



# Information for new families 2023 Enrolments



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## Welcome to Aspendale Gardens Kindergarten

We are pleased that you are considering enrolling your child at our service.

Our kinder is unique as we are located within the Aspendale Gardens Community Service, close to the primary school and the local shops. The community service offers a variety of programs for children, including playgroup, messy play sessions, sports, and school holiday activities. This creates a real central hub for our kinder families.

The community service and kinder are run by a volunteer board of management, made up of kinder parents and community members. Our board of management meet monthly and oversee the high-level decision making, financial and strategic planning for the service. Our team of staff take care of the day to day running of the service.

## Our Kindergarten Philosophy

We believe in educators, children, families and our community:

Working together to foster, nurture and extend children's voices;

Working in partnerships and having high expectations for each child to build on prior learning; and strengthening positive relationships within their learning context.

## 2023 Timetable

We are pleased to be offering the following session times in 2023:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Wattle Room</b>	<b><u>3 year old</u></b> <b>Possums</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	<b><u>3 year old</u></b> <b>Dolphins</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	<b><u>3 year old</u></b> <b>Possums</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	<b><u>3 year old</u></b> <b>Dolphins</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	
<b>Blue gum Room</b>	<b><u>4 year old</u></b> <b>Rosellas</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	<b><u>4 year old</u></b> <b>Bilbies</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	<b><u>4 year old</u></b> <b>Rosellas</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	<b><u>4 year old</u></b> <b>Bilbies</b> 8:30 – 4:00 (7.5 hours)	<b><u>Extra Kinder session</u></b> optional extra session for children from any group* 8:30 – 1:30 (5 hours)

*\*subject to availability*

This timetable has been developed after consultation with our community, staff, board of management and local council. Our kinder has been offering long day sessions for 4 year old kinder for a number of years. With an increase in funding for 3 year old kinder, we are now also able to offer more hours for the possums and dolphins groups. All groups will now receive 15 hours of funded kindergarten per week, over 2 days.



### **Shorter sessions:**

We understand that long sessions may not suit all families. Our team is committed to working with each family, if you would like to start later, or collect your child early, arrangements can be made with the educators. Your child will still be enrolled for the full 15 hour program, and you may wish to extend their hours later in the year, or, as and when they are ready. The routine of the day will be planned to ensure children who do shorter sessions still get the most out of their kinder experience.

### **Extra sessions:**

For those families who would like their child to attend 3 times per week, we offer an extra session on Fridays, which is open to all enrolled children (places are limited).

The extra session on Fridays was introduced in 2022, and we have observed many benefits of mixed age sessions, as well as children having an opportunity to make and play with new friends from the other groups. As kindergarten funding only applies for 15 hours per week, this extra session on Fridays will be charged separately (unfunded).

### **Kindergarten Fees:**

Fees for 2023 have not been confirmed, however, as a not-for-profit service, we aim to keep fees as affordable as possible for all families and keep increases to a minimum.

#### **For reference, our 2022 fees are as follows:**

15 hours per week of funded kindergarten = \$570 per term

Additional 5 hour session on Fridays = \$500 per term

Annual Membership = \$15

Maintenance levy = \*\$120

\*The maintenance levy is credited back to families who participate in activities such as working bees.

### **Kindergarten Fee Subsidy**

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy enables eligible children to access free funded kindergarten. If you are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy, you will not be charged the term fee for your funded kindergarten hours.

Eligibility includes children identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, children of multiple birth (triplets or more), and families who hold a health care card, pensioner concession card, veterans affairs card or eligible visa.

## The Educational Program

Kindergarten is an extremely important time for your child as they form the attitudes, skills and knowledge to build on through their education journey. We encourage parents to become involved in our curriculum as we look forward to spending a very enjoyable and fulfilling year with you and your child. Our curriculum is designed around each child's interests and needs within the group. Staff are trained to observe all aspects of children's participation and set goals to strengthen their development in the five learning outcomes areas. The experiences provided in our curriculum will be based on our observations and objectives for each child.

