



NORTHERN DAREBIN COMBINED
KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION

Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten



PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET 2024



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NDCKA Philosophy

At NDCKA our philosophy is to provide a warm, safe, happy, and stimulating environment for all children and their families. Throughout our 3 services our goal is to assist each child into making a smooth transition from home to kindergarten and then onto school.

We strive in helping each individual child develop self-esteem, confidence, and a positive attitude to learning.

Throughout their kinder journey our children will develop knowledge, skills and attitudes which will lay down the foundations for later formal learning in life.

We respect, value, and embrace the diverse values, beliefs, family and cultural backgrounds, traditions, life experiences and knowledge that all children and their families bring to our kindergartens.

Gellibrand Philosophy

Our philosophy is founded on respect for all children and families equally, regardless of race, colour, religion and other status.

At Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten, we focus on the whole child and work to support each child's learning and development through offering an emergent curriculum. Our Curriculum embraces the Early Years Learning Framework which is a part of the National Quality Standard. Children are assisted to achieve within the five learning outcomes "Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning, Communication" identified in the Early Years Learning Framework, which inevitably helps each child form their identity through 'Belonging, Being and Becoming'.

We aim to create a safe, warm, happy and healthy environment for children, staff and families. We value individual strengths and talents. We believe in extending creativity in each child's abilities, and promoting each child's confidence and self-esteem. We provide age-appropriate learning experiences to foster physical, social, emotional and language skills. We support children to develop their problem solving through the use of open ended materials and engaging adults for successful school entry.

We respect, value and embrace the diverse values, beliefs, family and cultural backgrounds, traditions, life experiences and knowledge children and their families bring to our kindergarten. We aim to provide a Curriculum that respects the diversity of the families and communities within Australian culture. It is our intention to develop and maintain reciprocal understandings between educators, families and children where we value each other's contributions and where we have a reciprocal trust that will allow shared insights with each other about each child. It is also intended that open and respectful communication will form the basis of how we interact with families.

We believe that supportive relationships between management and staff members lay a foundation of quality in early childhood settings. To ensure the education and care we provide is of a high standard we aim to be a progressive and innovative kindergarten that considers new ideas and forward thinking. We

keep up to date with current early childhood practice and continually advance the professional development of our staff.

WELCOME TO NDCKA

The Northern Darebin Combined Kindergarten Association (NDCKA) and the kindergartens' staff welcome all our new families to **Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten**. Our community includes Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten in Reservoir, Blake Street Kindergarten in Reservoir and Maryborough Avenue Kindergarten in Kingsbury. We hope the following information will be helpful.

Please read the following information carefully and keep it in a safe place for future reference.

Staff

Our team of qualified, professional, and highly skilled educators have over 25 years' experience working out of Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten.

| | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Maria Sorace | Director/Teacher/ Educational Leader |
| Mindy Fan | Educator |
| Catherine Hardiker | 3YO Teacher |
| Chani Weerasinghe | Diploma Co-Educator |
| Christine Hopkins | Co-Educator |
| Fiona Cuell | 3YO Co-Educator |

Communication with Families

Teachers will provide parents and caregivers with regular updates about curriculum and specific program related information via email or paper-based letters.

The Committee of Management will regularly communicate with parents / caregivers via email and paper-based letters.

NDCKA also has an SMS text service to immediately and effectively communicate with families when required.

Updating Personal Information

Parents and caregivers are required to update NDCKA Administration Staff with any changes to their personal circumstances during the year. This includes phone number, email, residential / postal address, and emergency contacts. Updates can be emailed to:

admin@ndcka.org.au

KEY DATES AND SESSION TIMES

Term Dates 2024

Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten is a sessional kindergarten, which follows the same term dates as Victorian Government Schools. Student free days may occur within each term for

teachers to attend professional development and plan curriculum. Parents and caregivers will be notified of any student free days as early as possible.

The first two school days are staff **Preparation Days** when the teacher and co-educators prepare the play areas and plan the introductory program.

For 2024, Preparation Days are Monday 29th and Tuesday 30th January. Children do NOT attend on this day.

Term 1: 30th January – 28th March 2024

Term 2: 15th April – 28th June 2024

Term 3: 15th July – 20th September 2024

Term 4: 7th October – 20th December 2024

Public Holidays 2024

The kindergarten will be closed on the following days:

Australia Day Thursday 26th January

Labour Day Monday 11th March

Good Friday 29th March

Easter Sunday 31st March

Easter Monday 1st April

Anzac Day Tuesday 25th April

King's Birthday Monday 10th June

Friday before the Grand Final 27th September

Melbourne Cup Day Tuesday 5th November

Session Times

Our 4-year-old program is a 15-hour rotational model, which runs Monday-Thursday. Each child is allocated a group (Red, Blue, Yellow, Purple) and attends kindergarten on their allocated days. Teachers will do their best to accommodate parent / caregiver preferences, however, to ensure the rotational model is feasible, a similar number of children will be allocated to each group.

