



**Bright Futures**  
Early Learning Centres

# Parent Information Handbook

## About Bright Futures Early Learning Centres

Bright Futures Early Learning Centres is a family owned and operated long day care centre. We cater for children aged 1 years old up to school age. We are conveniently located at 59 Carter Road Menai, which is easily accessible by road or bus. We pride ourselves on providing high quality individual care, in a nurturing and friendly environment. We believe strongly in working in partnership with parents and our qualified nurturing and approachable staff.

Being a centre that has been well established within the local community, we have experience in providing the highest quality children's services. Government childcare benefit is available. Our centre is fully air-conditioned for the comfort of the children as we also have a well-equipped outdoor play area. Our innovative programs include activities and experiences appropriate to the needs of each child to develop skills and knowledge in preparation for school. We are open 50 weeks of the year Monday to Friday 7:30 am until 6:00 pm (excluding public holidays).

## Centre Philosophy

### As a service we believe

**1. Social Justice** is a core value that guides our practices and the way we teach and relate to people. It prompts us to take action and advocate for all early childhood participants to be valued and respected for who they are. Social Justice is achieved for all families, learners and early childhood practitioners through adopting an anti-biased approach to early childhood education.

**2. Our service is an extension of home** for all families who attend the service. Our service is a small service, which ensures we get to know the families well. It also ensures that we are able to support children to develop meaningful connections with peers and educators at a heightened level due to our small size. Our twenty years of operation within the community and high level of staff retention has established us as a generational early childhood service, who now cares and educates the children of past students. This creates intergenerational partnerships between the service and families and supports the 'extended family' culture we aim to maintain at the service. The partnerships that we develop with the families are collaborative, reciprocal and genuine. The connectedness of the service's children, families and educators, enriches its everyday operations and is achieved by open and respectful dialogues, empathy, patience and a commitment to synergy.

**3. Learners are respected** as competent, enthusiastic and valued members of the early childhood community. We show respect to learners by being a supportive, responsive and enthusiastic learning chaperons that co-construct knowledge with children and their families. All children join the search for knowledge and understanding at birth and develop their own rich and unique learning style. This is celebrated in our pedagogy and practice. We respect children's ways of being and knowing, by ensuring they have sufficient access to resources, time, provisions and support to enable them to drive their own learning and experience genuine engagement.

**4. Connection to the world** is a central component of the human experience. The concept of connecting to the world prompts us to seek inspiration from natural beauty and also to inspire learners to appreciate and gain meaning from their world. The

natural environment encourages conceptual thought processes, builds a connection to other living things and lays the foundation to implement sustainability practices. We as a service encourage the exploration of the wider world through exploration of different cultures and the wider community. Children are respected members of a broad community and deserve to be active participants. We engage children in various forms of community engagement and instill a sense of belonging and purpose within children in doing so.

**5. Reflective practice and continuous improvement** guides the way we evolve our teaching practices and learning environments. Reflective practice ensures that early learning spaces are considerate of sociocultural contexts and reflective of learners' requirements. We aim to create learning spaces that are stimulating, imaginative and inspiring for young learners. Reflection enables us to develop and fine-tune our daily practices and become responsive to children's needs. It also assists us in thinking critically about our practices and striving for continuous improvement.

**6. Contemporary Pedagogies** underpin our curriculum decisions and teaching practices. We aim to use multiple early childhood beliefs, theories and concepts and manipulate these to respond the learner's requirements. We believe that 21st-century teaching practices are a necessity in the current educational climate in which most of the jobs children we are educating will have, have not been invented yet. This means as a service we have a strong focus on technology and critical thinking to help assist children in future learning scenarios.

**7. Respect for childhood** stimulates us to respect learner's time and unique development process. We support learners to engage genuinely with their world, gaining knowledge about themselves and their surroundings and making meaning through investigation. We protect children's right to a childhood, through supporting learners to mature at their own pace through an inclusive, holistic and balanced approach to instructive and play-based learning.

## Staff and management

All staff aim to provide a friendly, safe and caring atmosphere within an educational and stimulating environment.

The centre staff consists of:

<b>Director</b>	Haylee Loney
<b>Nominated Supervisor</b>	Michelle Angus
<b>Teachers</b>	Leeann Whitmore Alana Kimberley Lindsay Montgomery Karen Gallagher Alison Therkildsen Marilyn Leonov Sophia Paynter

All of who enjoy working as a team.

