## Acacia Kindergarten Policies and Procedures

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Please follow this link to access policies on the DECD website

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.

Curriculum

Our preschool’s food and nutrition curriculum:
- 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.
- Includes opportunities for children to develop practical food skills for example, growing, maintaining, preparing and cooking healthy foods.
- Integrates nutrition across the curriculum where possible.
- 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:
- Have fresh, clean filtered tap water available at all times and are encouraged to drink water regularly through the day.
- Are encouraged to bring their own named water bottle.
- Eat in a positive, appropriate, social environment with staff who model healthy eating behaviours.

Our preschool:
- Understands and promotes the importance of breakfast for children.
- Teaches the importance of healthy meals and snacks as part of the curriculum.
- 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:
  - Provide children with important minerals and vitamins.
  - Encourage a taste for healthy foods.
  - Encourage chewing which promotes oral muscle development.

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

STRICTLY NO PRODUCTS CONTAINING NUTS.
**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, crisps 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 this conflicts 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.

**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
  - Policy development/review
  - Information on enrolment
  - Pamphlet/Poster display

More information can be found at:
- Department of Health and Ageing
- OPAL
- Eat Well Be Active
- Eat a Rainbow
  [http://www.communityfoodies.com/Eat%20a%20Rainbow](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. For much of South Australia, UV radiation levels are 3 and above from September to April—it is during these months that 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. During May to August, at times when the UV radiation level is below 3, sun protection for most people is not necessary.

Aims
The aims of the Acacia Kindergarten SunSmart 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 Terms 1 and 4 of each 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.
  - 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. 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 at least elbow length sleeves and longer style shorts/skirts.
Families are asked to apply sunscreen on their child before arriving at kindergarten in Terms 1 and 4. Staff will re-apply sunscreen late morning and mid-afternoon. 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. In the event that 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 to 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 is unsafe. (No tank tops, tops with shoe string 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, keep very active play to a minimum.

Sources: DECD “Guidelines for developing a Preschool Hot Weather Policy”

Anti Cancer Foundation of SA.
BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT POLICY

At Acacia Kindergarten we believe that
- Everyone has a right to feel and be safe all the time.
- Children learn best when they experience success and have positive self-esteem.
- Behaviour changes more quickly when it is handled in a positive way.
- Behaviour has consequences that increase or decrease choices in life.
- Individuals need to accept responsibility for their own behaviour.
- Staff and parents/guardians need to share the responsibility by being as consistent as possible, creating a safe, secure environment for children and modeling appropriate behaviours.
- There are a small number of children with disabilities whose intellectual or sensory disability and/or brain injury may result in unsafe, involuntary behaviour. These children will require intervention that may differ from the usual strategies used. This will be documented in the Individual Learning Plan and/or Health Support Plan.

We accept that
1. All children feel angry, frustrated and upset at times and need help to express their feelings appropriately.
2. Children need to experience and know how to manage negative feelings from other people and they aren’t always going to get it ‘right’.
3. Children learn about ‘acceptable behaviour’ from experience not just from talking.

When we observe unsafe/unacceptable/aggressive behaviours, staff will use a range of strategies that may include:

- Sometimes a simple thumbs up or thumbs down gesture to clue the child(ren) into whether their behaviour is acceptable or not. Use of key words, signs, visual cues.
- Staff may need to move nearer and monitor the situation closely.
- If others are unsafe move in quickly to ensure the safety of all children.
- Teach, model and reinforce positive safe behaviours.
- Coach or model and support the child to assert their own needs and/or feelings so they can respond to situations appropriately.
- Problem solve with the child(ren). What could they try? What could they say? What might happen next?
- Talk about the feelings of all involved.
- Consider each child’s level of development.
- Be consistent and follow through when managing behaviours.
- If the problem persists and the child(ren) are unable to settle, we may need to give children the choice of
  - staying safely at the activity
  - re-directing the play or
  - redirecting the child.
Providing calming areas that give children an opportunity to unwind and settle. Locate these in a place where the child can see others yet the attention of others is not drawn to him or her. The area should have an open path back to the main play or group for when the child is ready to return.

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

- Staff will document behaviours and Parents/guardians will be approached.
- A Behaviour Support Plan will be developed by the staff, this may involve a risk assessment.
- Further support and intervention may be required so permissions may be sought for referral to DECD or other support agencies.
- Staff will work with parents/guardians and share information, strategies and offer support to ensure a consistent approach is maintained.

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 first 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 the 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, DECD 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 DECD 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 DECD 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 by email to decd.parentcomplaint@sa.gov.au

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

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

Please follow the link to access policies on the DECD Website

Last Review: 17/02/14

Director: Kimberley Crowe
Governance Council Chairperson: Fiona Badenoch