

# Early Learning Centre Handbook 2025

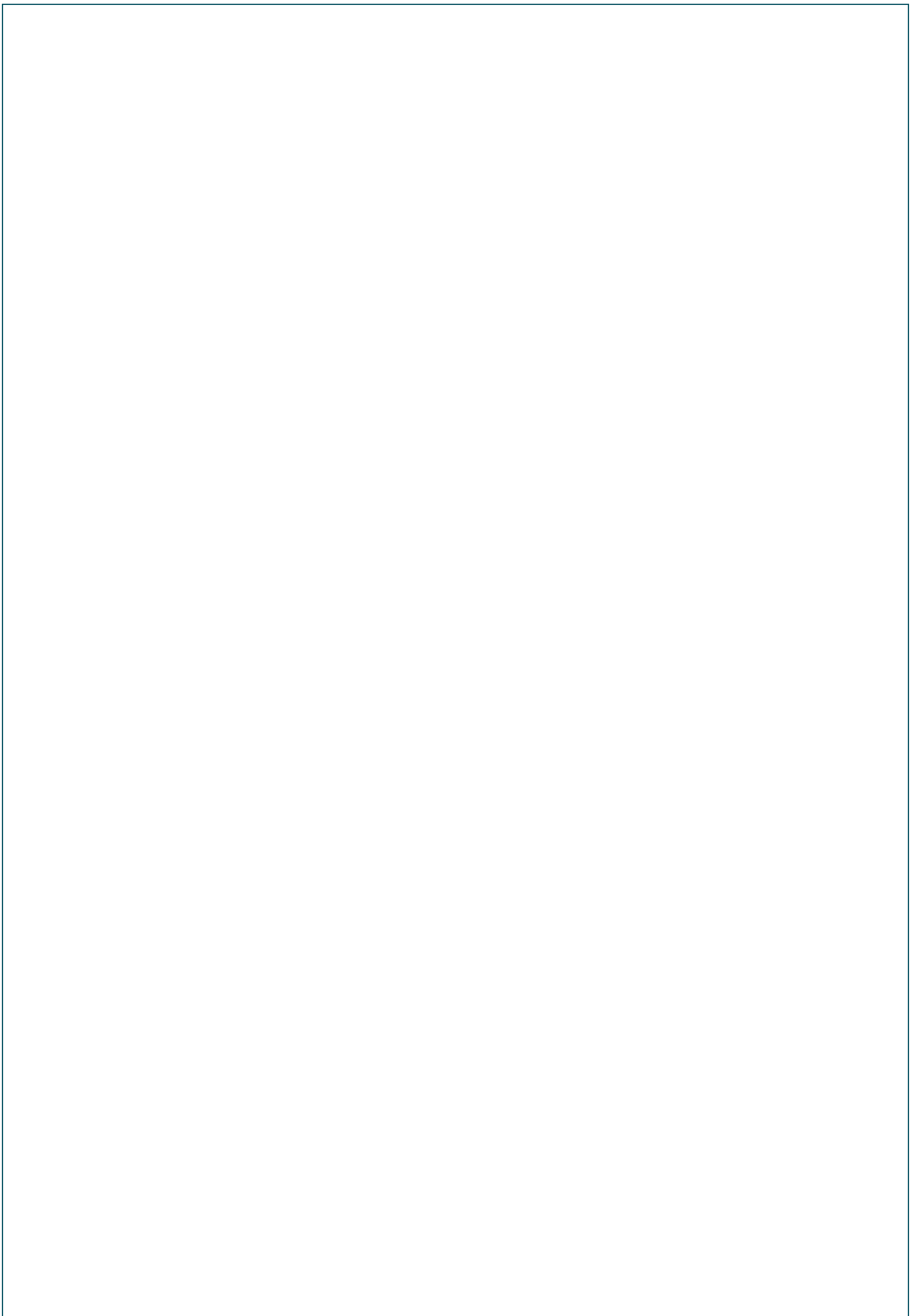


**Yarragon Primary School  
and Early Learning Centre**

**65 Loch Street Yarragon**

**Ph: 5634 2375**





***Welcome to all the families of Yarragon Early Learning Centre.***

***We feel privileged that you have chosen to send your child to our centre and we look forward to joining with you on this journey of learning.***