A high priority is the development of feelings of trust and security for both children and their parents.

Across all age groups the programmes will be kept as flexible as possible in order to meet the individual needs and interests of the children within each group. Staff will be responsible for the care (observations of development, planning for skills and daily interactions) of small groups of children. We will be responsible for all children in the centre, but will have our primary group within that structure.

## Hours of Operation

The Centre is open 50 weeks per year, five days per week, between the hours of 7.30am – 6.00pm. The Centre is closed for the 2 week period over Christmas and New Year. The Centre is also closed on public holidays.

## Fees

**Fees are payable fortnightly IN ADVANCE.** Payment can be made via direct debit, direct credit, cash or cheque.

Fees are charged for all days your child is booked to attend the centre, including public holidays. No fees are charged when the centre is closed over Christmas.

Please be aware that if your fees fall into arrears, we cannot guarantee your child's position at the centre.

Parents who fail to collect their child by 6.00pm will be charged a late collection fee of \$5.00 for the first 5 minutes and then \$1.00 per minute until the child is collected.

Please make cheques payable to Bright Futures Early Learning Centres Pty Ltd.

Bank account details for direct credit are below:

**Account Name:** Valascorp Pty Ltd

**BSB:**112-879

**Account #:**455 678 352

St George Bank

If you wish to pay by direct debit, please ask staff for a direct debit form.

Current fees at the centre are:

Tadpole Room(2 – 3 years) - \$115.00 per day

Frog Room(2 – 3 years) - \$108.00 per day

Jungle Room(3– 5 years) - \$104.00 per day

## Child Care Benefit

Full child care fees will be charged until such time as evidence is provided from the Family Assistance Office of your child care benefit entitlement and percentage. Once confirmation has been received, the percentage of benefit will be applied from the date advised by the Family Assistance Office and your account will be credited accordingly.

## Enrolment

Parents interested in enrolling their child at Bright Futures Early Learning Centres are asked to complete an enrolment form and return it to the centre with a \$200 enrolment bond. The bond will be refunded if 2 weeks written notice of withdrawal from the centre is provided.

## Waiting List

Bright Futures Early Learning Centres maintains a waiting list for all children who are seeking a place at the centre. The waiting list is divided into 2 sections.

- The internal waiting list. This includes:-
  - ~ Children who are enrolled but require changes to their existing care arrangements such as moving to the next group or adding or changing days;
  - ~ Siblings of children who attend;
  - ~ Children of staff working at Bright Futures Early Learning Centres;
  - ~ Children who have left and wish to return to Bright Futures Early Learning Centres;
  - ~ Siblings of children who have attended Bright Futures Early Learning Centres in the past.
- The external waiting List includes children who have not been involved with Bright Futures Early Learning Centres previously.

## Movement within the centre

Where possible, children are moved to the appropriate room according to age; this is governed by the availability of care and the developmental needs of the child. Throughout the year staff will assess a child's readiness to move up and will discuss this with the parents. Every effort will be made to accommodate the child's needs and parent's wishes as to moving up or staying in a group. However, the overall centre occupancy rate and needs of children across all the groups must also be taken into consideration when moving children between groups.

## Change of Personal Details

Please inform the nominated supervisor or director of any changes to your address, telephone numbers and emergency contacts. It is important that we always have current contact details in case of an emergency.

## Court Orders, Restraining Orders and Separation

A copy of any court orders and/or restraining orders must be given to the director on enrolment or when approved by the court should the child/children already be enrolled. It is also the responsibility of parents to inform the director of any family separation issues where court orders/restraining orders are not in place. The details of any court orders shared with the director and staff of the centre will remain confidential. The family situation can in this instance mean changes to who parents wish to collect their child/children. Without court/ restraining orders we legally have to release children to either parent. However, if we are informed of circumstances we may be able to put procedures in place to assist parents in separation situations.

## Signing In and Out

Each day parents are required to sign their child **in** and complete the sign-in form, which requires details of the drop off time. The child must also be signed **out**, giving the actual time collected, and staff must also be informed of the child's departure. These records are used for attendance checks and in emergency evacuation drills. Children will not be allowed to leave the centre either on excursions or in the care of other adults without prior written permission from the parents or guardian.

