

THE WILLOWS Preschool & Early Learning Centre



PARENT HANDBOOK
2015



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1 Welcome to the Willows

1.1 The Willows Story

The Willows is an owner-operated, family-run child care service with a passion for providing children and families with a high-quality and valuable experience in a home-like environment. We began on April 21 1997 as the smallest centre in town - Perfect Angels Child care Centre. In 2001, we evolved into the Willows Early Learning Centre, moving to our current premises in Dalton Street. 2003 saw the addition of the Willows Preschool and purpose-built Preschool room for 3-5 year olds. We extended upon this in January, 2012 with our Transition-to-School room, focusing on school readiness for our 4-5 year olds.

We are very proud of our personalized, focused and caring approach, and our ability to create meaningful and lasting relationships with the families who attend the Willows. We look forward to getting to know your family and working together to ensure the next generation will be filled with strong, confident, inquisitive, community-minded individuals.

1.2 The Willows Philosophy

GROWING TOGETHER, A GREAT HEADSTART



The Willows philosophy was distilled from the beliefs and values of all the Willows' Educators and Families in 2011 and all agree it encapsulates our current beliefs and values, and describes succinctly what life is all about at the Willows.

Management, Educators, Families, Children and the Community growing together, teaching each other, learning from each other, and supporting and including one another.

The distilled one line version of our philosophy does not give us a basis for all our decision making and programming at the Willows, so we thought about what we want here and how we reflect the core elements of the Early Years Learning Framework.

This is what we came up with:

- The Willows Management, Educators, Children, and Families work together to co-create a stimulating and supportive environment.
- We share our lives with each other so we know each individual's special skills and interests, and what really excites us. This allows us to provide a tailor-made and meaningful experience for everyone at the Willows.

- The children and Educators feel open and relaxed, that they belong to our school community, and that they are safe to explore and experiment together.
- The boundaries are clear and consistent, so we all know what to expect and how to treat each other.
- At the Willows, we celebrate everyone's uniqueness and work together to foster a love of learning, community, and self.
- Children are respected, and viewed as strong, capable, unique, and inquisitive learners, explorers, and detectives.
- Management and Educators engage in the process of continuous improvement, are dedicated to furthering their professional knowledge, and reflect upon and analyse their practices and beliefs.
- Management and Educators are continually evaluating the environment and program at the Willows to ensure access by people of ranging ability.
- We promote a sense of social conscience, a joy for human diversity, and an awareness of the common humanity shared by all people.
- We believe in play based learning. Children make sense of their world through play, and actively participating with their peers, in their environment. At the Willows, Educators promote, engage in, and prioritise children's play.
- We believe that the child's voice is paramount, and every child has a right to be actively involved in their own experience.
- The general feel of the place is a gentle buzz of contented activity, an easy pace with time to listen and time to really explore. There is the occasional quiet lull as we fill our mouths, rest a while, or really concentrate on our work, and there is the occasional burst of energy when we discover something really exciting.



1.3 The Willows Goals

Management and Educators:

- Respect each child as an individual, building self esteem through positive interaction.
- Encourage each child to express themselves, to communicate and to listen to others, to make decisions and to accept consequences.
- Provide positive guidance in a non-sexist, non-violent environment that emphasises an anti-bias curriculum.
- Implement a program that stimulates each child's own ability in the fundamental areas: Physical, Emotional, Social & Intellectual.
- Incorporate a flexible routine that promotes independence, self-confidence and social competence.
- Facilitate parent participation in the Centre according to their own needs, interests and opportunities, and place prime importance on open communication between parents and staff.
- Maintain a mutual respect between staff, children and parents that promotes the wellbeing of all concerned.
- Possess knowledge of the developmental needs of children and extend the knowledge and skills of the staff through in-servicing and study support.
- Create an exciting, accepting, loving, fun place to learn.

NOTE

The Willows Early Learning Centre adheres to the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics for quality early childhood practises. (A copy is displayed in each room)

2 Rooms & Staff

2.1 Rainbow Room	0 - 12 months
Sunshine Room	12 -18 months

Philosophy

Your Child, Your Family, Your Service

We are linked in a common goal to ensure your child is happy, healthy, and learning all they can about their world.

In the Rainbow and Sunshine Rooms, we strive for a nurturing and routine-based program focused on continuity of care between home and the Willows, creating loving and secure relationships, and providing supportive challenges for rapidly developing brains and bodies. There is an emphasis on creating a warm and inviting home-like environment.

Our language skills are beginning to develop and many of us are using different cries, gestures and body language to indicate hunger and thirst, tiredness, insecurity and anger when someone takes our toy or mum leaves before we are ready.

The educators in this room are experienced interpreters and devote much time to exploring the emotions with the children and gently coaxing them towards the words to express them. This will give them the power to control their own worlds. Once we learn to talk and walk the world opens up to us.

Routine

8.30	Program commences - table activities are set up for children to explore. Children help to choose which resources and toys will be used today.
9.00	Nappy Change
9.15	Morning Tea
9.30	Outdoor program commences - creative art, gross motor, and sensory play
11.00	Nappy Change
11.15	Group Time - the Children and Educators get together and talk, sing, dance, and tell stories
11.30	Lunch time
12.00	Rest time and quiet, one-on-one activities
1.30	Nappy Change
2.30	Afternoon Tea
3.00	Outdoor program commences

This routine is flexible depending on seasons, weather, children's interests, and other incidental factors.

2.2 Butterfly Room 18 - 30 months

Philosophy

Working Towards Independence and Supporting Social Success

Providing an environment that encourages sharing, turn-taking, and respect for all.

In the Butterfly Room, we focus on

- self help skills such as toileting, hand washing, and dressing and feeding ourselves.
- language and communication.
- socialising.

We strive to provide a supportive environment where children are encouraged to 'give it a go,' and mistakes are viewed as stepping stones on our learning journey.

