

Coowarra OOSH

Before and After School Care and Vacation care

Family Handbook



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There is an answering machine to leave
a message when the centre is unattended.

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Note from Coowarra co-ordinator

A big welcome to Coowarra OOSH.

I look forward to getting to know you and your child/children as they attend Coowarra, and trust that your child/children will settle in well and enjoy their time with us.

The wonderful educators here at Coowarra are hard working and dedicated to ensuring that children are safe, cared for appropriately and are happy here. Great care will be provided to ensure that the environment is engaging, fun and happy for children. We will provide experiences that challenge and stimulate children and are catered for the needs and interests of all children. In all experiences here at Coowarra, we aim to promote self-esteem, self respect, respect for others and respect for the environment.

This booklet serves to assist you in becoming familiar with our centre and its operations. We also wish to facilitate you as parents/guardians to become involved in our centre. Please feel free to enquire as to how you can become involved in this community organisation.

Looking forward to having you as part of the Coowarra family and once again welcome you to Coowarra.

Lorraine Hall.
Co-ordinator



Coowarra OOSH Philosophy

At Coowarra, we strive to provide a nurturing and inclusive environment in which all children feel safe and secure, welcomed and supported. We aim to provide a cost effective service that is accessible to all families within the area by maintaining high quality standards in a safe and stimulating environment. We acknowledge, accept and value all individuals and families regardless of their family structure, cultural background, religion or beliefs.

We are committed to open and effective communication between our families, children, educators and local community. Our centre implements the MY Time Our Place framework to ensure the children have the opportunity to engage in leisure and play based activities that reflect the interests and choices of the children. Our child directed program aims to meet the various developmental levels of children whilst allowing for extension of learning.

In relation to the children:

- We aim to develop positive relationships and life skills whilst developing each child's self esteem and self-concept. We will encourage children to be considerate, co-operative and accepting of others, respecting that children can be active participants in decision making.
- Children are encouraged to participate in stimulating recreational based activities, where tolerance, independence and respect are nurtured to develop the child in a holistic nature.
- Children's interactions are valued with each other and educators, encouraging and providing many opportunities for relationships to form
- The children are facilitated in the development of unique and individual strengths, abilities and interests through daily routines, curriculums and reflections.
- We believe that play is a valuable part of children's middle childhood and will ensure that the children are given time, access to and confidence to participate in a broad range of play experiences.
- Our service delivers the My Time Our Place Curriculum, empowering children to learn grow and reflect through interactions with other competent individuals

In relation to families:

- We believe families are the most important and influential resource in a child's life and we value family input into decision making and utilise such input to improve quality in our daily practices
- A perspective of belonging, respect and mutual support is nurtured between educators and families.
- We believe families need to have confidence in the care provided by the service
- The diversity of families is fostered, respected and promoted in our service, we value individual cultures and their place within our local community.
- Family participation is valued and encouraged. We offer participation through fundraising, the parent committee and to be active contributors to our program.
- Family privacy is respected by all Educators and management

In relation to educators

- We believe in open communication to create a cohesive working environment.
- Positive interactions are valued between team members as well as with families, children and community members.
- All educators are respected for their individual strengths that they bring to the service.
- Team input is valued in all decision making and educators are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the service.
- Educators adhere to and implement the Code of Ethics and the United Nations Rights To The Child whilst always behaving in a professional manner
- We encourage our educators to analyse My Time Our Place and to critically reflect on theories behind our everyday practices.
- We scaffold children's learning guiding them through processes and assisting in the discovery of extending their thinking and knowledge.
- Educators should strive for consistent high quality care practices.

In relation to the program:

- The program should reflect the interests of the children.
- The program will be offered to all children equally without discrimination.
- Should offer a diverse range of experiences through structured and unstructured activities or play opportunities.

In relation to the community

- The centre should promote and support a productive partnership with the local community.
- To build strong partnerships with local businesses within the community respecting their ideas and suggestions to assist us in bringing something unique to our service.
- Community information and resources are made available for all families

In relation to the environment:

- To incorporate sustainable practices wherever possible
- Promote children's understanding of their responsibility to care for the environment on a day to day basis and for long term sustainability
- Engage and encourage children to participate in sustainable practices
- Provide information and resources to families and the community on sustainable practices.