## Learning outcomes

The educational program contributes to the following outcomes; for each child:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators



## Excursions and visitors

To support the educational program, the kinder staff will organise excursions and visitors related to the educational program. The 4 year old groups go on regular nature walks to the local wetlands, which encourage the children to connect with nature. The children are encouraged to take calculated risks and to be mindful and caring of the environment. Our walk days are enjoyed by the children, staff and parents as an extension of our kinder program.

## Storypark and iPads

At Aspendale Gardens Kindergarten, we use Storypark to document children's learning. Families can view their child's profile, read journals and communicate with their child's educators through Storypark.

Each kinder group has an iPad. iPads may be used throughout the year to support the inquiry process. The iPad is used to take photos, research current interests and extend on learning. Carefully selected applications are used to support the program. For example, Victorian Field guide, which provides information about various animals living in Victoria and other parts of Australia.

## Healthy Eating Policy

Families are asked to provide a healthy snack box and lunch box each day. Families are encouraged to use reusable containers, and to minimise packaging. Food scraps will be placed in our worm farms or used for compost.

### Children's Birthdays

To make birthdays special we sing happy birthday with a pretend cake, provide stickers and cards and use a birthday hat (a fun way to celebrate birthdays that does not involve food.)

### Cooking Experiences

Cooking is part of our kinder program, as we teach the children about healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Any cooking experiences will be planned and families will be notified via Story park or notices will be displayed near the sign-in area. Families will be notified of ingredients etc prior to cooking.

### Volunteers and Students

Our kindergarten supports the early childhood profession by providing placements for student teachers to gain practical experience. Student teachers are always supervised by kinder staff. Where applicable, the centre will seek permission from parents/guardians for students to observe their child as part of their studies.

### Sun Protection

We consult the Sun smart app on the iPad every day. When the UV levels reach 3 or above (generally between September-April), the centre uses the following Sun Protection Measures:

- Children are encouraged to play in shaded areas,
- Wear protective clothing (light clothing that covers as much of their body as possible)
- Families provide a hat for their child
- Apply sunscreen: reapplying during the day where required
- Wear Sunglasses: children are encouraged to wear sunglasses when outside (where applicable)

### Toileting

At Aspendale Gardens Kinder, we acknowledge that children are ready for toilet training at different ages and stages of development. When a child is ready, educators will work with families support the child to begin toilet training at kinder.



### Orientation Process:

At the beginning of each year, we offer a settling in timetable to help build relationships between children, families and educators.

#### **First visit:**

The first visit to kinder will be a short session where parents/carers stay with their children. Families meet their child's educators and receive information about the routine and the curriculum. The educators can also answer any questions, and spend some time with each family to learn about your child.

On this first visit, children can explore the space with their grown-up, find their locker, see the toilets, where to wash their hands and meet some of the children in their group.

#### **Second visit:**

The next visit will be the child's first time without parents/carers. We offer a shorter session, with half the group. This allows children to settle into the space, meet the educators and start building strong relationships. The children can become familiar with the room and experiences before they have to share the space with many peers. Educators can observe children and determine needs and goals to assist in each individual child's development.

#### **Third visit:**

On their third visit, children will be able to stay for the whole session, with the entire group.

If your child needs some more time to settle, we will work with you to offer short sessions to begin with or plan for you to stay at kinder for a little bit longer.

### What to bring

All children are to bring a labelled bag/backpack with:

- A sun smart hat
- A drink bottle filled with water
- At least one full set of spare clothes labelled with your child's name (including socks)
- A small bag for soiled clothes where required
- A coat and beanie (in winter)
- A snack and lunch box

### Belongings from home

We recommend that children keep their special toys and belongings at home to avoid things being lost or broken. On occasion, children may be encouraged to bring along objects as part of our treasure bag activity and items that may seem important or relevant to current learning or themes within the kinder curriculum.