***The following handbook has been created to help explain some of the underlying principles and regular practises of our service. While this book covers many areas, it is not exhaustive so please feel free to contact us with clarification or queries that you may have.***

***We look forward to working with you soon,***

***The Yarragon ELC educators.***

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**Contact Details:**

**Yarragon Primary School and Early Learning Centre**

- **65 Loch Street, Yarragon 3823**
  - **03 5634 2375**
  - **[Yarragon.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:Yarragon.ps@education.vic.gov.au)**
  - **[www.yarragonps.com](http://www.yarragonps.com)**
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## **Centre Philosophy**

The Yarragon Early Learning Centre strives to provide a friendly and open environment where families feel welcomed and valued. We are inclusive of all children and families including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community.

We acknowledge the importance of forming successful relationships with children, families and the community which optimizes positive outcomes for each child enabling them to reach their full potential. Promoting the implementation of the child safe standards so that each child feels safe and connected is embedded in our services everyday practice.

We endeavour to provide a play based learning environment that reflects the children's interests and ideas, provides open ended and creative experiences and caters for children's individual needs. An environment that is child centred, rich in a range of materials, resources and opportunities in which children can engage and excel as confident learners and become valuable members of the wider school community.

## **What We Offer**

### **4 year old group**

Our program offers 2 groups over 4 days for pre-school aged children with each group attending 2 x 7.5 hours days

Blue Group: Monday / Tuesday 8.30 – 4.00 pm

Red Group: Thursday / Friday 8.30 – 4.00 pm

### **3 year old group**

Our program runs for 7.5 hours, once a week.

Yellow Group: Wednesday 8.30 am – 4.00 pm

## **Enrolments**

- Children must turn 4 years of age by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to attend.
- Children must turn 3 years of age by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2025 to attend and can only attend once they have turned 3 years of age.
- Children can only attend **ONE** funded kindergarten program. This means your child **cannot** attend another kindergarten or child care centre that offers a funded kindergarten program. **Please complete the enclosed Funded Kindergarten Place Declaration in your pack and return to kinder on Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2024.**
- Children **cannot** attend two years of 3 year old kindergarten

## **Term Dates for 2025**

Term 1: 29<sup>th</sup> January to 4<sup>th</sup> April \*

Term 2: 22<sup>nd</sup> April to 4<sup>th</sup> July

Term 3: 21<sup>st</sup> July to 19<sup>th</sup> September

Term 4: 7<sup>th</sup> October to 19<sup>th</sup> December

*\* The first session of the year is designated as a 'set up day' (which means there are no kinder sessions). Individual letters regarding arrangements for the start of the year are included in your Parent Information Packs.*

## **Centre Program**

We aim for kindergarten to be a time of growth and learning for all children. With this in mind we have designed our learning spaces to encourage development in social, physical, emotional and cognitive skills.

Please note that if your child is in the year before attending school they are enrolled in a funded kindergarten program through Yarragon ELC. The fifteen hours of funded kindergarten will be available over 2 days. Each child is eligible to attend a state funded kindergarten at one service.

At Yarragon ELC, we strongly believe that children learn best through direct experiences with the world around them. Our Centre is designed to provide various hands-on situations that help children develop confidence, problem-solving abilities, independence, analytical thinking skills, and a deeper overall understanding. We achieve this by offering open-ended activities that encourage children to explore at their own pace and delve into subjects that personally intrigue them. While some areas of the room, such as the book corner and the box construction table, will remain constant throughout the year to provide reassuring stability, many spaces will be regularly adapted to reflect the children's interests.

This approach ensures that our program remains relevant and engaging, as it aligns with the children's preferences and levels of engagement. Educators will collaborate with children to help build their knowledge and encourage them to reflect on the learning taking place during their play experiences. These key learning moments will often be documented to capture the many meaningful and productive outcomes of the children's work at the Centre. As professionals, we aim to connect children's observed learning to the Victorian standards for early childhood education, specifically the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). This document outlines five key areas that should be nurtured to promote children's growth.