## Sun Safety and Outdoor Play

*All children MUST have a hat in order to play outdoors.* The damaging effects of the sun in Australia have been well documented over the years and the staff and management of the centre need to ensure that your children are protected.

When dropping of your child in the morning, please apply sunscreen to them as we do spend much of the morning in the outdoor playground. Staff will apply sunscreen to your child before they go outdoors in the afternoon, so please let the staff know if your child is sensitive to any particular sun care products.

## What to bring to Preschool

### Frog Room

Bottle – if formula, ready made – if cows milk, empty.

Bottle for water

Piece of fruit for morning tea

Hat

2 changes of clothes

Dummy if necessary

Security blanket or familiar toy if necessary

**In Summer 1 pair of swimmers and a rash shirt**

### Jungle Room

Hat

1 change of clothes

Spare underpants

Bottle for water

Piece of fruit for morning tea.

**In Summer 1 pair of swimmers and a rash shirt**

## Food

Although the centre provides all meals, we actively encourage and promote healthy eating habits for all children. Parents will periodically be given information and advice about good nutrition, including recommendations about the sort of food to send with their child. Fruit will be the predominant snack provided for morning and afternoon tea. This will be varied from time to time with the provision of snacks such as toast, cereals, popcorn, scones and muffins.

Microwave and refrigerator facilities are available in the kitchen area. Microwave containers must be provided by the parent for the heating of food. Food storage containers must be unbreakable and clearly labelled. Please do not use glass containers, plastic bags, or plastic lunch wrap.

Parents are strongly requested not to send in any lollies, chocolate, potato crisps or 'junk food' in general.

Nuts and hard foods such as carrot sticks are also not allowed due to the risk of choking. ***Nut products are banned*** due to the possibility of a child having an undiagnosed allergic reaction to these products.

## Toys

Children may bring comforters such as dummies, soft toys or special blankets as they are important for settling the child if upset or for sleep. It is centre policy to restrict other toys brought in by children to such special comforters, or 'show and tell' toys, which are then put away in the child's bag to be taken home. Toy guns, swords and other 'weapons' are not permitted in the Centre for 'show and tell' as they tend to promote aggressive play.

## Daily Routines

Each room in the centre has a set routine which covers approximate times for activities such as meals, nappy changes, sleep and so on. Routines will vary from time to time according to the needs of the group and individual children and also depending on the weather outside. For further information about your child's routines please see the team in your child's room.



## Settling your Child into Day Care

The introduction into long day care can be difficult for children and parents. Children's welfare and happiness are the priority for staff when welcoming new children to the centre and when assisting the family to settle into the centre environment. It is recognised that families needs will vary greatly in the orientation process and individual needs will be met as best is possible.

The following outlines some helpful hints for parents on settling their child into care :-

- Make sure you familiarise your child with the environment and the people in the environment (children and adults) by coming in for visits before commencing care.
- Provide a favourite toy, blanket or comforter to support your child when they are separating from you or settling to sleep. This can help your child feel more secure.
- If your child is unsettled, short visits with you helps your child to gain trust with an unfamiliar environment.
- Effective communication & interactions between staff and parents or staff and other children can produce positive role models and be reassuring. This experience can help to establish trust in an unfamiliar setting.
- Try to talk at home about child care. Mention the names of the staff and other children. Talk about the things the child will be able to do at child care that are fun and enjoyable.
- Talk to the staff about your child, for example, what they like to do, successful ways of settling them to sleep, foods they like and dislike and so on. This helps staff to get to know your child.
- When leaving your child it is best to make sure you say goodbye and then leave. Hesitating and not going after you have said your goodbyes, if a child is upset, only confuses them. Reassure your child that everything is alright and you will return later, this can help them to settle.
- It sometimes helps to establish a routine when leaving. For example, giving your child a cuddle and giving them to a staff member before leaving.
- At first some children protest strongly while others may take a day or two to realise that you are leaving them and begin to protest after several days. Children soon learn that you do return and in the mean time they are well cared for.