Hours of operation

Coowarra OOSH caters for the needs of working parents whose children attend school. Children must have started at school to be able to attend both before and after school care or vacation care. The service caters for up to 45 children a day and operates Monday – Friday in school terms. Our hours of operation are:

Before School: 6:30 – 9:00am
 After School: 2:30 – 6:30pm
 Vacation Care: 7:00am – 6:00pm

Coowarra provides vacation care for April, July and October School Holidays. We will advise parents of the opening dates for Christmas school holidays each year. Coowarra also provides care on pupil free days. On pupil free days we open from 6:30am – 6:30pm.

Fees

The fees are reviewed annually and set by the management committee. The current fees are:

Booked in:

Mornings \$19.50
 Afternoons \$22.50
 Vacation care \$43.00

Floater:

Mornings \$21.00
 Afternoons \$24.00
 Vacation care \$48.00

Other charges applicable

Annual administration charges

An administration fee of \$10 per child or \$20 per family is payable with each enrolment and annually thereafter. This is payable on confirmation of enrolment and covers the cost of all the administration for your account for the year.

Late fee

Coowarra OOSH closes at 6:30pm sharp (6:00 in vacation care). The penalty fee for collecting a child after the specified closing time is \$10 for the first 10 minutes and \$5 for each 5 minutes or part thereof after the first 10 minutes.

Non-notification of absence

A fee of \$10 is added to your account if you do not notify the service that your child is not attending an afternoon session. It is important that you notify each time your child will be absent from care so that staff do not have to spend time searching for your child and your spot may be given to someone on the waiting list. Notification can be made by phone call to the centre by 2:30pm or text message to the service mobile.

Payment of fees

Fee payments can be made by EFT payments directly from your bank account into Coowarra's account.

Please use your name as the reference. Our account details are:

Account name: Coowarra Out Of School Hours Care BSB 062453 Acc no 1019 9671

Your statement showing your fees and child care subsidy can be accessed via your HubHello account.

Overdue accounts

The management of Coowarra OOSH understands that some families may be experiencing difficulties in paying fees. However, as a non-profit organisation we have our own financial obligations to meet and rely on parent fees to keep the service running.

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Child Care Subsidy

To be eligible for CCS, you need to apply online through your MyGov or Centrelink. Once your enrolment has been submitted by the service, you will then need to confirm the enrolment through your MyGov.

Allowable absences

If you receive CCS, this enables your child to have 42 allowable absences per year where they will still pay CCS. After you have used the 42 allowable absence days per financial year, you will be required to pay full fees for any additional absences. Any additional absences may be claimable under special circumstances.

Access to the Service

Coowarra must comply with the enrolment priority and access guidelines set by the Commonwealth Department of Family and Community Services, which are:

1. A Child at risk of abuse or neglect
2. A child of a single parent or two parents who both satisfy the work training study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act
3. Any other child

Within each category the following children are to be given priority:

- a) Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- b) Children in families which include a disabled person
- c) Families with low income or receiving income support
- d) Children in families with a non-English speaking background
- e) Children in socially isolated families
- f) Children of single parents

If a vacancy does not exist, children will be placed on a waiting list.

There are some situations where a child may be booked in for care but may have to have their placement cancelled. Where the service has no vacancies and is caring for a child who is a priority 3 under the priority of access guidelines, the service may require that child to vacate their position to provide for a higher priority child but a minimum of 14 days' notice will be given if any child is required to vacate a position.

Coowarra must provide priority to children who have already commenced school. Priority will also be given to children who are in kindergarten to year 6. Children who have commenced high school will only be given a placement if there are vacancies after all other children are enrolled.

The National Quality Framework

Coowarra OOSH follows the National Quality Framework for OSHC and adheres to all relevant industry and workplace legislation. The National Quality Framework was established on 1st January 2012 and must be applied in all OSHC services.