These areas are as follows:

**Outcome 1: Identity**

- Children feel safe, secure and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

**Outcome 2: Community**

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal right and responsibilities necessary for active civic participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

**Outcome 3: Wellbeing**

- Children become strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

**Outcome 4: Learning**

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, places, technologies and natural and processed materials

**Outcome 5: Communication**

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and get meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

Throughout the year we will be referring to this document to verify the learning that children are participating in.

Our programs do contain formalized times when children come together for group activities. Formal group times may be with small or large groups of children and educators, they will involve; music, movement, drama, games, and stories.

## **What to expect in the first few weeks**

The first term at kindergarten is an important time for each child.

For some children it might be their first time away from home and their immediate family, a time when they

- Venture into a new environment
- Meet new people and learn to trust
- Mix socially and share with other children
- Work in a group situation

We want to make sure that kinder is a welcoming, safe and happy place because your child's self confidence is an important part of their development.

You can help support this by

- Talking about the positive experiences they have at kinder
- Sending your child to kinder regularly and punctually
- Showing an interest in what your child does at kinder
- Praising their efforts and positive behaviour
- Discussing with us anything which will help us to understand your child

## **Separation Anxiety in children**

Separation from family, particularly parents, is a normal part of early childhood. It often reflects a child's need to cling to what feels safe in a world that can seem frightening to them. As your child matures and gains confidence, they will learn to trust the caregivers to whom they are being left, and this anxiety will diminish. While it can be concerning for parents and caregivers, it's important to remember that it's common for children to find the transition to early learning unsettling, and this distress is usually temporary.

To help manage separation anxiety, it's essential to stay positive and encouraging. Inform the staff if your child may need extra support. Here are some helpful tips for navigating this period.

- Create quick good-bye rituals – If you linger, the transition time does too. So will the anxiety
- Be consistent – try to do the same drop-off with the same ritual each day – a routine can diminish the anxiety and help your child build trust and their independence in themselves and you
- Attention – when separating, give your child your full attention, be loving and provide attention. Say a quick goodbye despite their antics for you to stay

## **Attending Kindergarten**

For every day that your child attends Kindergarten, they will need to be signed in and out of the centre. Sign in books are located by the entrance to the room. Families need to provide contact details for every person who will be dropping off or picking up children. If it has been organised for another person to pick up your child, please add their name as an authorised person in the enrolment form to collect your child. In an emergency this can be given verbally over the phone and then added. Under DET regulations, we cannot release your child to an unauthorised person, this includes staff at the onsite OHSC program run by TheirCare. Can you please ensure that if your family utilises this service that you add TheirCare to your Authorised persons listing.

Please make sure you close gates and doors when arriving and departing.

## **When not to attend Kindergarten**

To ensure the health and safety of all children at Yarragon ELC, we kindly request that any ill children stay home until they have fully recovered. This helps prevent the spread of illness to other children and our educators. We ask that families adhere to public health regulations regarding the recommended exclusion periods for various illnesses. For a complete summary, please refer to Appendix A.

## **Dressing for Kindergarten**

Yarragon ELC has an optional T-shirt for children. These are available from the School Office and are **\$20 each**. They come in sizes 4, 6 and 8. Children are permitted to wear casual clothes provided that they conform to the following guidelines:

- children should be dressed in clothes that are seasonally appropriate, well-fitting and comfortable, allowing children to run, climb and play. We encourage children to wear clothes that are able to get dirty, muddy or wet as we will frequently be working outside. We also ask for families to send a spare change of seasonally appropriate clothes along with their child to allow for them to change out of soiled clothes.
- During the warmer months (until the end of April and again after September), to comply with our SunSmart Policy, every child will need to wear a sun hat with a wide brim to protect their ears and neck. Yarragon Primary School sells broad brimmed hats for \$15.00 each. The centre will provide sunscreen for children but we also encourage you to put this on before coming to kinder.
- During the cooler months, every child should bring a warm coat as outdoor activities will still be encouraged during this time.
- All clothing which comes to kinder should be **CLEARLY LABELLED**.
- We strongly urge all children to wear closed-toed shoes that are suitable for running and climbing. Sandals and thongs do not provide adequate protection for feet and make it hard for children to participate in activities.