We have discovered the power of words and are encouraged in our journey toward independence by skilled facilitators who understand the value of providing a setting where it is safe to try new things, and teach the importance of being responsible for our belongings, environment, and community.

Routine

8.30	Children prepare themselves for the outdoor program. Depending on the weather, they apply sunscreen, put on hats/beanies, and weather-appropriate clothing
9.00	Nappy change and Toileting
9.30	Morning Tea
10.00	Indoor program commences
11.00	Nappy Change and Toileting
11.15	Group Time - the Children and Educators get together and talk, sing, dance, and tell stories
11.30	Lunch - Children help to set up for lunch and clean up afterwards
12.00	Rest time and quiet, one-on-one activities
2.00	Nappy change and Toileting
2.20	Group Time - the Children and Educators get together and talk, sing, dance, and tell stories together
2.30	Afternoon Tea
3.00	Outdoor Program recommences

This routine is flexible depending on seasons, weather, children's interests, and other incidental factors.

2.3 Junior Preschool 2.5 - 3.5 years

Philosophy

Cultivating Curiosity

Exploring and supporting Children's awe and wonder at our amazing world.

In the Junior Preschool Room we are mastering spoken language and self expression. We are detectives and scientists exploring our exciting world by asking questions and experimenting with language, maths, and the arts and sciences.

In the Junior Room, we are becoming responsible and active members of our community, and we help to set up, use, and care for our learning environment. We are learning to engage in cooperative play and hints of successful sharing can be seen.

Our friends are very important to us, and our patient educators give us gentle conflict resolution skills to foster strong relationships.

Routine

8.15	Indoor program commences. Children help to set up environment.
9.30	Outdoor Program commences
10.15	Indoor Group Time - the Children and Educators get together and talk, sing, dance, and tell stories together
10.30	Morning Tea
10.45	Indoor Program recommences
12.15	Group Time - the Children and Educators get together and talk, sing, dance, and tell stories
12.30	Lunch - Children help to set up and serve lunch, and clean up afterwards
1.15	Rest time/quiet activities
3.30	Afternoon tea
3.45	Outdoor program recommences

This routine is flexible depending on seasons, weather, children's interests, and other incidental factors.

2.4 Senior Preschool/Transition to School 3.5-5years

Philosophy

Embraced, Celebrated, Supported, Prepared
Working together to equip children with the skills and knowledge for success at
“Big School” and Beyond.

The Senior Preschool focuses on school readiness for our 4-5 year olds with an exciting and challenging program specifically catered to the skills, interests, and capabilities of our older children.

The programming is heavily child-interest based, so the skills, interests, and background of the children will guide their learning environment and experiences, allowing effective learning to take place.

The children take ownership and responsibility for their classroom and involve themselves in the day-to-day runnings.

In this room, we can use words effectively and our independence allows us to focus our energy outwards to experience a world full of wonder and excitement.

Our highly qualified educators guide us to focus on how our behaviour affects others and how to be respectful but assertive when the behaviour of others affects us.

The environment at the Willows Preschool is the ideal opportunity to instil a joy of learning that will last a lifetime.

Routine

8.15	Indoor program commences. Children help to set up environment.
9.30	Outdoor Program commences
10.15	Morning Tea. Indoor Program recommences
12.10	Language, literacy, and social group session
12.30	Lunch - Children help to set up and serve lunch, and clean up afterwards
1.00	Indoor Program recommences
3.00	Rest time
3.30	Afternoon tea
3.45	Music and movement group session
4.00	Outdoor program recommences

This routine is flexible depending on seasons, weather, children's interests, and other incidental factors.

2.5 Staff Management

Trevor Carroll	Bachelor of Education Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood
Cathy Carroll	Diploma of Children's Services

Educators

Assistant Director/Educational Leader: Alex Halls Diploma of Children's Services
 Service Operations Manager: Leanne Ah-see Diploma of Community Services

Rainbow Room	Room Leader:	Denise Stephens	Working towards Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
	Educators:	Trudy McMiles Leanne Ah-see	Diploma of Children's Services Diploma of Community Services

Sunshine Room	Room Leader:	Denise Stephens	Working towards Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
	Educators:	Dinah Kasakeijan Maddi Phillips	Diploma of Children's Services Working towards Diploma

Butterfly Room	Room Leaders:	Ashlee Betts	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
	Educators:	Leanne Ridley Chelsea Coe	Working towards Diploma Traineeship - Certificate iii

Junior Preschool	Room Leader:	Teresa Pearson	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
	Educators:	Kate Ogden Isabel Wright Meg Kelly Lyn Condliffe	Diploma of Community Services Diploma of Community Services Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)

Senior Preschool	Room Leaders:	Amy Wherrit	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
	Educators:	Brydie Adams Joel Clancy	Diploma of Community Services Certificate iii Children's Services

Rotating	Jane Morris	Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)
	Brianna Walker	Certificate iii Children's Services
	Tanya Whiley	Working towards Cert iii

Administration and Maintenance

Natalie Hanlon	Fees Officer	Matthew Carroll	Cleaner
Monique Wilson	Enrolments Officer		

3

Operations

3.1 Services Offered

The following services are offered at the Willows:

- Long day care
- Preschool
- School holiday care
- Casual care
- Limited Out of School Hours (OOSH) Care

3.2 Days of Operation

- Monday to Friday, 52 weeks a year

3.3 Hours of Operation

- 6.45 am till 5.45 pm

3.5 Sessions

The fees charged cover 1 session.

Each session is a maximum of 11 hours between 6.45 am and 5.45 pm

3.6 Priority of Access

In accordance with the Australian government's *Priority of Access Guidelines*, the Willows is obliged to abide by a Priority of Access:

- Priority 1** A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2** A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the *Work, Training, Study Test*.
- Priority 3** Any other child.