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive through continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- A national legislative framework
- A National Quality Standard
- A national quality rating and assessment process

For more information on the National Quality Framework, speak to one of the educators or visit www.acecqa.gov.au

Management structure

Coowarra OOSH is a not for profit community organisation. A volunteer parent management committee is responsible for running the service. All families and interested community members are invited to join the management committee. The positions on the committee are President, Vice president, Treasurer and Secretary as well as ordinary committee members. An AGM is held each year to elect a new committee.

Management committee representatives and members of the association are not to receive payment for any work done for the organisation with the exception of being reimbursed for genuine expenses. All assets and income of the organisation are to be spent on the organisation only. In the event of the organisation being dissolved, the funds that remain after all debts and liabilities have been managed are to be transferred to another organisation that is not carried on for profit or gain of individual members.

Staffing

Coowarra OOSH employs permanent educators who hold the following minimum qualifications:
 Diploma in OOSH First aid training - Asthma and Anaphylaxis training
 Child protection training

A co-ordinator is appointed by the management committee. All educators are responsible to the co-ordinator on day to day matters. The co-ordinator is responsible to the management committee.

There will always be a minimum of 2 educators on duty at any time. Our staffing ratio whilst at the centre or walking to and from school is 1 staff per 15 children. When out on excursions it increases to 1 per 8 children, which is inclusive of volunteers.

Family involvement

Parent involvement is encouraged at Coowarra. This may range from:

- Being on the management committee. Monthly committee meetings are held at the cottage. They are held on the third Monday of each month at 6:30pm.
- Assistance with fundraising. Selling raffle tickets, suggesting new fundraising ideas etc.
- Informing staff when circumstances change. Parents must notify staff change of employment details, change of address and contact details, children are going to be absent, someone different will be picking up your child, the booking for your child needs to be terminated or you are having difficulty paying fees on time.
- To be familiar with procedures and relevant policies as outline in this handbook. For example picking up children, late fees etc.
- Volunteering on excursions during vacation care to assist staff with supervision of children.

If any parents have any special skills or hobbies or spare time they would like to contribute to the centre please see educators or the co-ordinator. Perhaps you are a budding musician, cook, carpenter, artist or person that is interested in being involved in our program in some way. The children love having visitors to the centre and we welcome any help that parents and relatives can provide. We also accept any donations of items that can be used within our service such as dress up clothes, craft materials etc.

Vacation care

Bookings for vacation care are taken as early as five weeks prior to school holidays. These places do fill quickly. Working parents do have priority of access, however all children are able to attend to have some holiday fun. Vacation care fees must be full paid the week before vacation care commences. Children need to bring morning tea, lunch and drinks during vacation care.

Fees for each holiday period must be paid by the due date to avoid your booking being cancelled and an administration fee being applied to your account. Phone bookings are not accepted. All families must complete and return a signed booking form to the service.

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Dropping off and picking up children

Children are not to be left at the centre at any time prior to the opening of the service. Any points of information are to be advised to educators, such as particular requirements for the day or changes to who will pick up the child. The authorised person dropping off and picking up the children will be required to sign the sheet next to the child's name, indicating time of arrival and departure. This is a legal requirement that is linked to you receiving CCS.

The educators will not release a child to anyone who is not authorised without prior consent and in line with centre policy. If the centre has not been advised that someone other than the parent or authorised person comes to collect the child, the centre will ring the parent to get authorisation. The child will not be released from the centre without proper authorisation. Only people aged 18 years and over are permitted to drop off or collect children from the service.

Transportation of Children

Educators will walk children to the school each day at 8:45am. Children are signed out by staff at the centre before leaving. The primary children can then go to their class and the kindy children are walked to their area. Educators remain here until the bell goes. If children need to be at school early or are staying back at school for activities, staff must receive a written note informing us of the time and days that this will occur and that the parents understand the child will be walking to/from school without a staff member.

Educators are at the school at 2:55pm each day to pick up the children. The children meet staff at the Kindy COLA area. Educators carry a roll and mark each child off as they arrive. An Educator wait in the school grounds until all children have arrived that are booked in for care each day.

