

Family Handbook



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Note from Coowarra Director

A big welcome to Coowarra OOSH.

We 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 safe 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.
Director



Coowarra OOSH Philosophy

- We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land in which we meet, play, dig, dance, eat and learn today. We pay our respect to the Dharug people of the past, present and future, their land and the animals that were here before us.
- At the Hub we acknowledge, accept and respect children, families, our team and the broader community. We strive to make the environment feel welcoming and supportive to assist with a sense of belonging for all.
- We recognise that each of us is unique and welcome our differences and similarities.
- We value building positive relationships with children and families and extend on these to create experiences that support and foster life skills, children's self-concept, self-esteem and confidence. Strong relationships between educators and children are essential to ensure children feel supported in all experiences at the service.
- We believe that The Hub should be an enjoyable, safe and welcoming place where children have a voice and are involved in decision making surrounding programming, planning, daily spontaneous play and ensuring the flexibility of the program suit their needs and interests.
- Children are encouraged to be inquisitive, express ideas and opinions, make choices and be active contributors to their own learning. Children have time to play with peers where they are not rushed and can make their own decisions on what play activities they will engage in.
- Programmed activities are carefully planned to enhance children's learning with the activities being linked to rich learning experiences in line with the national Quality Standards and My Time Our Place outcomes
- Educators are expected to be positive role models, participating, and facilitating children's play.
- We have an open-door policy and encourage and value involvement and feedback from all stakeholders with a commitment to open and effective communication.
- We are committed to contributing towards a more sustainable future through embedding sustainable practices and supporting the children in developing their knowledge in caring for our planet to ensure that we are leaving the planet resourced for future generations.
- We endeavour to provide a high-quality service through following the Children services Regulations, National Law and implementing the "My Time Out Place" learning framework.

Hours of operation

Coowarra Hub provides before school care, after school care and vacation care. The service caters for up to 45 children a day and operates Monday – Friday in school terms. Coowarra Hub vacation care runs each school holidays from 7am – 6pm with the exception of an annual 3 week closure in Dec/Jan. Dates are advised for this each year. Coowarra Hub also provides care on pupil free days. The hours of operation are:

Before School: 6:30 – 9:00am After School: 3pm – 6:30pm Vacation Care: 7:00am – 6:00pm

Fees

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

Booked in:

Mornings \$22.50
Afternoons \$28.50
Vacation care \$55.00

Casual sessions:

Mornings \$25.00
Afternoons \$31.00
Vacation care \$60

.00

Additional charges occur for excursions and incursions during vacation care and these are advised on the program

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 cottage closes at 6:30pm sharp (6:00 in vacation care) and Coowarra Hub at 6pm. 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 \$20 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.

Reviewed and Updated February 2025

Payment of fees

Fee payments can be made by two methods:

- ☐ EFT payments where you transfer 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

Fee statements are accessible through your Hubhello account and show all CCS and fees. Fees must be paid up to date for each week of attendance as per the service fee policy.

Overdue accounts

The management of Coowarra Hub 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. Fees must be kept up to date each week. Any overdue accounts will result in reminders being sent. For accounts with over 3 weeks owing, debt recovery action will be taken as per our fee policy.

Child Care Subsidy

Child care subsidy is available for families enrolled in our service. Families need to register for CCS. The CCS is administered as a fee reduction weekly at the service.

Allowable absences

If you receive Child Care Subsidy, you are entitled to have 42 allowable absences per year where CCS is still paid. 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. Please speak to the service for more information on this.

Access to the Service and enrolment

Enrolments are done by completing the online enrolment. Once completed, the director will liaise with the family to ensure all aspects are completed and to process the enrolment including the state day for care.

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.

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 which meets at the service the third Monday of each month at 6:30pm. 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.

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. For times when an additional needs child is attending, an extra staff person may be employed.

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. Bookings are done online via your HubHello account. Once the booking window closes, cancellations of care are not accepted and fees are payable for all absences. Additional days can only be added if there is vacancies available.

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. The authorised person dropping off and picking up the children will be required to sign the child in/out using the electronic sign in. 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.

Transportation of Children

Children will make their way to the hub once the school bell rings where they are signed in by an educator upon arrival.

If children are not attending after school care, 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.

Cancellation of enrolment

We will not accept verbal notification to withdraw your child from the centre. To cancel your child you must provide 14 days' notice in writing. Failure to provide notification will result in one week's fees being charged at the full fee rate. CCS is only paid up to the last physical day of attendance.

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 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 in the service. 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.

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 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 provided in a policy folder near the sign in/out book. These are available for parents to view at anytime so please take the time to familiarise yourself with current policies and procedures. If you have any questions relating to the way things are done in the service please do not hesitate to ask a staff member.

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.

All service policies are accessible on the service website.

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 blister/webster packs by an authorised staff member. Prescription medicine will be administered only for the child whom it is prescribed, a blister/webster 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.

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.

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. This is to be uploaded into the enrolment. 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.

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 valid 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 via the electronic signing through Hubworks.

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 style, 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 Dealing with Complaints Policy on the website for information on complaints relating to the service.

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 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 off 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.