### Child Safety

Aspendale Gardens Kindergarten has zero tolerance for child abuse and has strict policies and reporting protocols for allegations of child abuse.

Our service aims to provide a safe learning environment for all children. Teaching staff complete daily hazard checklists for both indoor and outdoor learning spaces. This supports the removal and reduction of hazards and the monitoring of the spaces throughout the day. Risk Benefit Assessments are also undertaken by teaching staff for various program opportunities, visitors and excursions.

### Relationships with Children and Partnerships with Families

Our teaching staff are committed to providing a safe and secure environment to support the development of trusting, respectful and positive relationships with children. Teaching staff develop these relationships by spending meaningful time with each child individually and in groups as well as gaining an insight and knowledge about each child from their families. Educators use positive language, role model appropriate behaviour, are calm, gentle, endeavour to learn about children's interests and respect children's choices.

### Behaviour Guidance

Teaching staff work collaboratively with families to support children to feel secure and comfortable in the learning space; work closely with families to determine a plan to support children through challenging periods, are consistent with strategies at kinder and home environments; support each child's behaviour by talking with children, supporting their choices and setting reasonable limits when required; are mindful to use positive language to help support the development and acknowledgement of feelings and assist children to understand how their behaviour impacts others.

### Interactions with families and community

The kindergarten works in partnership with families to best support the needs of each child. Through shared decision making and open communication, sharing of cultural needs and family beliefs, this is achieved. Where appropriate, teaching staff will work in collaboration with the family to seek additional support and assistance for their child.



### When to start kindergarten:

Children are eligible for 3 year old kinder if they have turned 3 by the 30<sup>th</sup> April.

If your child's birthday is between May – December, they will attend 3 year old kinder in the year they are turning 4.

If your child's birthday is between January – April, you may choose whether to enrol your child in the year they turn 3, or wait until they are turning 4.

We encourage families with children born between January to April to consider carefully when they would like to start their kindergarten journey. If you are unsure, please speak to one of our kinder teachers, or your child's educators if they attend another children's service.

Please note: Children cannot start attending until after their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday.

If your child was born between	Your child is eligible to attend Three-Year-Old Kinder in:
1 May 2017 – 31 December 2017	2021
1 Jan 2018 – 30 April 2018	2021 or 2022
1 May 2018 – 31 December 2018	2022
1 Jan 2019 – 30 April 2019	2022 or 2023
1 May 2019 – 31 December 2019	2023
1 January 2020 – 30 April 2020	2023 or 2024
1 May 2020 – 31 December 2020	2024

### Having an extra year of kindergarten:

Sometimes we find that children need some extra time to learn and develop before they are ready to go to school. The kindergarten teachers will discuss with you if they feel this would be a suitable option for your child.

All children will move to the 4 year old program after completing one year of 3 year old kinder. If your child needs additional time at kinder, they may have a second year of 4 year old kinder, if they meet the criteria. More information about accessing an extra year of kinder can be found here: [Does my child need a second year of kindergarten? | Victorian Government \(www.vic.gov.au\)](#)

## To Enrol:

**Step 1:** Attend our Open day or arrange a tour of the service.

**Step 2:** from 1<sup>st</sup> May, submit your application through the City of Kingston website. [Three & Four Year Old Sessional Kindergarten - Kingston City Council](#)

You must register for 4 year old kindergarten, even if your child has already attended our service for 3 year old kinder.

When you complete your registration, you will nominate 3 kindergarten groups, in order of preference. The 3 groups may be from the same or different kindergartens.

**Step 3:** From July, City of Kingston send offers to families, advising of the kindergarten and group they have been allocated to.

**Step 4:** Follow the instructions in the email to accept/decline or defer your offer of enrolment

**Step 5:** Enrolments are finalised with our kindergarten on completion of the confidential enrolment form. This is an online form, which is stored in our EnrolNow database. At this step you will be required to provide your child's immunisation history statement, details of allergies and medical conditions.



If you have any further questions about our kindergarten or the enrolment process, please contact us:

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