## Individualised Program Planning

Staff in each room are responsible for planning an early childhood program which reflects child centred, anti-bias and multi-cultural experiences, is developmentally appropriate and emerges from the children's observed interests. Staff observe each individual child on a regular basis, recording these observations and using them to develop individual objectives for each child. These are then incorporated into the overall group programme of activities and learning experiences. A wide variety of early childhood curriculum and developmental areas are provided for within the indoor and outdoor play environments including cognitive, physical (gross and fine motor), social and emotional development, language and literature, art and craft, music, science, maths and number, drama, movement and dance and construction. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress through their child's learning feed on Storypark. Parents are also involved in the setting of individual goals which are tracked and assessed over the period of six month intervals. Parents are able to upload their own stories and progress notes to their child's learning feed and also comment on their child's observations.

## Socialisation and Behaviour Management

Staff follow a guiding children's behaviour policy which extends across the whole centre giving consistency of expectation in all rooms. This policy allows children to develop self-discipline, a respect for others and for property and respect for self.

The policy aims are :-

- To give all children the opportunity to expand their experiences of life in a productive, safe environment that allows individuals the right to safety, tolerance, self-expression, cultural identity, dignity and the worth of the individual, and honesty in dealing with peers and caregivers.
- To be taught to respect the rights and needs of others by foreseeing the outcome of their behaviour and the consequences of their behaviour.
- To encourage the individual social development of each child.

If you require further information on this policy please ask staff.

## Newsletters

The centre newsletter is distributed each term. This will contain important information about events, meetings, policy issues and parent education articles.

## Extended absences

If a child is to be absent for an extended period of time due to holidays or parents work obligations then fees must still be paid to hold the child's place. If parents do not wish to pay fees then the child's place will be forfeited and the child will be placed on the Waiting list. The centre needs to be notified of such absences and a form outlining which of the above options parents wish to take must be completed.

## Allowable Absences

The Family Assistance Office regulates that families are eligible for up to 42 days of allowable absences for each child per financial year. This means that if your child is away from the centre due to holidays, illness or any other reason, child care benefit can still be claimed for your child. The centre keeps a record of how many days your child is away from the Centre. If your child is not signed in, it will be marked as an absence. Once 42 absences have been accrued, all further days absent will be charged at full fees.

## Extra days

If space is available due to another child being absent, additional days may be booked through the director or nominated supervisor on a casual basis. Extra days are only available for children who are already at the centre and should be booked through the room leader. Bookings should be made at least two days in advance whenever possible. In exceptional circumstances bookings may be made up to 3 pm of the previous day.

## Change of care days

Any requests to cancel or change care days must be in writing giving two weeks' notice in advance to the director. This assists administration and enables us to fill vacancies quickly. A position on another day will only be made available if there is a suitable vacancy on that day.

## Notification of absences

If your child is unable to attend on a booked day, please notify the centre no later than 9:30am on **9543 0208**. Any absence known in advance should be notified to staff as soon as possible. This will assist us in providing emergency care for families who require it.

## Withdrawing from care

Families must provide two weeks' notice in writing when withdrawing from the centre. If the required notice is not given, two weeks' fees will be charged in lieu of notice and the \$200 enrolment bond will not be refunded.

## Fire Safety

Emergency evacuation procedures are displayed throughout the centre as are locations of hoses and extinguishers. Parents should familiarise themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures as they may be required to assist in an evacuation drill. The emergency evacuation procedures are displayed within the centre.

## Emergency procedures

If a child's condition requires urgent medical attention an ambulance will be called to transport the child to the emergency section of hospital and the child's parents will be

contacted and advised to meet the child there. A staff member well known to the child will accompany the child if the parent is unable to.

If the condition of the child is not urgent but nonetheless requires medical attention, then every effort will be made to contact the child's parents so they may come and take the child to hospital or to a medical practitioner. However, if the child's parents are not contactable, then an ambulance will be called to take the child to hospital. Children will not be transported in staff members' cars under any circumstances.

In view of this, parents are advised to ensure they hold ambulance insurance. The centre will not accept liability for the treatment provided and any expenses will be met by the parent.

Upon parents being notified that their child is unwell, parents are expected to collect the child within 60 minutes. If parents are unable to collect the child, then they need to arrange for someone else to collect the child from the centre.

## **Minor Accidents**

Any accident or injury, which occurs to a child during care at Bright Futures Early Learning Centres (no matter how minor), will be documented on an incident injury trauma & illness form. Staff will inform parents of any accident/injury either by phone or at collection time and parents will be required to sign the form to acknowledge that they have been informed of an accident or injury to their child. In the event of a child's injury involving a bump to the head or teeth the parent will be contacted by telephone immediately to allow the parent to assess the situation in consultation with staff.

## **Sickness**

If a child is sick, the staff should be notified of the absence by 9.30am. It is essential that contagious diseases be reported immediately. Children are to be excluded in accordance with the centre's infectious disease policy and the NSW Health Department guidelines. The final decision as to whether a child is fit to attend rests with the Director and/or nominated supervisor. Parents are requested to collect their child within 1 hour of being notified of an illness.

A doctor's clearance is required before the child can return to the Centre.

## **Medication**

All medications must be clearly labelled with the pharmacist's label, showing the child's name, the name of the prescribing doctor, the name of the medication and the dosage. Medications must be handed to the staff in the room for safe storage in the child-proof medication box in the refrigerator. The daily medication form must be completed each time you wish the medication to be administered. The medication forms are located in folders in each room. Medication is only administered by senior staff and is checked and witnessed by a second member of staff. Staff cannot administer medication without the written permission of the parent or guardian. Homoeopathic and herbal medications will not be administered.

## **Immunisation**

It is the policy of the centre that all children, except those with medical reason, must be immunised according to the NSW Immunisation Schedule. Children who have been immunised outside of NSW will need to have their immunisation information transferred to a NSW Immunisation Record Form by their GP or a local health clinic. Up-to-date immunisation records or a doctor's letter stating the reason for non-immunisation must be shown to the Director when registering at the centre. If parents fail to comply with the Director's requests to show that their child's immunisation is up to date, the child will be excluded from the centre. If a family has difficulty in obtaining evidence of immunisation, or if it is not possible to obtain evidence, a statutory declaration stating that the child is fully immunised must be obtained.

## **Qualifications and staff teams**

At all times during the centre's hours of operation there is at least one appropriately qualified member of staff on duty. Qualifications must include either a Bachelor or Diploma in Early Childhood Education, a Diploma or Associate Diploma in Community Services Centre Based Care (or equivalent) or a Certificate in Children's Services. During the core hours of 9.30am -3.30pm there is a qualified Room Leader in charge of each room.

A floater assistant covers breaks and busy times in each room. At all times staff/child ratios required by the licensing conditions are met and in most cases exceeded.

All senior staff members and Room Leaders must hold a current Senior First Aid certificate and other staff are also encouraged and assisted financially by the centre to maintain First Aid qualifications.

## **Staff Absences**

The centre policy is to have a minimum number of different caregivers for any one group of children. Where ever possible staff usually relieve for each other to cover sickness and holidays. Where this is not possible relief staff are employed through a reliable agency.

## **Suggestions**

Suggestions are always welcome from all parents and may be verbal or given in writing and submitted to the director in the office upstairs or placed in the suggestion/fees box provided in the centre.

## **Director's and Centre Leader's Role**

The director/centre leader is responsible for the day-to-day running of the centre and monitoring of child care and staff. The director/centre leader ensures the objectives and policies of the centre are implemented. Parents should feel free to approach the director at any time to discuss concerns or issues relating to the Centre, the staff or the children.

## Birthdays

Parents are encouraged to send in a birthday cake on their child's birthday to share with the other children in the group. We usually celebrate birthdays at morning or afternoon tea and parents are welcome to come along and share this special time. (Please note lollies and sweets and other party food are discouraged as they are not necessary and some children are not allowed to have them).

## Complaints

The relationship between staff and families is one of the key components in the development of a sense of belonging and caring which is central to the vision and philosophy of the centre. In order to enhance and preserve this relationship any complaints, concerns or differences of opinion need to be dealt with. This will allow for quick resolution and minimal disruption to the day to day running of the centre.

We welcome complaints and comments because they help us to provide a better service.

Parents:

- Have the right to complain if they are unhappy about any part of our service.
- are able to bring the complaint or grievance to the attention of whichever staff member of the Centre that they feel most comfortable with;

The nature of a grievance can be either organization / program based or may relate to interpersonal relationships between child, parents and staff or the individual experiences of a child and / or family within the program.

For further information, please see our Complaints and Grievances Policy.