As of 2024 we will be offering 10 hours per week for our 3YO program over 3 days (one 5hrs session & two 2.5hrs session).

2024 Timetable (subject to change)

| | | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 4 Year Old Program | Red | 8:30am – 1:30pm | 8:30am – 1:30pm | - | 9:15am – 2:15pm | - |
| | Blue | 8:30am – 1:30pm | - | 9:15am – 2:15pm | 9:15am – 2:15pm | - |
| | Yellow | 8:30am – 1:30pm | 8:30am – 1:30pm | 9:15am – 2:15pm | - | - |
| | Purple | - | 8:30am – 1:30pm | 9:15am – 2:15pm | 9:15am – 2:15pm | - |
| 3 Year Old Program | | 2:00pm – 4:30pm | 2:00pm – 4:30pm | - | - | 9:00am – 2:00pm |

Orientation Day / Interview Session

Orientation day is the first day of every kindergarten year. On that day parents and caregivers will attend an interview session with the child's teacher to discuss enrolment details and other confidential information. All parents and caregivers will be notified of the date and time they need to attend to finalise the enrolment for their child.

Parents / caregivers are required to bring along the **COMPLETED enrolment form** (if not already submitted); any **COMPLETED medical forms** (if applicable); e.g., asthma form (if applicable); the child's **immunisation records**; any copies of **custody arrangements** (if applicable); and **Health Care / Concession cards**.

Please Note: A child cannot start kindergarten until the enrolment form has been completed.

INTRODUCING CHILDREN INTO THE KINDERGARTEN (SETTLING-IN POLICY)

In the first few weeks of Term 1, the children are gradually introduced into their regular sessions. Smaller groups and shorter times will be organised to allow each child to adjust to the kindergarten with more ease.

A whole group of 30 children at the beginning can be very overwhelming and quite unsettling for most children.

We appreciate that many children have attended either Day Care, Creche or 3-year-old kindergarten and are used to being separated from their parents / caregivers. However, children starting a new year, in a new environment and with different children and adults need reassurance and time to familiarise themselves with their new surroundings.

Parents and caregivers will be notified of the times for their child's Introductory / Settling-In Sessions.

Kindergarten Program

The kindergarten provides both a social and educational program for the children, as well as opportunities for families to get to know each other. The kindergarten program is designed to promote children's whole development (physical, social, emotional, and educational). The teachers and co-educators work together to develop the kindergarten program. They do this by learning about children's individual needs and interests, as well as the needs and interests of the whole group.

The program is always displayed on the notice board (Reg.75a). Parents and caregivers are encouraged to provide feedback about the program by talking with the educators.

What Children Should Bring to Kindergarten

- Backpack or carry bag to hold their **clothing and creations from kindergarten**
- A healthy snack and lunch in a sealed labelled lunchbox (more information provided under **Food/Snacks**)
- Drink bottle (WATER ONLY PLEASE)
- A full change of clothing: underwear, socks, outerwear, shoes; and a bag to store dirty clothes
 - **All Clothes Should –**
 - Be comfortable and suitable for active and messy play. This includes closed toe shoes that allow for climbing and running (no thongs). Smocks are provided, but clothes can still get dirty.
 - Provide weather protection: warm clothing and sun protection (e.g., sun hat). A warm jacket and hat such as a beanie for colder weather.
 - Be easy for children to manage themselves, especially for going to the toilet.

Parents and caregivers should ensure that all their child's belongings (clothes, bag, lunchbox, drink bottle) have been named and labelled clearly with their child's first name and surname.

THE ASSOCIATION (NDCKA) WILL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY LOST ITEMS.

Food/Snacks

Due to the longer session, the children will have both a snack time and a lunch time. Parents and caregivers should provide in their child's lunchbox a healthy snack such as fresh fruit, a sandwich, cheese, yoghurt, cooked food, or vegetables, as well as nutritious filling food such as bread, sandwich or wrap for lunch. Parents and caregivers should not provide **any sweet drink such as cordial, or junk food such as lollies or sweet snacks as they are NOT allowed.**

Food Allergies and Dietary Restrictions

To ensure children who have food allergies (including anaphylactic reactions to any type of nut or certain foods) remain safe, we are a **NUT FREE** service. **ALL nut products are NOT ALLOWED. These include Nutella, peanut butter or any muesli type bars with nuts.**

Parents and caregivers must inform their child's teacher of any allergies their child has by completing enrolment information. If required, please supply the child's medication such as epi-pen/antihistamine. If applicable, the child's action plan must also be provided to the kindergarten prior to commencement.

Birthdays and Excursions

The Committee of Management has decided that there will be no EXTERNAL excursions. However, incursions with entertainers or other visitors invited to the kindergarten, may occur.

Children's birthdays will be celebrated at the kindergarten during group/snack time. If parents and caregivers would like to provide food, they need to **discuss arrangements with their child's teacher beforehand**. This is to ensure that all children, including those with special dietary requirements (allergies) are kept safe. Parents are encouraged to join the session.

Sun Protection

The kindergarten has a sun smart policy that requires children to wear hats **EVERY TIME** they play outdoors. If a child has no hat, he/she will be required to play in the shaded areas. Hats need to have a front peak and a back flap (like the legionnaires hats). **Caps are not acceptable**. A t-shirt or top that cover shoulders, the whole back and tummy must be worn. **Singlet tops and sun dresses are not suitable**.

Parents and caregivers should apply sunscreen to their child before coming to kindergarten.

Supporting Children's Behaviour

Children will be encouraged to use their own problem-solving skills to work out possible solutions to conflict. Teachers will assist children to use various verbal and non-verbal strategies to solve their problems. They will also guide the children in expressing their emotions appropriately.

Teachers will NOT use any discipline which involves smacking, frightening or humiliating experiences. Rather, teachers will use positive reinforcement to help children to behave appropriately.

If required, staff will move children to alternate activities if they are not responding appropriately to other children. If teachers have any concerns about children's behaviour, they will discuss them with parents and caregivers.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

To ensure the health and wellbeing of all children and staff, it is vital that if children are ill, parents/caregivers keep them at home. Please contact the child's teacher to advise them of their absence.

Staff will contact parents/caregivers if their child is ill or has had an accident requiring medical attention. It is extremely important that **contact phone numbers are always kept up to date**. If parents/caregivers **change phone numbers, mobile numbers etc**, please inform the kindergarten immediately so that the centre's records can be updated (Reg. 160).

Accidents

An Injury and Illness book is kept at the kindergarten (Reg. 87(1)). All accidents which occur at the kindergarten will be recorded and parents/caregivers will be notified at the end of the session (Reg. 87(3)(e)). If the accident is more serious, parents/caregivers will be contacted immediately, and medical assistance requested. Every effort will be made to contact parents/carers or their emergency contacts. For that reason, the kindergarten always needs to have **parents' and caregivers' correct contact numbers**. Parents/caregivers will need to collect their child.

Medication

Staff will only give a child their medication if a parent/caregiver has completed the medication book which states the child's name, name of medication, dosage, and permission to administer (Reg. 92(3)). The medication must be in the **original container** with the child's name clearly visible. If siblings attend the same session and they need medication at the same time, each one of them will need to have their **own separate medication** clearly labelled with the child's name (Reg. 95(a)).

Infectious Diseases

Children with an infectious disease are restricted from attending kindergarten. Parents / caregivers of children who have contracted an infectious disease should notify the kindergarten immediately so that necessary regulatory steps can be implemented. (For further information including a list of diseases and exclusion periods please refer to the table at <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases> and to the 'Dealing with Infectious Diseases' Policy).

COVID-19 NDCKA will follow advise from DET in order to keep all our families, children and Staff safe. (Subject to change)

Immunisation

The kindergarten must abide by the State Government of Victoria's 'No Jab No Play' policy which aims to reduce the incidence of vaccine preventable diseases through immunisation. All parents / caregivers wishing to enrol their children into an approved government program must provide evidence that the children are fully immunised or on a vaccination catch-up program at the time of enrolment. For further information relating to immunisation please contact your Family Doctor/General Practitioner (G.P) or Child Maternal Health Nurse.

Smoking

The kindergarten is strictly a **non-smoking** environment. Parents / caregivers, visitors and staff are prohibited from smoking anywhere on or within kindergarten premises. They should all refrain from smoking anywhere children can see them.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Kindergarten Noticeboards

The following information is displayed on the notice board at the entrance of the kindergarten (Reg. 173):

- An outline of the program and activities that are provided for the children
- Hours and days of operation
- Fees and fee arrangements
- Arrangements for dropping off / picking up children
- Information for dealing with illness and emergency care
- Information for dealing with infectious diseases
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Complaint procedures
- Staff names and positions
- Privacy policy
- Asthma Policy
- Anaphylaxis Policy
- Child safe public commitment

Preparation Time

Preparation time is the time before and after the kindergarten session.

Preparation time is used for:

- Planning and organising the program and preparing learning resources
- Updating children's records
- Meeting with parents
- Meeting with other professionals
- Attending staff training
- Attending to other work-related tasks for the kindergarten e.g., buying materials and equipment, ingredients for cooking/baking
- Responding to emails and phone calls
- Kindergarten tours

Appointments with the Teacher

Preparation time is the best time to make appointments with your child's teacher. Parents and caregivers should feel comfortable arranging a time to discuss the program, their child's development, concerns or enquiries and any other issues that are important.

Parents and caregivers are also welcome and encouraged to attend as an adult helper during their child's kindergarten session from Term 2 (this may be subject to change).

Emergency Procedures

The kindergarten has an Emergency Evacuation Procedure in place if the need arises. This is displayed on the notice board (Reg. 97(4)). These procedures are practiced once every term with all the children.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

NOTE: Committee of Management will follow DET guidelines (this is subject to change)

Information regarding the process of arrivals and departures is subject to Covid-19 regulations as instructed by the Department of Education and Training. It is important that parents / caregivers read and understand any updates to this information, which is usually communicated via email.

Special Notice to Parents and Caregivers

All parents / caregivers must **ALWAYS** be careful that when they are leaving the kindergarten with their child/children, they **DO NOT allow** another child to leave the kindergarten unless accompanied by that child's parent / caregiver.

Parents / caregivers **ARE responsible** for their children before signing the attendance book at drop off and after signing at pick up time.

Attendance Book

Parents and caregivers must sign the attendance book (Reg. 158) when bringing children to kindergarten as well as when picking children up. It is important that the exact arrival and departure times (Reg. 158(1)(b)) are recorded in case of an emergency. Every child is allocated a number (located next to the child's name) and parents / caregivers must ensure they sign on the correct line.

Other Adults Collecting Children

Parents / caregivers must give permission before a child will be allowed to leave the centre with another adult (Reg. 99(4)). Parents / caregivers should ring the kindergarten immediately for any reason that will cause their child to be picked up late. Both staff must remain at the kindergarten with the children until parents / caregivers arrive. There may be a late charge involved in such a situation.

Late Collection Fee

It is not possible for Kindergarten Staff to care for your child after a session has finished. Late collection causes distress to children because they feel they have been left behind or forgotten. Staff are also unable to carry out their specific duties required after each session.

It is therefore NDCKA's policy that repeated late collection of children by parents/carers will incur a late fee fine. All late collection will be recorded in the late collection book. Parents are required to sign the late collection book to acknowledge lateness with a signature. If a parent/carer is repeatedly late in collecting a child without legitimate reasons, two verbal warnings will be given. If late collection continues, a written warning will be issued on the THIRD offence. **A fine of \$50.00 after the first fifteen minutes and \$1.66 every minute thereafter will also be charged.**

Waiting Area

To ensure a well organised and operated program, parents and caregivers should wait quietly in the designated waiting area before the beginning and at the end of the kindergarten

sessions. Children are NOT allowed to enter the play area during this time. Parents / caregivers are responsible for their children during this time.

Parking

Parking restrictions apply in the vicinity of the kindergarten. Please observe these restrictions and take due care when visiting the kindergarten.

FEES

The free funding can only be allocated to one service. If your child attends another service at the same time you will need to decide which service will receive the funding. Please note that if this is the case you will be asked to cover the fee subsidy resulting in being out of pocket. Please see letter attached.

| | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>4-Year-Old Program</i> | <i>Free Kinder for 2024</i> | <i>If you have a health care card, pension card or a visa you must still let us know</i> |
| <i>3-Year-Old Program</i> | <i>Free Kinder for 2024</i> | <i>If you have a health care card, pension card or a visa you must still let us know</i> |

Note: Fee will be subject to change in accordance with government recommendations.

PARENT SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

The kindergarten is a non-profit service which depends on parent / caregiver help as well as encouraging family involvement. During kindergarten sessions a parent / caregiver or family member are invited to experience the program with their child.

Examples of assistance:

- Listening and talking to the children; helping them with activities and preparing the food and drink for snack time.
- Washing smocks. One parent / caregiver from each group will be asked to take them each week.
- Mending items such as dolls clothes and smocks.
- Helping with minor repairs around the kindergarten room e.g., loose screws, repaint or repair home corner furniture, planting in the playground or sewing.
- Assisting with special activity days.
- Sharing an interest or talent e.g., musical, cooking, storytelling.
- Donating interesting “waste materials” e.g., ribbons, cellophane, soft wood pieces, bottle tops, plastic bottles (any size) etc.
- Supporting fundraising and social activities.
- Becoming involved with the Management Committee and the various sub committees (fundraising, maintenance, social events).

Kindergarten Committee

Any family member with a child attending kindergarten or who has attended recently, is welcome to join the Kindergarten Committee.

The Committee aims to:

- Provide parents / caregivers with information about kindergarten operations.
- Provide kindergarten families with opportunities to participate in their child's education, by enabling them to suggest some activities and express their needs.
- Provide kindergarten families with opportunities to get to know each other.
- Support teaching and administration staff with any concerns / queries.
- Support and coordinate special projects and activities.
- Help organise fundraising activities that support the purchase of new equipment and / or improvement to the kindergarten room or outside playground.

All parents and caregivers are welcome to join the committee. Committee meetings are held monthly, at times suitable for most staff and committee members. During each meeting, the committee discusses any kindergarten issues which have arisen, as well as organising fundraising events, applying for funding grants and any other tasks as required.

If any parent / caregiver or family member is able and interested in supporting the kindergarten in some way, please contact a committee member or your kindergarten teacher.

GOVERNANCE

Privacy Policy

We believe the privacy of every family is important. The Kindergarten Association has put in place a Privacy Policy which is available on request. Our privacy policy covers any health or personal information and is bound by the Health Records Act (Vic.) and the Information Privacy Act (Vic). The service is bound by Government Legislations and policies; therefore, we might sometimes be required to disclose any health or personal information to some government agencies or departments to comply with the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2010, The Incorporations Act 1981 and any employment related laws and agreements.

For any enquiries or information on the Privacy Policy, please contact either the teacher, President or Secretary.

Complaints and Grievances

We are happy to assist families with any concern that they may have regarding the management of the kindergarten or the program for the children. If any family has a problem or difficulty, please raise it with the teacher. However, if the problem remains unresolved, all complaints **MUST** be in writing and sent to the address below:

The President
 Northern Darebin Combined Kindergarten Association
 PO Box 87
 RESERVOIR, VIC 3073
 Email: president.ndcka@gmail.com

If parents and caregivers are not satisfied with how the problem or difficulty is resolved, then they can contact:

Department of Education and Training
Quality, Assessment and Regulation Division
(Northern Metropolitan Region)
900/1 McNab Avenue
FOOTSCRAY, VIC 3011
Phone: (03) 7005 1989
Email: nmr.qar@education.vic.gov.au

Management and Registration of the Kindergarten

The Northern Darebin Combined Kindergarten Association (NDCKA) employs the staff and operates the service, which is a registered children's centre. The Association makes decisions about how the kindergarten will operate, guided by the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. The purpose of these Government Regulations is to ensure that the safety and needs of the children are paramount. A copy of these Regulations is available at the kindergarten. When Regulations apply in this Parent Information Booklet this will be noted as: (Reg. 185).



Northern Darebin Combined
Kindergarten Association
PO Box 87
Reservoir VIC 3073
admin@ndcka.org.au
ABN 71 385 314 142

PUBLIC COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten and the Northern Darebin Combined Kindergarten Association (NDCKA) are committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people involved in our services and programs. Our association has zero tolerance for child abuse of any kind as we work towards compliance with the Victorian Child Safe Standards.

Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten and NDCKA are committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:

- promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island children;
- promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
- promoting the safety of children with disabilities;
- promoting the (right to) safety of trans and gender diverse children and their families in ECEC (Early Childhood Education and Care) settings;
- ensuring that LGBTIQ+ children and families feel included;
- valuing, respecting and caring for children;
- fostering opportunities for each child to participate, express their views and to learn and develop;
- always acting in the best interests of each child and having a zero tolerance of child abuse;
- taking all reasonable steps to ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development;
- actively managing the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations in protecting children and preventing any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm;
- continuously improving the way our service identifies risks of and responds to child abuse, and reporting on responses to allegations of abuse;
- proactively sharing information with relevant authorities to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or a group of children, consistent with their best interests.

Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten and NDCKA are committed to providing and actively promoting a safe environment where all children are valued and feel safe. This commitment is reflected in our centre's philosophy and daily teaching practice. Our commitment to the safety of children is based on our duty of care and responsibilities to children and always acting in the best interests of children. Every person including staff, parent/caregiver and volunteers engaged by Gellibrand Crescent Kindergarten and NDCKA plays a specific and vital role in sharing the responsibility of protecting the children from risk and harm in our kindergarten community.