



Parent Handbook

September 2017

ELC Director: Felicity Veale
BCCS School Administration
(03) 5153 0079 / admin@bccs.org.au

Enrolment Age Requirements

Four-year-old kindergarten program:

Children must turn four years of age by 30 April of their year of commencement.

Three-year-old program:

Children must turn three years of age by 30 April and have had their third birthday before they can attend the three-year-old program.

Payment of Fees

Fees are invoiced at the beginning of each term and are due by that term's end. A discount of 5% will apply to all fees paid within 21 days of the date of invoice in each term.

Families can directly deposit funds (via internet banking) into the school bank account using the following details:

Bank: Westpac
Account name: Bairnsdale Christian Community School
BSB: 033-203
Account number: 237703

Please quote your 'family name, term and ELC' if using this facility i.e. 'BROWN T3 ELC'.

Term Dates

Foundations Early Learning Centre operates within the BCCS school calendar year.

The ELC is closed on public holidays and BCCS student free days. Families will be advised of these dates in advance.

Operating Hours

Four-year-old kindergarten program:

Three days a week (Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday)

Three-year-old program:

One day a week (Friday)

The ELC is open from 8:45am-3pm each program day.

Orientation Program

On commencement into either program, children will attend an orientation session with a family member for the first two weeks. This will provide children the opportunity to establish themselves within the new environment, and become acquainted with their teachers and peers. Families will be notified of these dates and times prior to commencing at Foundations ELC.

Uniform

Foundations ELC polo tops are available for purchase at \$25 per item. This uniform is not compulsory, however, we do ask that you dress your child in weather appropriate, comfortable clothing and footwear.

Food

Families are required to provide a healthy packed lunch and water bottle for their child each day that they attend the ELC. Please put your child's name on all food containers and reusable packaging.

Families are requested to notify the ELC of any food allergies or special dietary requirements.

As part of the educational program children will at times be involved in cooking/food preparation activities.

Delivery and Collection of Children

The Early Learning Centre will open at 8:45am and close at 3:00pm sharp on program days. Families are required to sign their child in and out of the ELC upon delivery and collection daily.

Children will not be released to any person, other than their parent/guardian, unless written permission is given.

In the event of an emergency, a verbal authorisation from parents/guardians will be accepted, but written permission must be provided as soon as possible thereafter.

Before & After School Care

Currently Foundations ELC/BCCS does not offer Before or After School Care.

Priority of Offers

Children and siblings of children currently enrolled at BCCS will be given preference on enrolment where possible.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

At this time, Health Care Card holders are unable to claim the 'Kindergarten Fee Subsidy' to attend Foundations Early Learning Centre. It is anticipated that the subsidy will be available to eligible families in the near future.

For further information, please speak with school administration staff.

Toilet Training & Spare Clothes

All children attending the ELC are to have commenced toilet training. We understand that children learn at different rates and that 'accidents' can also happen. Therefore, we ask that all families provide a spare set of clothing in their child's bag for any accidents or messy play! Our educational program is very hands-on and exciting and at times it will be impossible to stay clean and dry.

Quiet Time

A designated 'quiet time' for all children takes place as part of the educational program, after lunch each day. Children are not required to sleep, but all are asked to rest their bodies for approximately 30 minutes. Teaching children to be happy with their own company for a short time each day is essential to long term wellbeing. It is valuable for your child to learn how to enjoy their time independent of external influences.

Toys from Home

Ideally any home toys or trinkets should remain at home. Toys brought from home can easily be broken or lost and the ELC takes no responsibility for such items.

A 'comforter' or special toy can be brought into the ELC for your child's rest time comfort. These items should be clearly labeled and remain in your child's bag at all other times.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a very exciting time for children, and the ELC staff look forward to sharing these events with each child. You are welcome to bring along a special treat for your child's birthday celebration. Please include a complete list of ingredients with any food item provided.

As an alternative, you might like to provide non-food items i.e. stickers, glow wands or party blowers.

Family Involvement

We believe that God has given the responsibility for the training and nurture of children primarily to their parents/guardians. As an Early Learning Centre we want to support and work together with families to provide a positive learning and nurturing environment for each child.

Parents/guardians are most welcome to participate in ELC activities. Opportunities for parent/guardian involvement include assisting with excursions, attending meetings and information evenings, and participating in the regular educational program.

Please note that while volunteering within the ELC there are certain regulations and guidelines that must be adhered to.

Furthermore, we recognise the limits on your personal time but also know that your involvement in your child's life at the ELC can create wonderful benefits for you, your child and the ELC community.

Please let ELC staff know if you are interested in participating.

Communication

If you have any concerns or matters to discuss about your child, or the ELC program we strongly encourage families to feel free to make an appointment to speak with the ELC Director.