## **Lunch and Snacks**

**4 year old group** - Please provide a healthy and substantial lunch and snack for your child each day, along with a full water bottle.

**3 year old group** - Please provide healthy snack, enough for two breaks, along with a full water bottle.

We encourage children to be independent during meal times. Please ensure your child can open their lunch box, snack containers, and drink bottles. Additionally, check that the containers and lunch box you send are suitable for their needs.

Please provide only nutritious foods, avoiding foods high in sugar and low in nutrient content; please no lollies or chocolate, or cordial in drink bottles.

Children will also need a clearly labelled drink bottle and snack and lunch containers.

The Nutrition Department of the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, has the following suggestions:

### **BEST CHOICES**

- Fruit – fresh, tinned or dried
- Try vegetable sticks with dips or a small container with mixed vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, peas, cucumber.
- Fruit yoghurts, cheese stick or slice (don't forget to include a cold pack to keep cool)



- Sandwiches. Try a variety of breads and fillings. Some different breads include: rolls, pita bread, flat bread, fruit loaf or buns, foccacias, scones, pikelets, muffins, crumpets, crisp breads, rice cakes, corn thins to name a few
- Dry biscuits

### **BEST LEFT OUT**

- Dried fruit bars and ‘straps’ or ‘wraps’ and lollies are very high in sugar, low in fibre and stick to children’s teeth causing tooth decay
- Chips and packets of crisps
- ‘Dairy desserts’ are high in sugar
- Sweet dips such as chocolate spreads
- Donuts and creamy cakes
- lollies and chocolate bars
- Cordial/juice/soft drink/flavoured milk

We have also enclosed a “Pick and Mix” flyer from Nutrition Australia that has some valuable healthy lunch box ideas.

### **Celebrations**

We enjoy celebrating special occasions and strive to include a variety of cultural festivals and events that are important to our families. If you would like to participate or share information about your celebrations, please reach out to one of our educators..

We enjoy celebrating Easter, Mothers Day, Fathers Day and Christmas.

### **Birthdays**

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at kinder. Parents are welcome to bring along some individually packed items to share with the group. Please check for any allergies first and provide a list of ingredients of the cakes or celebration food.

### **Artwork**

Please remember to collect your child’s artwork each week. Artwork and notices are placed in each child’s locker or take home file which is placed out for collection each afternoon. Don’t despair if your child doesn’t bring home much (or in some cases, any!) artwork. Some children are much more into being creative with block buildings or sand creations.

### **Fees**

From 2023, the Victorian Government is making kindergarten programs free for three and four-year-old children saving you and your family up to \$2,500 per year for their program. Free Kinder is a critical component of the Victorian Government’s **Best Start, Best Life reform.**

Yarragon Early Learning Centre will participate in the free kinder initiative so you will not be required to make any fee payments for three and four-year-old kinder programs in 2025.



Services will receive funding directly from the Victorian Government so that families are not out of pocket. The funding will go directly to your service, not your child or your family.

***(Families with a current Pension or Health Care Card are still required to provide a copy of their card for funding requirements. A copy of your current concession card must be taken by a staff member to be eligible for the subsidy.)***

## **Facebook**

We have a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/Yarragon-Primary-School-Early-Learning-Centre-153596291382208/>. Please go on and "Like" if you have not already.

## **Interacting with the School**

Yarragon ELC is part of Yarragon Primary School. At the discretion of the educators, children will be taken to the school to enjoy its wonderful facilities and build relationships with other students. Our goal in fostering this connection with Yarragon Primary School is to make the transition to school a richer experience for the children entering Foundation next year.

Information regarding transition to school will be sent out to all families directly from the school.

## **Rosters**

The ELC relies on parents help and involvement to run smoothly. We do have the need for parents to help out with 'parent duty' during the kinder sessions. You don't have to stay for the whole morning or afternoon if you don't have that much time, a couple of hours will also be greatly appreciated.