Within these main Priority Categories, priority should be given to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Families
- Families which include a disabled person
- Families which include an individual whose adjustable income does not exceed the lower income threshold, or whose partner is on income support
- Families from a non-English speaking background
- Socially isolated families
- Single parent families

Priority is also given to people who require PERMANENT FULL TIME CARE.

3.7 Public Holidays

We are closed on Public Holidays. WE CHARGE FULL FEES and pay our staff full wages for Public Holidays. These are the only days we do not operate. This is a private service that relies solely on payment of fees.

3.8 Approved Providers - Trevor and Cathy Carroll

3.9 Approved Provider Number - PR-00003495

3.9 Approved Service Number - SE-00009321

3.10 Nominated Supervisor - Trevor Carroll

Along with the Approved Providers, the Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the service is following the National Law and Regulations.

3.11 Educational Leader - Alex Halls

The Educational Leader is a suitably qualified and experienced person who leads the development and implementation of the educational program in the service.

3.12 Certified Supervisors

In the absence of an Approved Provider or Nominated Supervisor, a Certified Supervisor is given the duty of Responsible Person, and placed in day-to-day charge of a service.

Our Certified Supervisors include: Alex Halls, Leanne Ah-See, Denise Stephens, Ashlee Betts and Teresa Pearson.



4

Fees, Government Assistance, & Payment

4.1 About Fees

- This is a privately run Service that relies solely on payment of fees.
- Fees charged are similar to all other services in this area.
- Fees are reassessed on a 6 monthly basis in January and June and increase in line with indexation and State Award Wage increases.
- Fees are to be paid 2 WEEKS IN ADVANCE.
- Upon leaving 2 WEEKS NOTICE, IN WRITING must be given.
- The 2 weeks payment in advance covers this 2 weeks' notice.

4.2 Current Fees

Full fees, before any government assistance or discounts are applied, are as follows:

0-2 Years	\$99.50/day
2-3 Years	\$97/day
3 Years+	\$94/day
OOSH	\$12/hour

4.3 Discounts

0-2 yrs		2-3 yrs		3+ yrs	
Sibling Discount	\$97	Sibling Discount	\$94	Sibling Discount	
Full Time Discount	\$94.50	Full Time Discount	\$92.50	Full Time Discount	\$89.50
Holiday Discount (2 wk's notice)	\$49.75	Holiday Discount (2 wk's notice)	\$48.50	Holiday Discount (2 wk's notice)	\$47

4.4 Deposit

Payment of two weeks fees is required to retain a position for your child. This amount is credited to your account or refunded on two weeks' notice of cancellation of care.

4.5 Payment Methods

The Willows accepts Eftpos, credit cards (VISA, Mastercard), cheques (to Perfect Angels Pty Ltd) and direct deposit. We prefer to not to keep cash on the premises.



4.6 Child Care Benefit (CCB)

Child Care Benefit is provided by the Commonwealth Government through the Family Assistance Office (FAO.) The government will pay up to \$3.99/hour/child of your fees. You are eligible to receive CCB if you are a parent, relationship parent, foster parent or grandparent.

From 1 July 2009, Centrelink and the Family Assistance Office recognises all couples, opposite-sex and same-sex.

After registering your child for child care with the FAO, you will be issued with a percentage and amount of hours of care for which you are able to claim CCB. This depends on your income, the type and amount of care you use, the reason you use care, and the number of children you have in care. This percentage shows how much of the \$3.99/hour ceiling the government will pay for your child to be in care. Most child care centres' fees break down to about \$8/hr.

4.7 Child Care Rebate (CCR)

If you are working or studying, you may be eligible for the Child Care Rebate (CCR.) The government will reimburse you 50% of your out-of-pocket child care costs.

You can chose to have this amount be delivered to you weekly, quarterly or annually, or you can opt to have it paid straight the child care service as a further fee reduction, effectively halving your fees. This is the preferred option at the Willows, we strongly suggest you chose to have your CCR paid to the Willows, making it much easier to stay on top of fees.

4.8 Other Types of Assistance

Are you studying? You may be eligible for Jobs, Education and Training (JET) funding, which reduces you child care fees to \$11/day/child at the Willows.

Are you a Grandparent Who is the Primary Carer of Your Grandchild? You may be eligible for Grandparent Child Care Benefit (GCCB). The government will pay your child care fees in full for up to 50 hours of care a week.

Further assistance is also available. For more information, you can call the Family Assistance Office (FAO) on 136 150, visit www.familyassist.gov.au, or see the Willows Information for Families Using Child Care booklet.

4.8 Non-Payment of Fees

It is important that fees be kept up to date. **Non-payment of fees will result in your child's place being forfeited.** We are aware that everyone has cash flow problems from time to time. If you are experiencing a short-term difficulty please don't hesitate to come and talk to the staff who will do all they can to help overcome financial hiccups.

5 Attendances

5.1 Allowed Absences

You will receive CCB and CCR for up to 42 absences every financial year. Unless documentation proving sound reason for absence is supplied, any absences after this will be charged at full fees.

On July 1st every year, allowed absences are refreshed.

5.2 Notification of Absences

It is important for families to inform us of absences because:

- Some of our families who have casual or rostered work rely on absences in the system to allow them to utilise Child care. They ring in by 8.30 am to see if there are vacancies.
- The Teachers in each room provide a balanced Educational Program for each individual child. If that child will not be attending then the program will need to be modified.
- We regularly have student teachers in our facility. They track a child's development throughout their practical placement. If they are monitoring your child and they will be absent the student needs to be informed.

5.3 Public Holidays and Sick Days

NORMAL FEES APPLY FOR PUBLIC HOLIDAYS, AND FOR GENERAL ABSENCES.

We are closed on Public Holidays. We charge full fees and pay our staff full wages for Public Holidays. These are the only days we do not operate.

If Public holidays fall within a block of notified planned absences, holiday fees apply.