We are always happy to chat, but find that drop off and pick up times do not provide you with a sufficient confidential environment. An individual appointment would generally better suit your needs. To book an appointment please email: foundations@bccs.org.au.

Feedback

As part of our regular review process we also ask for continual feedback on your family and child's experience (in writing or verbally) with the Early Learning Centre. We will also routinely email out policy updates, procedural changes, health alerts and other relevant information, and ask you for feedback.

Email

You can contact the Director via email at: foundations@bccs.org.au.

Families have the option to have any notices, updates and information emailed to them or to have them printed.

Pigeonholes

All children are provided a pigeonhole within the ELC foyer. These are to store your child's school bag and any personal belongings. We recommend that families do not store any valuable items or dangerous goods in your child's bag or the pigeonholes. The pigeonholes are not lockable and will be accessed throughout the day by the children.

Play-based Learning

Foundations Early Learning Centre adopts a play-based learning program. This does not mean that the children just do what they like all day. There will be times when the children come together as a group, listen to others, observe rules and begin to take responsibility for their actions and their environment.

In practical terms, a play-based program gives emphasis to encouraging children to express their own ideas in play. Play is the way in which children learn. They learn most effectively when they are relaxed and having fun.

Research shows us that a work-oriented, rigid approach to learning is not likely to help children develop a love of learning or provide the skills and attitude they need to be life-long learners.

Play's Benefits

- Play enables children to develop all their skills and abilities.
- Play provides opportunities to improve small and large muscle skills and maintain physical health.
- Play helps to develop imagination and creativity, provides a context in which to practise social skills, acts as an outlet for emotional expression and provides opportunities to understand value systems.

Routines and Procedures

Routines are an integral part of the ELC daily programs and provide children with a secure structure in which to grow and learn. In formulating routines, consideration is always given to the developmental age and stages, and any particular needs of the children.

Excursions and Incursions

Children learn from experience, as such excursions are seen as a valuable part of the program. Incursions (outings within the Bairnsdale Christian Community School grounds) will also occur on a regular basis throughout the program.

Health and Safety

The ELC has several health and safety related policies and procedures. A reference folder of all policies is located in the foyer. Additional copies are available upon request. Families are encouraged to familiarise themselves with these documents.

Illness

We believe that children recover best in the comfort of their own home and have procedures in place for arranging families to collect ill children. Families will be advised of any case of an infectious disease occurring at the Early Learning Centre.

Families are requested to inform staff of any illness experienced by their child. Such information is held confidence.

Children should not attend the ELC within 24 hours of any episode of vomiting or diarrhea.

In circumstances where a child develops an infectious condition/disease as per the Department of Education & Early Childhood 'Exclusion List' the child will not be permitted to return to the ELC until after the exclusion period has passed (A schedule of the recommended minimum periods of exclusion is on display in the ELC).

Medical Conditions and Special Needs

Children with medical conditions and/or special needs are very welcome at Foundations ELC. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to notify the ELC of any known medical conditions or special needs of your child.

Parents/guardians should also notify the ELC if their child is at risk of having an Anaphylactic reaction.

The ELC staff will work with families to prepare and implement specialised Medical Management and Communication Plans for your child.

Immunisation

The ELC must maintain current records of a child's immunisation status. Families are required to supply a copy of their child's immunisation history statement upon enrolment. In accordance with recent 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, your child's enrolment cannot be finalised until ELC is provided with an immunisation history statement that shows the child:

- is up to date with vaccinations for their age;
- is on a vaccine catch-up schedule; OR
- has a medical condition preventing them from being fully vaccinated.

Families are requested to advise ELC staff of any updates to this information.

Sun Protection

Foundations Early Learning Centre has a Sun Protection policy that aims to ensure all children attending the ELC are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful rays of the sun. The policy is to be implemented throughout the year, but with particular emphasis from September through to April when UV radiation is most intense in Victoria.

Parents/guardians are requested to supply their children with appropriate sun hats. Children will be required to wear their hats whenever they are outside and UV ratings are three or higher.

Parents/guardians are also requested to supply SPF30+, broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen for their child's individual use. From September through to the end of April, parents/guardians should ensure that their child has sunscreen applied prior to arriving at the ELC.

Child Abuse

Child abuse is an act that endangers a child's physical or emotional health or development. The abuse may occur as physical injury, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect.

Foundations Early Learning Centre is committed to being a Child Safe environment. As such it has zero tolerance for any form of child abuse. Foundations ELC is committed to ensuring each child is kept safe from harm and is committed to acting in the child's best interests at all times.

The Early Learning Centre treats its responsibilities with regards to child protection very seriously and with the utmost importance. To this end, policies have been developed and procedures are in place to ensure every child is kept safe whilst in our care.

Evacuation Procedures

Evacuation procedures are invoked for fire, flood, bomb threat, hostage, storm and cyclone, toxic emission, air and transport accidents and for any explosion or disruption to essential services. The evacuation of children will be practiced informally on a regular basis so that in an emergency the children will know exactly what to expect.

Data Collection

Information collected by Foundations Early Learning Centre will only include that which is essential to the safe and effective care of the children enrolled. It is the parents/guardians responsibility to inform ELC staff of any changes to the personal information contained in their child's Enrolment record. Information should be updated as soon as possible.

Child Records

The following records will be maintained confidentially in relation to each child enrolled at the ELC:

- Enrolment forms
- Attendance records
- Developmental records
- Individual Learning Plans
- Authorisations or Refusals
- Relevant Court Orders
- Administration of Medication forms
- Letters of referral, assessments, or reports
- Medical Management Plans
- Incident, Injury and Illness records

With the exception of the Attendance record, the above documentation will be kept on the child's individual file.

Children's files are to be retained for a minimum of three years after the child has left the ELC.

Incident, Injury and Illness records and Administration of Medication authorities are kept by the ELC for a minimum period of twenty-five years.

Any records kept by the ELC staff are the property of Foundations Early Learning Centre/Bairnsdale Christian Community School.

Access to Individual Records

In order to maintain confidentiality, access to personal records is limited. For further information, please refer to the ELC's Privacy and Confidentiality policy.

Privacy

Foundations Early Learning Centre is committed to protecting the privacy of all children, families and staff, in accordance with the Health Records Act 2001 and Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

Any person has the right to query the management of information held about their child or themselves. Queries should initially be raised with the ELC Director. We will endeavor to resolve any concerns or complaints promptly.

Confidentiality

All information will be treated as confidential unless otherwise advised. Relevant confidential information may be discussed for professional purposes, or in the event that your child requires emergency medical care. However, the information shared will be limited to that which is relevant for the care of the child.

Complaints

In the first instance, complaints regarding Foundations ELC should be made to the Director on (03)5153 0079 or foundations@bccs.org.au, alternatively the school can be contacted via email at admin@bccs.org.au.

All complaints will be addressed in a discreet, effective and timely manner and will adopt the procedures set out in the 'Dealing with Complaints' policy. A copy of this policy is available in the ELC foyer or upon request.

Any complaints involving allegations that a child's health, safety or wellbeing has been compromised or that relevant legislation has been contravened, will be forwarded to the Department of Education and Training within 24 hours of the complaint being received by the service. Complaints of this nature can also be made direct to the Education Department on (03) 5127 0400.

Ask to speak with an Authorised Officer.

Policies and Procedures

Foundations Early Learning Centre has a policy and procedures folder that contains policies relating to the National Quality Standard areas of:

- Educational program and practice
- Children's Health and Safety
- Physical Environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management

A reference folder of all policies is located in the foyer. Additional copies are also available upon request.

Families are requested to familiarise themselves with these documents. Your feedback is welcomed.

Statement of Philosophy

We believe that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.

Foundations Early Learning Centre provides a caring, nurturing, and safe environment where biblical truths are taught and lived. We believe children are created in God's image, that each child is precious and has wonderful God-given gifts and abilities that are to be nurtured and encouraged. Our aim is that each child may grow in the knowledge and understanding of the person and character of God, and develop Christ-likeness in both attitude and practice.

Our service exists to help parents fulfil their responsibility of raising their child. We partner with families to *'train up children in the way they should go; so that even when they are older they will not depart from it'* (Proverbs 22:6). In this, the Early Learning Centre acts as an extension of the home where we:

- value children as unique individuals;
- equip children to grow as competent and confident learners;
- help children develop personal virtues i.e. patience, kindness, love, respect;
- equip children to develop their gifts and talents for service in God's world; and
- encourage children to think and act in a Biblical, faithful way.

We believe each child's learning is based upon strong and positive relationships with caring adults and other children. The role of the educator is to guide and support children's learning by providing an environment that offers encouragement, challenge, curiosity, stimulation and positive role models. We also acknowledge that each child learns at a different pace and this requires a range of differing learning and teaching styles.

Our curriculum is firmly based on God's Word and incorporates the most contemporary early childhood theory and research and Australian Government curriculum guidelines including the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Foundations Early Learning Centre offers an education and care program that:

- includes both specifically planned experiences, as well as activities and interactions that arise spontaneously;
- reflects the diversity of cultures and people that God has created;
- offers an age-appropriate program that caters for individual and group learning; and
- ensures Biblical truths underpin all learning experiences.

Through our program children will develop a Biblical understanding of the world and their place in it. Constructive intentional play allows children to experience a wide range of activities to provide an environment where they can ask questions, solve problems and engage in critical thinking. Life skills are developed while equipping children to make wise choices and participate fully and actively in society. At Foundations Early Learning Centre all children will develop and experience a strong sense of belonging, being and becoming.