You may be asked to help with cleaning up, wiping tables, sweeping the floor after lunch, cleaning up paint brushes or supervising an activity. You may also be asked to help with other duties at different times throughout the year so please keep an eye out for notices from the ELC staff.

*Remember, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles or special friends can do duty too!*

## **Recycling**

We try to encourage an awareness of the environment and the need to recycle where possible. For this and other reasons we ask for donations of any wrapping paper, greeting/Christmas cards, polystyrene meat trays, corks, bottle tops, material, boxes, wood off cuts, yoghurt containers and any other items you think may be useful to us. Special requests may be made at different times of the year. Also please think of us before discarding any kitchenware, old clothes or things that we might be able to use for dramatic play.

We are always after spare clothes (sizes 3-6), dolls clothes, old towels or face washers, gumboots (sizes 3-6), plants (child-safe) and fresh flowers to brighten up the room.

## **Your child's progress**

We encourage parents to communicate regularly with our educators. Keeping track of your child's progress is important. If there are any specific issues you'd like us to address with your child, please feel free to come and chat or schedule a private meeting with the educator.

Parent/teacher discussions are offered via available time half of the year.

## **Illness and Emergency Care**

A child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately any medical emergency occurs concerning their child and arrangements made for the child to be taken from the centre as soon as possible.

Parents must give authorisation on enrolment for an ambulance and or medical/hospital service to be sought in the case of a medical emergency.

Parents must provide emergency contact numbers which will be used in case a parent/guardian is unable to be contacted.

Please try to make contacts who are authorised to collect children, geographically close to the kindergarten. Contacts that are located away from the immediate area should not be used if possible.

Staff have the authority to take a child from the centre without the consent of the parent/guardian in a medical emergency. If an ambulance is called, a staff member will accompany the child if possible.

**Please note an ambulance will be called if medically required whether you have ambulance cover or not. The kindergarten will not be held financially responsible for any costs incurred in such an emergency.**

## **Staff Training/ELC Closure Days**

Staff will undertake approximately 3-4 days of training throughout the year where the centre will be closed. Information regarding this will be provided at the time.

## **Immunisation**

All enrolments are required to be immunised as per the "No Jab, No Play" Policy. **An up to date immunisation certificate for your child must be provided before they can start at the Yarragon ELC.**

## **Medication**

**Must not be left in your child's bag.** Give any medication required by your child during the session to an educator. You will need to fill in a medication permission form, noting the name of the medication, dosage to be given and the time required to be administered. The medication needs to be in its original container, and prescription medication needs to have the pharmacy label attached; clearly citing the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, and not be past its expiry date.

If your child experiences asthma/anaphylaxis:

- You will need to provide a current management plan, and provide asthma medications and epipen/anapen to the staff each session, or alternatively medications can be kept at kinder for the year. A doctor must have signed this form. Staff will work with families to create a risk minimisation plan and communication plan after the student has commenced for the year.
- **If you attend the service without your required medication your child will not be able to attend kinder on that day until medication is accompanying them.**
- Please ensure you inform staff of any changes to asthma/anaphylaxis plans immediately.

## **Communication with Families**

The educators at Yarragon Early Learning Centre (ELC) place a strong emphasis on partnering with families in their child's education, and we believe that effective communication is a vital aspect of this partnership.

Program plans will be displayed regularly, and our educators welcome feedback from families regarding their experiences with the program, as well as any suggestions for future improvements. Information about the program, upcoming events, and meetings can be found in the foyer area, so we encourage you to check this information frequently. Newsletters and other relevant notices will be available in your child's locker.

We utilize Compass as our electronic communication platform with families, and we may also send occasional emails from the Yarragon Primary School email address. For those children who will transition to Yarragon Primary School, using Compass will be particularly beneficial, as it is the same platform they will use.

A Parent Guide will be available online, and passwords will be distributed early in the new year. Compass is also used to record kindergarten absences due to illness, medical appointments, or other reasons. Please ensure you log your child's absence by 8:30 AM.