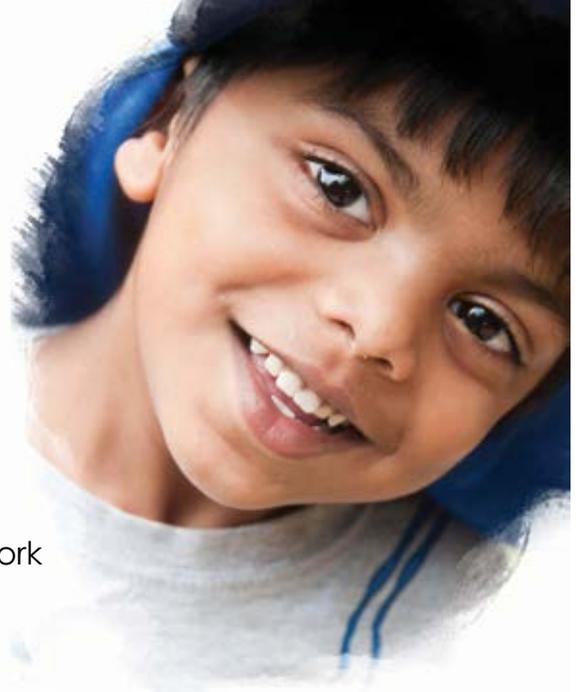
5.4 Holidays and Planned Absences – HALF FEES APPLY

If two weeks' notice of holidays or intended absences is given, the Willows only charges half fees. This fee still attracts CCB and CCR.

5.5 Changes to Enrolment or Ceasing Care

If you wish to make any changes to enrolment – i.e. drop or add days, go on holidays, cancel your position at the Willows – two weeks notice must be submitted in writing, by completing an Enrolment Variation Form, or emailing us.

Under no circumstances can booked days be swapped, unless it is as a permanent change and notice is given.



6 Comprehensive Developmental Program

Our Service is Committed to the Early Years Learning Framework

6.1 Early Years Learning Framework

The Program at the Willows is developed in line with the principles, outcomes, and philosophy of the EYLF. You can access this document online or at the Willows.

The Outcomes:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with, and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident learners
5. Children are effective communicators

Family Input is a vital part of programming at the Willows!

Learning outcomes and personalised goals guide our curriculum development. Each child's strengths, interests and culture form the basis of the program which is guided by thoughtful and reflective Educators in collaboration with families and children.

6.2 Play Based Learning

“ Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise and imagine. ”

EYLF pg. 15

As stated in the Willows Philosophy - Educators promote, engage in, and prioritise children's play. Research supports our belief that children construct meaning and learn about their world through play.

We provide an environment and opportunities for learning that support all areas of development:

- **Fine and gross motor skills** are strengthened through a wide variety of both indoor and outdoor activities such as block play, manipulative play, drawing, climbing, balancing, dancing, yoga, throwing and running.

- **Maths and the sciences** are explored through building, cooking, science experiments, water play, sensory play, natural treasure and bug hunts, gardening, and raising and caring for animals.
- **Language development** is encouraged through educators modelling language, group time, story time, show and tell, poems, room libraries, games, dramatic play.
- **Social and emotional development**, self-confidence and independence supported and strengthened through the development of strong relationships with staff and peers, children's active inclusion in the development and delivery of the program, role play, dramatic play, group games and self-help tasks. We also learn about human and cultural diversity and promote an attitude of anti-bias and inclusion.
- **Music and movement activities** encourage physical, social, and creative areas of children's development.
- **Life skills** such as hygiene, dental care, healthy lifestyle choices, and road safety are imbedded in the program.

These activities are supervised, guided and observed by educators who assess the reaction, involvement, and enjoyment of the children both as individuals and a group. This information is used to expand upon learning and create a program catered to the children in care.

6.3 Program Display

Everyday, the Willows Educators take hundreds of photos of their observations of the children's learning experiences at the Willows.

This has two functions:

- families can be included in the learning process, and
- Educators can capture the essence of each child and be assured that they know each child in their care really well. They are looking for developmental markers like first steps or predicting which way a cog might turn. They are looking for those things that really excite each child. These photos are displayed on ipads or used in wall displays in each room with written descriptions and commentary. These documents are then used as a platform for further learning.

6.4 Portfolios

Observations of all children enrolled at the Willows are documented and kept for future reference and reflection, through use of portfolios. Portfolios - or Learning Diaries - are stored in each room and are easily accessible to families. Families are welcome to take portfolios home so that they can have a look through and make comments. We ask that you return portfolios promptly as staff refer back to them for programming and new additions are added regularly.

6.5 Family Input

No one knows your child better than you, and nobody is more important to your child. This is why family involvement in the program is so important. Your insight and knowledge of your child's strengths, interests and life outside the Willows can enrich their learning experience and allow for deeper and more meaningful learning to occur.

Each room at the Willows has several processes for family input. Please also see chapter 9 for further ideas.