If children are being picked up from school by someone else or are going to a friend's house, educators must be notified by 9am that day. If educators are not notified and have to search for a child who is not attending, a fee will be charged to the parents. It is important that parents do not send messages with children about attendance, as we cannot be guaranteed to receive the message. Parents may only sign their children out at the centre. If children are picked up from the school and are booked in that day, Educators will write that the children are absent for that session.

Permanent and Casual bookings

Permanent booking

Cancelling or changing a permanent booking will require 7 days written notice. A change of booked care for is available from the office to complete and submit to an Educator. All permanent bookings are to be paid for even when a child is absent from care.

Casual bookings

Casual bookings will only be accepted if there are places available on that day. You can call the centre to enquire about vacancies. Casual bookings give way to permanent bookings no matter when they are made.

Cancellation of enrolment

We will not accept verbal notification to withdraw your child from the centre. To cancel your child you must provide 7 days' notice in writing. Failure to provide notification will result in one week's fees being charged at the full fee rate.

Program

Coowarra aims to provide a balanced program to cater for the interests and developmental levels of all children in care. Coowarra is a relaxed and informal environment, where children can make choices about
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what they would like to do whilst at the centre. The program for each week is displayed near the sign in/out table. Suggestions from parents and children are welcomed. There is also a space in the program book for any parent comments or suggestions. The program incorporates the 5 outcomes of My Time Our Place:

Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity

Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world

Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Outcome 4: Children are confident learners

Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Meals

Breakfast is provided for children each day if required, up until 8am. This consists of a variety of cereals, toast and cooked breakfasts.

Afternoon tea is provided every day. This consists of a cold drink and food including vegetable trays, fruit trays, biscuits etc. A menu is provided and is displayed near the program book. The weekly menu will take into account good nutrition and children will be encouraged to make healthy eating choices.

In vacation care children will need to bring morning tea, lunch and a drink. Educators are not permitted to heat food for children's lunches, therefore a lunch that can be eaten cold is required.

Water is available for children at all times. Children's special dietary requirements will be taken into account when planning menus. This service is a nut free service and children are not permitted to bring food items that contain nuts. Please ensure that you include any information on your child's dietary requirements on the enrolment form.

Fundraising

We occasionally hold fundraisers throughout the year to raise money for new equipment or work to be done on the centre. We ask for your support where possible to assist us in providing the best possible resources and environment for your children.

Behaviour management

We use positive strategies for guiding children's behaviour, including praising children's good/desirable behaviours and redirecting undesirable behaviour. Educators take care to provide an environment that is most conducive to positive behaviours. Children are set a standard of behaviours to follow. Children are given choices when it comes to determining outcomes of chosen behaviours. If inappropriate behaviours are continuous, the child may be offered an alternative place to play or calm down for a short period until they can participate once more in a safe and acceptable way.

Educators will speak to parents regarding their child's behaviour if any challenges arise. Educators will work with parents to develop strategies to use with the child. These strategies must be consistent with the centre policies and procedures. Educators will never agree to a strategy that may negatively impact on the child or that goes against centre policies. A copy of the behaviour guidelines policy is available in the policy manual.

Our service has a zero tolerance approach to bullying. Educators will work with any children who have been bullied, as well as the child who is doing the bullying to come to a resolution. If a child is continually bullying other children, their place in the service may be terminated. Parents are also asked to be mindful of the way they treat educators and other parents as any parent who bullies an educator or other parents may be banned from coming to the service.

Excursions

Excursions are conducted during vacation care and all relevant information will be supplied with permission notes. The costs for excursions are to be covered by parents/guardians. On the days we have planned

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excursions, all educators will attend the excursion so there will not be any supervision at the centre should you not wish your child to participate. Please ensure your child has a bucket hat, appropriate clothes and footwear for every day, including excursions. Wet weather gear may also be required on some days. Children will not be permitted to leave the service for any excursion without a completed permission note.

Policies and Procedures

Coowarra has policies and procedures that must be adhered to by all staff and families. These relate to a variety of areas and issues relevant to our service and are in practice everyday. Written policies are available on our website.

The policies are reviewed annually based on any feedback obtained for parents, children, management, staff as well as changes to legislation or recommendations from various authorities.

Medication

If children require medication whilst at the centre then a medication form must be filled in and signed by the parent/guardian. Medication must be given to an educator and not left in children's bags. Medication will only be administered from its original packaging by an authorised staff member. Prescription medicine will be administered only for the child whom it is prescribed, from the original container bearing the child's name and with a current use by date. Non-prescription medication will not be administered at the centre unless authorised by a doctor, as per our medication policy.

Where medication for treatment of long-term conditions such as asthma, epilepsy or ADHD is required, the centre will require a letter from the child's medical practitioner or specialist detailing the medical condition of the child, correct dosage as prescribed and how the condition is to be managed. If children are receiving medication at home or school but not at the centre parents should inform the centre the nature of the medication and its purpose and of any side effects it may have for the child so that staff can properly care for the child.

Children with a medical condition such as asthma or anaphylaxis will require a medical management form completed by the doctor. This form must have the child's photo on it and be completed clearly to ensure all educators are aware of the child's needs. An updated management plan will be required every 12 months, unless needed sooner due to changes in the child's condition.

Allergies

Parents are asked to inform the centre of any allergies the child may have. If food allergies exist, parents are asked to supply the centre with information in regards to dietary requirements.

Immunisation

Parents are to provide the centre of documented evidence of their child's immunisation status, as per our immunisation policy. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease at the centre or school attended by children at the centre, children not immunised will be required to stay at home for the duration of the outbreak for their own protection.

Illness and Infectious diseases

If a child is unwell at home, parents are asked not to bring them to the centre. If a child is ill at school and parents are contacted, they will need to collect the child from school. If a child becomes ill or develops symptoms whilst at the centre the parents will be contacted to collect the child. Coowarra follows the guidelines as set down by the Department of Health NSW in regards to infectious diseases. Children and staff will be excluded from the centre if they are ill with an infectious disease or symptoms of one and will not be able to return to the centre until a doctor's clearance is provided.

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Please keep children home until a doctor's clearance is provided if they have:

Severe temperature	Vomiting	Diarrhoea	Measles
Conjunctivitis	Chicken Pox	Mumps	Head lice
Ring worm	Tonsillitis	Whooping Cough	Cold sores
Excessive mucus from nose	Scabies	Infectious hepatitis	Diphtheria
Discharge from eyes or ears	Impetigo	Rubella (German measles)	

First Aid

All permanent educators hold a senior first aid certificate. Qualified first aiders will only administer first aid in minor accidents or to stabilise the casualty until more expert assistance arrives in more serious accidents. Parents are required to provide written consent for staff to seek medical attention for their child before they start at the centre. This will be recorded in the enrolment form. Parents will be required to provide the contact details of their preferred doctor, dentist and Medicare number. If a child, educator or visitor to the centre has an accident whilst at the centre they will be attended to immediately by an educator who holds a first aid certificate.

All accidents will be recorded on an Injury/Accident/Illness form which parents will be required to sign. A copy of this form will be given to the parents.

Sun Protection

Children and Educators must wear protective clothing when outside such as hats and shirts that protect shoulders and necks. Children who do not have a bucket hat will only be able to play in sheltered areas when the UV Rating is 3 or above. Children will not be permitted to share hats. An SPF30+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen will be made available in the centre and applied to staff and children when exposed to the sun. Hats are required in before and after school care as well as vacation care including whilst on excursions. Hats must be bucket or broad brim type, as per our Sun Protection Policy.

Appropriate clothing

In addition to wearing a hat, children are required to dress appropriately. Thongs are not permitted to be worn, either are singlet or sleeveless shirts. Shirts without sleeves do not provide adequate sun protection. If children wear inappropriate clothing they will not be able to engage in outdoor activities. This is effective during school terms and Vacation care. For further information please see the Sun Protection Policy in the policy manual.

Emergency Procedures

Emergency evacuation procedures will be clearly displayed at the centre. Children and educators will practice emergency procedures on a regular basis. A Record is kept at the centre of all practice emergency procedures

Complaints procedure.

Please see the attached copy of the centres Dealing with Complaints Policy for your information.

Our Code Of ethics

Responsibility – The early childhood professional is responsible for offering the highest level of skills and services to all users, both children and adults, regardless of their economic, racial, physical or social
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characteristics. Every user is afforded dignity and respect. Every user is afforded maximum freedom within the professional relationship. The skills and services available are represented accurately to users.

Accountability – The early childhood professional is accountable to parents and children for providing the highest possible levels of skills and services. No aspect of education or care may be wilfully neglected. Professionals must be ready to justify what they do and when they do it.

Confidentiality – In the course of their professional duties, early childhood workers acquire information that is private or limited circulation only. They should never discuss the families or children they work with outside the service. When within the service, some information gained in confidence from parents, or inadvertently from children, should not be discussed. Children's developmental records are confidential and only available to the employer, the co-ordinator and the employees when required. The services business affairs, reports and minutes of meetings are confidential unless the management committee, the co-ordinator or any legal reporting obligations decree otherwise. Staff should never permit their discussions of the centre or parent's business to be overheard by others – not even the children.

Collegiality – This refers to the professional support that colleagues extend to one another, automatically, because they are colleagues. Colleagues do not publicly criticise each other. Colleagues offer each other tolerance, good humour, courtesy and politeness in the workplace. Colleagues act co-operatively and are considerate of others in their knowledge of shared resources and facilities.

Dealing with Complaints Policy

POLICY STATEMENT

Coowarra OOSH will maintain a complaints and grievance management system to ensure that all Educators, families and communities members know that complaints and grievances will be taken seriously and investigated promptly and fairly. Complaints and grievances will be investigated and documented in a timely manner. Our complaints and grievance management system will be promoted in the parent handbook and on our website. We will identify complaints and grievances as opportunities to improve the quality of our service.

CONSIDERATIONS

National regulation 168 "Education and care service must have policies and procedures" (2)(o) dealing with complaints)

National Standard 7: Element 7.3.4 "processes are in place to ensure that all grievances and complaints are addressed, investigated fairly and documented in a timely manner".

Community Services Complaints, Appeals and Monitoring Act, 1994.

PROCEDURE

The service will support an individual's right to complain and will help them to make their complaints clear and try to resolve them.

A complaint can be informal or formal. It can be anything which an individual thinks is unfair or which makes them unhappy with the service.

Every parent/guardian will be provided with clear written guidelines detailing the grievance procedure, in the parent handbook.

All confidential conversations with individuals who have a complaint or grievance will take place in a quiet place away from children, other parent/guardians or Educators not involved.

If an individual has a complaint or comment about the service, they will be encouraged to talk to the Nominated Supervisor who will arrange a time to discuss their concern and come to a resolution to address the issue.

If the complaint is not handled at this level to the satisfaction of the person making the complaint they should discuss the issue with the Chairperson or liaison person of the Management, either in writing or verbally.

The Management will discuss the issue with the Nominated Supervisor and develop a strategy for resolving the problem, this would be discussed further with the individual or if necessary a meeting will be organised with the Nominated Supervisor and individual to resolve the problem.

All complaints will be recorded and dated indicating the issue of concern and how it was resolved. All information on complaints and grievances will include evidence that complaints are investigated within satisfactory timeframes and have led to amendments to policies and procedures where required.

The Nominated Supervisor or Management will inform the person making the complaint of what has been decided regarding the issue. Educators will also be informed of any relevant issues that they need to address or be aware of.

This could be done verbally or if the issue has been dealt with on a more formal basis then the committee or Nominated Supervisor will write personally to the individual making the complaint.

If any complaint cannot be resolved internally to the persons satisfaction, external options will be offered such as an unbiased third party.

UPDATED AND ENDORSED: November 2023

DATE FOR REVIEW AND EVALUATION: November 2025