### **Positive Interactions**

At Yarragon ELC, we believe in encouraging all children by praising appropriate behaviours. Our goal is to build strong, trusting relationships between educators and children, and we aim to achieve this through positive interactions. Educators will never withhold anything from or exclude children as a form of discipline. Instead, our approach focuses on redirecting children to more acceptable behaviours and reinforcing these through positive responses.

### **Emergency Evacuation Procedures**

Please refer to Emergency Evacuation Procedures located in the ELC. During the course of the year the children will undertake evacuation training at the ELC.

This program will be gently introduced with much discussion and drill practice.

### **Code Red Fire Alert Days**

At the direction of the Department of Education and Training (DET), School and Children's Services in high risk areas will be closed on days declared as Code Red Fire Danger Rating Day. This may affect our ELC.

Where possible up to 3 days' notice will be given but in some instances less notice may be provided. You will be notified by the kinder if we are closing, but you can also check the DEECD website for details [www.education.gov.au](http://www.education.gov.au)

### **Concerns or Queries**

Should you have any concerns or queries we encourage you to contact the ELC Educational Leader and Nominated Supervisor, Lee Sheehan or Principal, Melissa Rock on 56342375.

## **Appendix A**

### **Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019)**

**In this Schedule, medical certificate means a certificate of a registered medical practitioner.**

<b>Column 1</b>	<b>Column 2</b>	<b>Column 3</b>	<b>Column 4</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Conditions</b>	<b>Exclusion of cases</b>	<b>Exclusion of Contacts</b>
1	Chickenpox	Exclude until all blisters have dried. This is usually at least 5 days after the rash appears in unimmunised children, but may be less in previously immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded
2	Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased	Not excluded
3	Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
4	Diarrhoeal illness*	Exclude until there has not been vomiting or a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
5	Diphtheria	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least two negative throat swabs, the first not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics and the other 48 hours later	Exclude family/household contacts until cleared to return by the Chief Health Officer
6	Glandular fever (Epstein-Barr Virus infection)	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
7	Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
8	Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until 48 hours after initiation of effective therapy	Not excluded
9	Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness	Not excluded
10	Hepatitis B	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
11	Hepatitis C	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
12	Herpes (cold sores)	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should	Not excluded

Column 1 Number	Column 2 Conditions	Column 3 Exclusion of cases	Column 4 Exclusion of Contacts
		be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible	
13	Human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV)	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
14	Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing	Not excluded
15	Influenza and influenza like illnesses	Exclude until well	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer
16	Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	Not excluded
17	Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash	Immunised contacts not excluded. Unimmunised contacts should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case. If unimmunised contacts are vaccinated within 72 hours of exposure with any infectious case, or received Normal Human Immunoglobulin (NHIG) within 144 hours of exposure of any infectious case, they may return to the facility
18	Meningitis (bacterial –other than meningococcal meningitis)	Exclude until well	Not excluded
19	Meningococcal infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed	Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy
20	Mumps	Exclude for 5 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
21	Molluscum contagiosum	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
22	Pertussis (Whooping cough)	Exclude the child for 21 days after the onset of cough or until they have completed 5 days of a course of antibiotic treatment	Contacts aged less than 7 years in the same room as the case who have not received three effective doses of pertussis vaccine should be excluded

Column 1 Number	Column 2 Conditions	Column 3 Exclusion of cases	Column 4 Exclusion of Contacts
			for 14 days after the last exposure to the infectious case, or until they have taken 5 days of a course of effective antibiotic treatment
23	Poliovirus infection	Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Re-admit after receiving medical certificate of recovery	Not excluded
24	Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (head lice)	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced	Not excluded
25	Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash	Not excluded
26	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is produced	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer
27	Shiga toxin or Verotoxin producing Escherichia coli (STEC or VTEC)	Exclude if required by the Chief Health Officer and only for the period specified by the Chief Health Officer	Not excluded
28	Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well	Not excluded
29	Tuberculosis (excluding latent tuberculosis)	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious	Not excluded
30	Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever)	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer