Primary School and Melaleuca Park Community Hub, which provides programs and services for families in our community.

We feed into both Public and Private Schools in the Mount Gambier Community and small schools situated on the outskirts of town.

Our families are very diverse, the parents ranging from middle class, two income parents to the lower socio-economic, single parent families, blended families and children in extended family care. Caregivers and grandparents are very much part of some children's routines.

Irregular attendance impacts on children's learning and we support families to access as much preschool as possible. We cater for a number of children coming from families with different background and cultures.

Our Kindergarten offers Universal Access to preschool, 15 hours of preschool for all children in their eligible year, and we operate Monday to Thursday 8.45am to 3.15 pm and Friday's 8.45 am to 12.45 pm. Mixed ages and abilities attend all sessions, including our Aboriginal three-year-old children. A funded Occasional Care program runs weekly offering three sessions a week and is fully integrated into the kindy program.

There is also a Kindy Connect Supported playgroup that runs weekly on a Friday morning alongside the kindy program

Public transport access

Mt. Gambier City Bus Service – some students do use this service to access school. Travel between Adelaide and Melbourne is serviced by a bus service and one airline.

Programs operating

- **Pre Entry:** is offered prior to commencing kindergarten 2 full days during week 8 term four each year.
- **Transition:** A transition to reception program is provided the term prior to commencing School. (for children going on to Melaleuca Park School)

Sessional Kindergarten for eligible children

Sessional Kindergarten is offered to children in their eligible year with single intake policy now up and running. Each child is entitled to 15 hours of preschool a week. Other policies for Early Entry, Aboriginal 3 year olds and children with additional needs are also in place. A Lunch care program is also offered.

Occasional Care (indicate whether funded or unfunded)

Melaleuca Park Kindergarten has a funded Occasional Care Program running two mornings a week with one session for under twos and two sessions for over twos. The Occasional Care Program is an integrated program within the kindergarten program. The program is very popular and has been in operation since term one 2009. We currently have a waiting list and as each week our sessions are fully utilised. We have two occasional care workers who are line managed by the Director.

Bilingual Support

Currently no Bilingual support however we have a growing numbers of enrolment from the local Karenni Families.

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Philosophy:

At Melaleuca Park Kindergarten:

We value relationships with children, families, staff and the wider community. We recognize and respect parents and care givers as their child's first educator and promote a trusting and nurturing environment.

We strive to ensure that each child feels a strong sense of belonging to the kindergarten. We value parent and community 'voice' and strive to develop authentic partnerships with parents and caregivers.

We believe that children learn best through play and in an environment where children feel safe, secure and free to express themselves. Children are encouraged and supported to take risks, challenge themselves, problem solve, explore and build resilience and persistence. (Educators are responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and areas of growth to develop a holistic, inclusive and equitable 'program'. We strive to find ways for children to connect to their natural environment and learn about sustainable practices.

Educators work together to embed a culture of equity, collaboration and innovation towards a shared vision and goals. We foster a culture of learning, respect and growth for the community. We value and respect the culture of our families and strive to celebrate the diversity of our community.

Our vision:

All Children will experience success and positive learning outcomes and be active and civil citizens

Our Mission:

To provide a safe learning space with a focus on nature play where well-being and learning is the focus of everything we do through playful pedagogies and respectful ways of being.

PQIP GOALS 2020

Goal 1 - If Educators engage in quality interactions with children to extend children's language and use pedagogical documentation as a tool for formative assessment then we will see children increasingly using language to communicate their ideas and thinking with others.

Goal 2 -Educators implement the Circle of Security (COS) and Berry Street Education Model (BSEM) then we will see children's well being and engagement in learning increase.

Curriculum:

We provide a curriculum that is developed through the ongoing assessment and planning cycle of observation, analysing learning, documentation, planning, implementation and reflection. We strive to incorporate critical reflection of our assessment and planning cycle to ensure each child's current knowledge, strengths, ideas, culture, abilities and interests are the foundation of the program. We reflect fortnightly in focus group teams where we discuss and track each child's learning, our observations and analysis for each individual child informs future possibilities, which then informs curriculum planning. This includes developing Individual learning plans (ILP's) and written learning summaries for each individual child communicated either in a learning summary or a learning conversation engaging with an educator about child's progress and areas for growth. Children with identified special rights have individual learning plans.

We ensure that staff have a deep understanding of the EYLF and the Indicators of Preschool Numeracy & Literacy to provide quality pedagogical practice. Educators facilitate learning by providing intentional learning provocations to guide children's thinking and wondering and offer opportunities for reciprocal shared conversations. Educators are respectful of parents and building trusting relationships and strong connections with children, families and each other to ensure everyone is included, are respected and work together in the best interest of the child. Through shared sustained thinking children work alongside their peers in play co constructing their learning through sustained meaningful conversations.

Curriculum Cont....

We ensure our Kindergarten is inclusive of all families cultures and languages and endeavours to support children's identity and build children's understanding of diversity. Of significance is our acknowledgement and respect for our nations first people and it is our aim to ensure our practices acknowledge the unique cultures of all peoples and to ensure that no one is disadvantaged while accessing our kindergarten. We have established strong links with the local Indigenous community and have built mutually respectful relationships through our work in The Aboriginal Family Literacy Inquiry Project.

Inquiry projects.

Aboriginal Family Literacy Strategy.

Centre Based Staff

Staff profile

Our service has a stable team of 7-8 educators /staff who have a strong connection with children's families. We have regular relief staff that support routines and continuity of learning. Qualifications of all staff are maintained at all times. Our service meets the required child educator ratio at all times. We have an Aboriginal Family Literacy teacher position which is currently shared by two 0.4 teachers working collaboratively across sites this allows for the service to have access and truly support our knowledge of curriculum and pedagogical leadership to create better outcomes for 3-year-old Aboriginal children and all our children. Processes in place for reflective practice and staff programming. Our service is very supportive and encourages and support new staff.

All staff value life long learning and there is high levels of participation and engagement in professional training and development individually and as a whole site team. All staff are respectful with their interactions with each other and support each others strengths and interests. There is open dialogue and critical reflection embeded in the kindergarten practice.

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Performance Management

The Staff at Melaleuca Park kindergarten will follow the Department of Education and Child Development guidelines and policy regarding Performance Development (PDP). Performance and development planning is a cycle of individual performance planning. Professional learning and performance review that will support ongoing learning and improvement at our site.

Educators use the Performance Development Plan Performa to identify performance objectives for that year. When writing personal PDP plans, educators take into account the frameworks and documents which guide our practice: current site priorities written in the Preschool Quality Improvement Plan (PQIP), the Early Years

Learning Framework Outcomes, Principles and practices, and the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST), Respect, Reflect, relate (RRR) and Aboriginal Family Literacy Strategy Talk, Play, Read Resource. Educators should also be aware of and take into consideration the Code of Ethics, and Protective practices for teachers.

Access to special support staff: Melaleuca Park Kindergarten has developed strong networks with DECD local support services team, Country Health Connect- OT and Physiotherapy and Child Development Unit. Staff are proactive in seeking Inter agency referrals support individual children's needs. All new families are greeted and invited to tour the centre, with effective enrolment and orientation process at the kindy for all occasional care and kindy children.

Centre Facilities -Buildings and grounds

Melaleuca Park Kindergarten has been developed as part of a million-dollar upgrade to the Melaleuca Park Schools. Lake Terrace Kindergarten and Melaleuca Park Child Parent Centre have combined and relocated to the new kindy site and opened its doors from the beginning of term 1/ 2003. We provide a new look service that offers an extended range of high quality programs to meet the needs of local families to advantage user groups in the local community. Our vision of a "one stop shop" has advantages in terms of ease of access, transition between programs, access to educational and community services in a familiar setting.

Local Community (intended for country preschools)

General characteristics

Melaleuca Park Kindergarten is located on the southeast side of Mount Gambier, a city of 25,000 people. Mount Gambier is a well-organised and close knit community, with a variety of medical, commercial, recreational, cultural and sporting facilities and organisations available.

Parent and community involvement We have an active group of parents who are members of our Kindergarten Governing Council There are regular centre newsletters and face book posts. We respect involvement and parent's contributions at every level. A supportive playgroup program operates every Friday morning during term time.

Our Community Parent Hub space connects to the kindy and is available for families with a Coffee and Chat group and Supported Playgroups and a range of parent programs. We have strong connections to relevant education and support agencies for families to have access to a range of community resources and services through our ongoing work with the development of the Melaleuca Hub. Melaleuca Pak Kindergarten are actively working with outside agencies and the community to provide a range of social services in the Melaleuca Hub working in collaboration with the Melaleuca Park School. We have strong connections with inclusive Directions and Playgroup SA along with the support of a Family Services Coordinator to support families at Melaleuca as an out-reach service from the Mount Gambier Children's Centre. We provide and support families to have further opportunities to be connected to the local community and local parent/ family sup-port services.

Feeder schools: Children mostly attend the Melaleuca Park Schools, however some attend a number of other Schools including small rural schools, private and public. A significant number of students enrol each year from Interstate.

Other local care and educational facilities:

The educational community is well established with excellent facilities for child care, pre-school, primary and secondary education. The local TAFE also offers a range of courses for both vocational and personal development. Schools are well serviced by other government agencies.

Commercial/industrial and shopping facilities

Mount Gambier is a large regional centre with excellent commercial/industrial and shopping facilities.

Other local facilities

Mount Gambier is a well-known tourist centre. A number of medical clinics, a public and private hospital, cinemas, theatre and library are amongst the facilities available.

Availability of staff housing

A range of housing options are available including private and government rental or purchasing your own home or unit.

Accessibility

Mount Gambier is easily accessible from major cities, with daily bus and air services available.

Local Government body

The local council is The City of Mount Gambier Council. Their offices are located at the Civic Centre, 10 Watson Terrace Ph 8724 1711. Information about Mount Gambier and Districts is also available from "The Lady Nelson" Tourist/Interpretive Centre, Jubilee Highway (East). Ph 8724 1730.