6.6 Additional Support

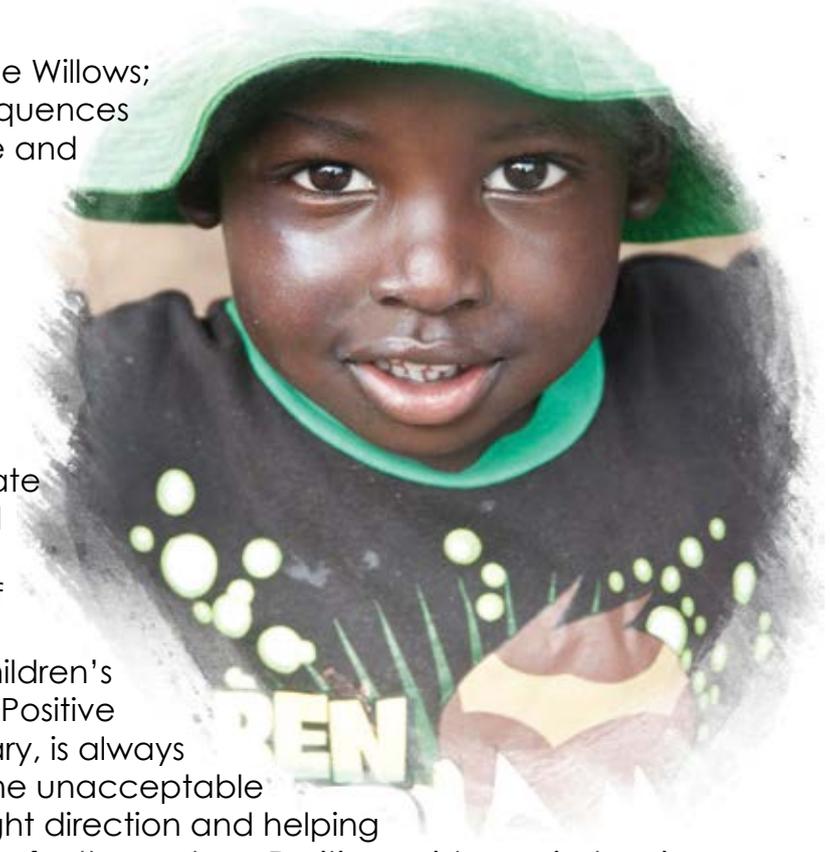
Where appropriate, the Willows will liaise with external agencies and support organisations to best educate and care for children with additional needs.

7 Discipline & Guidance

There is no place for 'punishment' at the Willows; self-discipline is learned through consequences of chosen behaviours. We don't shame and humiliate children who have not yet mastered complicated social skills; we empower them by guiding them in the right direction and praising them when they succeed.

7.1 Positive Reinforcement

Young children are learning how to relate and respond to their world through trial and error, and testing boundaries. It takes a long time to acquire the skills of socially acceptable behaviour. As caregivers, we must positively guide children's behaviour and model it appropriately. Positive guidance, although firm when necessary, is always respectful and focuses on correcting the unacceptable behaviour by guiding children in the right direction and helping them to learn to monitor their behaviour for themselves. Positive guidance is showing children where the boundaries are, what is acceptable and what behaviour is desirable.



7.2 Guidelines

We have 6 Guidelines, which we encourage the children to follow:

1. We are kind to people and animals
2. We keep our feet on the floor
3. We sit to eat and drink
4. We care for our environment
5. We walk calmly and quietly INSIDE and we run and yell loudly OUTSIDE
6. We keep our hats on our heads and shoes on our feet when we are outside.

7.3 Discipline Strategies

1. If children are using inappropriate behaviour, they are reminded of correct practices at the Willows. Various positive strategies for modifying behaviour may be used.
2. If the behaviour continues, it is pointed out how their behaviour is affecting their peers and their teachers.
3. With no improvement the child is informed that the consequences of their behaviour will be removal from the group until the inappropriate behaviour ceases.
4. Continuing inappropriate behaviour will lead to a phone call to the parents to discuss possible causes and strategies for dealing with the behaviour.

8 Health & Safety

8.1 Administration of Medication

The procedure for prescribed and non-prescribed medication is as follows:

- No medication will be given without written permission from the parent or guardian. The child's name is then written on the Medication Section of the Staff Communication Book and a sticker placed on the child's lunch.
- Only current medication in the original container with specific name and dosage will be administered by authorised staff.
- All medication must be handed to a staff member and stored appropriately. Children on long term medication must have a letter from their doctor renewed quarterly. The staff at this Centre is not permitted to administer Paracetamol to any child without doctor's orders.

8.2 Infectious Disease

Children may be excluded from the Centre for appropriate periods of time according to current medical guidelines. A Doctor's Certificate may be requested before the child recommences care.

Children or staff may be requested to leave the Centre for the following reasons:

- untreated eye discharge
- diarrhoea
- Lice or Eggs
- obvious signs of distress
- persistent vomiting
- common infectious diseases
- fever

Parents are asked to notify the Centre if a child contracts a contagious disease.

When a child or staff member contracts a contagious disease a sign will be displayed on the sign in/out notice board to alert parents.

8.3 Immunisation and Exclusion

Information regarding a child's immunisation status is to be kept current at the Willows. Please inform us of any updates or changes. It is not compulsory for your child to be immunised to attend child care. However, if there is an outbreak of disease, a child whose immunisation is not current may be asked to remain at home until any fear of contraction has passed.

8.4 Sun Safety

The Willows is very proud to be a Cancer Council accredited Sun Safe School. The outdoors plays a big part in our program, but living in Australia, we need to make sure we all follow sun safe practices.



It is of vital importance that parents consider how their children dress for the child care day. Sleeved T-shirts, Long shorts, and dresses with sleeves are appropriate.

If it is important for your child to choose their own clothes each day, it is your responsibility to ensure that they choose from a selection of sun safe clothing. Children who arrive at the Service inappropriately dressed will be asked to choose suitable clothing from our spare clothes supply.

CHILDREN MUST HAVE APPROPRIATE HATS-“No Hat-No Play”. Their hats must shade their noses and the back of their neck. Willows' hats can be purchased at the Centre at a cost of \$7.00. IF YOUR CHILD ATTENDS WITHOUT AN APPROPRIATE HAT, ONE WILL BE PURCHASED ON YOUR BEHALF AND YOUR ACCOUNT WILL BE INVOICED.

8.5 Meals

ALL MEALS are provided in accordance with the Start Right, Eat Right Program. This ensures each child receives a balanced nutritional diet while in care at the Willows.

Menus will be posted in the Parent Foyer, near the Sign-in book.

8.6 Emergency Procedure

Evacuation Procedures are posted at all main entrances of the Centre. These detail the deated emergency exits and the procedure to be followed in the event of an evacuation. Please acquaint yourselves with these procedures.

Evacuation drills are held quarterly by regulation. The timing of the drills is varied to include various aspects of the daily routine. If by chance you are present at the Centre you are obliged to participate. Your feedback at the time will facilitate effective evaluation of our Emergency Evacuation Procedure.

8.7 Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) Issues

There are a few issues relating to the specific conditions in a child care centre:

- Tripping Hazards - There are always things on the floor. The younger the children using the space, the more likely there are things on the floor to step over. In the babies area we ask that you be aware that there are very agile crawlers who may be under your feet without any warning. The rooms are set up with mats to provide walkways. It is the staff responsibility to keep these walkways as free of tripping hazards as possible under the circumstances. We suggest you be aware of the paths and stick to them where possible.

- Slipping hazards - Another potential hazard area in child care can be wet patches on the floor. A lot of crawlers dribble, they spill their drinks, empty paint pots, vomit etc. so there is always the potential for slippery wet patches. If staff have cleaned up a mess it is their responsibility to put out the wet floor sign. Unfortunately toddlers love to move them; they move everything, just because they can!

If you find a puddle feel free to help the staff by bringing it to their attention so that the hazard can be reduced.

- Signing In and Out - CHILDREN MUST BE SIGNED IN AND OUT OF THE CENTRE.

In cases of Emergency and Fire Drills, the sign in folder is used for role call. It is important that all children are signed in on arrival and signed out on departure, so that our role calls are accurate.

8.8 Gates

It is very important that we all work together to ensure that the Willows remains safe and secure at all times. At the Willows, we have self-closing doors and gates, PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU CLOSE ALL GATES AND DOORS as you walk through them.

Also, PLEASE DON'T LET YOUR CHILD SWING ON THE WILLOWS' GATES, it breaks the self-closing mechanism and pulls them off their hinges.

9 Parent Responsibilities & Involvement

As a member of the Willows community, it is important that you have the opportunity to help shape the program and overall experience at the Willows. We understand that our busy lives can't always afford the time, however any contribution no matter how big or small is much appreciated. Here are just a few ideas.

9.1 Family Skills, Interests and Talents

Are you crafty, creative, dramatic, musical, a great cook or gardener, a science wiz, or a handy man? We would love to have you share your wonderful gifts and experience with us. Maybe you could run a session with the children, a workshop for families and staff, or help repair or construct the Willows environment.

9.2 Your Occupation

Your child loves you and when they get to child care all they talk about is you. You are the most important person in their world. We welcome all parents to the Service to talk about their occupation or hobby. Everything parents do interest children and these talks are the best educational resources you can provide for the Service. Occupational discussions are use in our programming, and the ideas explored from parent talks can last for weeks.

9.3 Your Home Culture

We would greatly appreciate if you were able to share with our Service aspects of your culture and family life. This would assist us to enrich the lives of all our families and children.

9.4 Reading

This activity is especially good for grandparents!

Children love to have someone read to them. If you or your parents have the time, please contact your room Educators to organise a day for reading.



9.5 Useful Junk

We are always on the lookout for recyclable items for the rooms. Empty food containers, ribbons, wrapping paper, towel tubes (not toilet, egg or milk as these present hygiene and allergy risks), paper or anything interesting from your work is much appreciated.

9.6 Family Photos

Our aim is to create a warm, friendly and homely environment.

One way we like to achieve this is by having family photos displayed. Please bring in a copy of your family photos for us to display in the room.

9.7 Special Events

The Willows regularly hosts special guests, workshops, and performances throughout the year. We invite families to join us.

If your child doesn't attend on the scheduled day, they are more than welcome to come along accompanied by a guardian.

9.8 Annual Christmas Party and Graduation

At the end of every year, we hold a Willows Christmas Party and A Graduation Night.

Each night has a selection of presentations and entertainment provided by the children, staff and families. Dates for these events are provided mid-year.

9.9 Suggestions, Feedback, and Parent Surveys

If you have any suggestion or ideas for how we can deliver the best service for you and your child, please let us know. We would also appreciate your participation in Parent Surveys from time to time to help us adhere to our commitment to continuous improvement.



10 General Information

10.1 Care for our Environment

Two important Considerations when using this centre are:

- 1) The entire centre, including the car parking area, is a cigarette free zone. Unfortunately, we have found in the past that some parents finish their cigarettes in the carpark and thoughtlessly throw them on the ground. NICOTINE IS DEADLY and is concentrated in the used filter. There is enough nicotine in one filter to kill a toddler should they eat it. Please be thoughtful and LEAVE YOUR BUTTS IN YOUR CARS!
- 2) Please be thoughtful, ensure all DOORS and GATES ARE SHUT!

10.2 Confidentiality

Information received through records, information, and written and spoken communication with families will be treated with discretion and kept in a secure place. This information will only be accessed by, or disclosed to those people who need the information to fulfil their responsibilities at the service or have a legal right to know.

10.3 Child Protection

Child Abuse in any form is a crime (Interagency Guidelines For Child Protection Intervention 2nd Edition) and therefore the staff of this Centre has a duty to act in a responsible and appropriate manner in the reporting of a suspected case.

In the event that any staff member suspects an incidence of any form of child abuse, it must be reported immediately to the Nominated Supervisor.

If it is warranted, the Nominated Supervisor will contact the Department of Education and Community Services 133 627

Confidentiality in the case of suspected Child Abuse is to be respected.

This policy will be reviewed and developed further in line with the publication The Child Protection Booklet published by the Department of Community Services.



10.4 Grievances, Complaints, and Feedback

All Parents/Caregivers are free to have resolved any complaints or concerns they may have regarding any aspect of the program or daily routine in this Centre. In the event of a complaint or concern:

- Consult with the child's teacher regarding the nature of the concern.
- Consult with the Authorised Supervisor if they feel the complaint or concern was not addressed adequately.
- A Parent's Complaint Book is available in the Parent Foyer for the documenting of any concerns you may have.
- These may be left anonymous if you prefer and will be considered by the staff. The resolution of any signed complaint will be addressed as soon as possible. Where an action plan needs to be developed, an agreed time frame will be decided upon by the parent/teacher/Authorised Supervisor.
- Department of Community Services Helpline is a service available to parents.

The Helpline Number is: 132 111

The Local DEC Office is: 6361 7006

Positive feedback is also very welcome!

10.5 Excursions

Generally, it is not the policy of this Centre at this stage to conduct excursions.

10.6 Christian Children Fund

As part of our cultural awareness, anti-bias and inclusion policies, the Willows Early Learning Centre has taken on the responsibility of a community in the Nyanza Province in Kenya.

We support the families of

Rose 12-2-97,

John 27-1-03,

Lydia 28-10-01,

Salim 4-6-99,

Janet 14-5-99,

James 7-2-00,

Elizabeth 12-11-00,

As well as Garry 17-4-96 from the Philippines.

This is an ongoing commitment which provides agricultural supplies, medical supplies and educational supplies for their whole community. We expect that the positive benefits for your children from this program will include lots of discussion about other countries, customs, human rights, ceremonies and languages. We will discuss with the children the importance of helping others who are not as fortunate as ourselves, of generosity, of social responsibility, of caring for our neighbours, of how lucky we are to be living in Australia, the globe and where Australia is, where Kenya is, how time zones work and so on.

10.7 Service ID

The Willows' Registration Number with Centrelink is: 407 063 527V

The Centrelink/ Family Assistance Office (FAO) Phone Number is 136 150

11 Enrolment Process

11.1 Process

The very first step, regardless of where you chose to enrol, is to register your child for child care. You can do this by calling the Family Assistance Office (FAO) on 136 150. You will be issued with a Child CRN for each child registered, a Parent CRN, and a percentage (CCB). It is at this stage that you will be able to choose your CCR option and discuss any other types of assistance you may be eligible for. Please revise chapter 4 for more information. There are a few steps that are specific to the enrolment process at the Willows:

- 1. Is There a Position Available?** - Make an initial enquiry regarding availability.
- 2. Are We the Right Service For You?** - To see what we have to offer at the Willows, read through the Parent Pack and then organise a time to come in and see the Willows in action.
- 3. Enrolment Interview** - Complete and return the enrolment application with accompanying documents, and pay your retainer(see 4.4.) A staff member will take you through the form to make sure everything has been covered and clearly explained.
- 4. The Willows creates a formal enrolment** by linking up with centrelink using your CRNs. This allows us to collect CCB, CCR and any other benefits on your behalf. A FORMAL ENROLMENT IS NEEDED BEFORE CARE COMMENCES.
- 5. Orientation Process** – This may be done during your Enrolment Interview or on your first day. A staff member will take you through the orientation process and answer any question you may have.

11.2 Enrolment Checklist

When you return your enrolment application, make sure you have completed the following steps, and have the following items or information with you:

- Have you registered your child for child care? If not call the FAO on 136 150
- Have you registered for JET, GCCB, or any other assistance you may be eligible for? Please let us know what benefits you will be claiming.
- Have you let Centrelink know which CCR option you would like? Please consider choosing to have your CCR paid directly to the service, it is the preferred method of the Willows. See chapter 4 for more details.
- Have you filled out all areas of the Enrolment Application, and signed all agreements? If you are having difficulty, please don't hesitate to call us.
- **PLEASE BRING WITH YOU**
 - Your enrolment Application, Child Profile, and Developmental Chart.
 - Your Parent CRN and Child CRN – there should be a separate CRN for each child. If you have your confirmation letter from Centrelink please bring it with you.
 - Immunisation Records.
 - Birth Certificates for the child and Parent.
 - Retainer and any accompanying documents such as illness management plans and custody papers.

12 Your First Day

12.1 What Does the Willows Supply?

Your fees cover:

All meals – Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea, and snacks.

Nappies

Cancer Council Sunscreen

Programming Equipment

Painting smocks

Please remember to **LABEL EVERYTHING.** That way we can make sure everything is returned to you at the end of the day.

12.2 What to Bring

Every day, your child should bring with them a labelled bag containing:

- A sun safe hat – HATS ARE COMPULSORY. Willows' hats can be purchased for \$7.00. If your child attends without an appropriate hat, one will be purchased on your behalf and your account will be invoiced.
- A Jacket/Jumper if the weather requires.
- Spare Clothes – please make sure that all clothes are sun safe and weather appropriate. Your child will be involved in various activities, inside and outside. It is good practice to wear appropriate clothing that can handle dirt and paint. We provide smocks but somehow water play, mud play, sand play, goop, and slime seem to ignore the laws of physics, and clothes get dirty despite the protection. As a result we require a couple of changes of clothing.
- A Water Bottle – It is important that children stay hydrated, so please provide a drink bottle. Drink bottles are refilled regularly throughout the day. It is part of the Willows Dental Policy to Swig Swish and Swallow after every meal – it defeats the purpose if a drink bottle is filled with juice, cordial, soft drink etc. PLEASE BRING WATER ONLY.
- Any Important Medication – Please see 8.1.

Medication must be removed from your Child's bag and delivered to an educator. Medication includes Ventolin Puffers!

- Milk Bottles and Formula – Unfortunately, the Willows in unable to provide formula. However, we do provide cow's milk for older babies and children.
- Children are welcome to bring their comforters to help them adjust or sleep.



12.3 What NOT to Bring

- Sleeveless clothing in Spring and Summer: as part of the “No Hat, Play in the Shade” Policy, children with bare shoulders are required to remain with a teacher in the shade
- Toys from home: for little people who are yet to master sharing skills, personal ownership disputes are disruptive
- Toy weapons in any form
- Chewing gum: it is very difficult to get out of your friends' hair
- Nail Polish and Make up
- ANYTHING SMALL ENOUGH TO FIT IN A FILM CANISTER which could pose a choking hazard to babies.
- Overalls: With toilet trainees and endless nappies being changed all day, overalls are a child care workers worst nightmare.
- Lollies, chocolate, chips etc. It is our duty to promote healthy lifestyle practices. We provide a large range of delicious nutritious food at the Willows, please leave treats for home time.
- Cordial, soft drink, and flavoured milks: As stated above, it is part of the Willows Dental Policy to Swig, Swish, and Swallow after every meal.
PLEASE BRING WATER ONLY.
- Medication in milk/drink bottles: We understand that it can be difficult to get children to take their medicine sometimes, but mixing medication into your child's milk or drink bottle presents a safety risk to other children. Medication must be in its original packaging, clearly labelled with your child's name and dosage.

12.4 Signing Your Child In and Out

It is vital that you sign your child in and out every day. The sign in book can be found in each the front office.

Signing your child in and out means:

1. Signing the sign in book for each child, AND
2. Physically and verbally handing your child over to an educator or alerting educators that you are taking your child home.

*The sign-in book is used as a roster during emergency evacuation. If your child is not signed in, we may not know to look for them. If they are not signed out, a safety risk may be posed by searching for them.

*If you don't sign in and out, we are unable to claim CCB on your behalf. Full fees may be charged for that day.

* Staff members cannot hand over the responsibility of your child to anyone under 18, or anyone we cannot identify. Please notify the Willows if someone new is collecting your child.

12.5 Settling Your Child In at the Willows

Enrolling your child in child care can be a big transition for both the child and parent. We endeavour to do all we can to ensure that this process is smooth. Parents are more than welcome to bring their child in for visits before they start to help them settle in and get to know the staff, children, and routine. As long as a guardian is present with the child at all times, our staff to child ratios are not affected.

12.6 Lockers

Lockers can be found in each room for families to store bags. Lockers are not designated, you are free to choose any locker on any day.

DO NOT LEAVE MEDICATIONS OR CIGARETTE LIGHTERS IN BAGS IN LOCKERS-these are accessible to children.

12.7 Meals and Menu

The Willows provides Morning Tea, Lunch, Afternoon Tea, and Snacks. ALL MEALS are provided in accordance with the Start Right, Eat Right Program. This ensures each child receives a balanced nutritional diet while in care at the Willows. Menus will be posted in the Parent Foyer, near the Sign-in book.

12.8 Sleep and Rest Times

Because our days are so full, all children are encouraged to rest each day. We don't want them going home too tired and cranky to eat tea. As shown in the room routines (chapter 2), each room has a time designated to sleep or rest.

In the Rainbow and Butterfly rooms, children who sleep are supervised in the cot room, or on stretchers in a darkened, quiet room. Children who are only resting spend quiet time on mats with appropriate activities, or listening to music or stories. This is followed by age appropriate table activities until they are joined by those waking up.

Preschoolers also have a quiet rest time, when they are encouraged to read books, or relax on a comfy cushion with a friend.

No child is forced to sleep.

12.9 Appropriate Clothing

Appropriate clothing is:

- Sun safe
- Weather-appropriate
- Comfortable and the right size
- Safe

Inappropriate clothing is:

- Expensive or special (we would hate to get paint on your favourite jumper!)
- Excessively skin-bearing
- Ill-fitting

12.10 First Day Checklist

Before You Arrive:

- Have you returned your Enrolment Application and Documents?
- Has a formal enrolment been achieved so that we can claim CCB and other benefits on your behalf?
- Your labelled school bag should contain everything mentioned in 12.2.

On Arrival:

- You and your child will meet a staff member in the front office who will take you through the Orientation Process.
- You and your child will be introduced to the Educators and children in your room. You can spend as much time as you need to settle your child in.
- Your retainer, first week's fees, and anything else needed to complete the enrolment process can be fixed up in the front office.

You are welcome to call us to see how your child is going as many times as you need throughout the day!

13

Important Contacts List

The Service provides families with current information on child and family resources and services accessible in the local community. Our Service has a parent library with resources you may find helpful.

The Willows Preschool & Early Learning Centre

Address: 55-57 Dalton Street
Orange NSW 2800
Phone: (02) 6361 2575
Email: willowselc@optusnet.com.au
alexccarroll@optusnet.com.au

ACECQA is the new national body ensuring early childhood education and care across Australia is high quality

Address: Level 15, 255 Elizabeth Street,
Sydney, NSW
PO Box A292, Sydney,
NSW 2000
Phone: 1800 181 088
Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au

Family Assistance Office (FAO)

Phone: 13 6150

Australian Childhood Immunisation Register

Phone: 1800 653 809

Local Contacts

Orange Community Health Centre

Address: 129 Sale Street
Orange NSW 2800
Phone: (02) 6393 3300

After School Care (OOSH) at Kenna Hall

Address: 86 Hill Street, Orange
Phone: (02) 6360 2438

Orange and District Early Education Program (ODEEP) offers support and early intervention such as speech pathology and behaviour therapy.

Address: Yarrowong Place,
Orange NSW 2800
PO Box 644,
Orange NSW 2800
Phone: (02) 6361 4093

Emergency Services

Police, Fire, Ambulance: 000

Orange Base Hospital

Address: Forest Road,
Orange NSW 2800
Phone: (02) 6360 7700

Orange Fire Station

Address: 79 Summer Street,
Orange NSW 2800
Phone: (02) 6361 2205

Informative Websites for Parents

Raising Children Network. The Australian parenting website: comprehensive, practical, expert child health and parenting information and activities.

www.raisingchildren.net.au/

Better Health Channel - quality consumer health information, regularly reviewed, health and wellbeing information and services. This site is sponsored by the State Government of Victoria

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/

Notes



The Willows Preschool & Early Learning Centre