



St Catherine's School

Planning Our Return to ELC

HANDBOOK

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Parent Information Booklet

Dear ELC families,

We are looking forward to welcoming you and your child back to the ELC as we transition from the Learn@Home program to our classroom programs.

Upon return, the children will go back to their own classrooms with their usual Educators. In order to comply with the current operational requirements for early childhood services as set out by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC), we must implement a number of health, hygiene and social distancing strategies to minimise risk to the children attending and staff working in the program.

We ask that you read this information booklet carefully so that you understand the necessary procedures and protocols. Please also pass this information on to any family members or caregivers who will be dropping off or picking up your child from the ELC.

I trust that you will understand and support the need for these risk-minimisation strategies to be implemented in order to support the health and wellbeing of the children and staff at this current time. In order for these procedures to be implemented effectively, we require full cooperation from all families. If we are all vigilant, support one another and acknowledge that we are doing this for everyone's best interests then hopefully it will lead to the day when we can return to a 'new normal'. We look forward to the time when the children can greet one another with a hug, parents can interact more and once again become involved in the ELC programs. If we all work together, then that day will come sooner rather later.

We are looking forward to having the children join us next week when Campbell House will once again be filled with laughter and learning. Please ensure that you discuss these procedures with your child in advance so that they are prepared for the health procedures and changes to their usual morning drop-off routine.

Please feel welcome to contact me should you wish to discuss any of these matters.

Kind regards,

Sarah Bethune
Head of ELC

RETURN TO SCHOOL AGREEMENT

Prior to your child's return to the ELC, you will be required to complete a 'Return to School Acknowledgment' on CareMonkey. This agreement asks for parent's full cooperation in regard to completing the health screening process with your child each day, not sending your child to the ELC if they are unwell, and arranging for immediate collection of your child if they do become unwell throughout the day. It is necessary that we have full cooperation from all parents on these matters so that we can protect the health and wellbeing of all children and staff. This agreement will be emailed to you from CareMonkey and must be completed prior to the re-commencement of the ELC classroom programs on Monday 25 May.

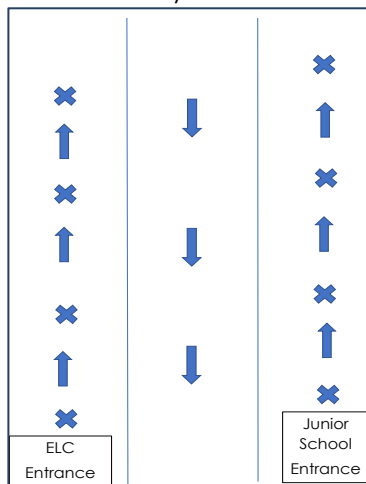
ARRIVAL PROCEDURES AND HEALTH CHECKS

Upon arrival in the morning, you will be required to access the school grounds via the main driveway between the ELC and Junior School. There will be a designated entrance lane for ELC children and parents in the driveway. A health station will be set up at the top of the driveway. Your child will be required to have their temperature checked and you will be asked to do a short health questionnaire. Once this is successfully completed, you can then proceed with your child to the specific drop off zone for your child's class. Please note the specific **arrival times** for your child's class:

Banksia and Wattle Rooms – 8.30am to 9.00am

Waratah and Blue Gum Rooms – 8.45am to 9.15am

It is imperative that these procedures and time frames are adhered to in order for these processes to run smoothly and effectively for all school members. We will be unable to accept late arrivals.



The ELC programs will commence from 8.45am once all children have completed their health checks and have transitioned to their classrooms.

DROP-OFF AND PICK-UP ZONES

We are required to set up specific arrangements for dropping off and picking up children from the ELC to avoid congestion and maintain social distancing. As such, drop off / pick up zones have been set up in specific locations around the ELC. Parents are asked to wait in the designated area for your child's class at arrival and departure times. Parents are unable to come in to the building as we need to minimise contact with the children and staff. Your child will be taken into their classroom by one of their educator's and assisted to unpack their belongings and settle into the program for the day. Your child will be signed in to the attendance book by a staff member. Please allow 10-15 minutes in the mornings for these processes to be completed.

The specific drop off zones for ELC classrooms are as follows:

- Waratah Room – enter via main ELC gate and wait by the front door.
- Blue Gum Room – enter via main ELC gate and wait by the side door to Blue Gum Room.
- Wattle Room – enter via rear, ground level gate and wait at door on back veranda.
- Banksia Room – use the external stairs in the Junior School forecourt to access the upper walkway and wait by the gate at rear of building.

There will be signage in place to direct you to the appropriate drop-off zone.

COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The ELC programs will conclude at 3pm each day. Upon arrival to collect your child at the end of the day, please wait in the designated pick-up zone for your child's class and a staff member will assist your child to pack up their belongings and come out to meet you. The staff member will sign your child out of the attendance book.

Once you have collected your child, we ask that all parents and children exit the school grounds in an efficient manner via the exit lane in the driveway. It is essential that all ELC families have departed by 3.15pm as the next staggered departure times for the Junior School will then commence.

ILLNESS POLICY

In accordance with our Illness Policy, children are unable to attend the centre if they have a cough, runny nose, sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhoea, temperature of 37.5c or higher, and / or lethargy. Please ensure that your child stays at home until they have fully recovered. They must be **48 hours clear** of all symptoms before returning to the ELC. This is critical to ensure that other children and staff do not become unwell or infected.

If a child's temperature is recorded at 37.5c or above either at the morning health check or during the day, they will be required to go home and remain at home until they have received medical clearance from their GP (or if necessary have been given a negative Covid 19 Test result).

It is recommended that the children have the flu vaccination in order to provide additional protection against the flu this winter.

CLASSROOM PROGRAMS

There are some modifications that need to be made to the routines and materials used in the classroom programs in order to minimise risk to all. These modifications have been advised by the Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC).

We are currently required to modify large group learning experiences and meal times in order to support social distancing requirements. Alternatively, we will implement small group experiences and meal times in two spaces. There are also some sensory play materials that we are restricted from using as these are deemed to be higher-risk in terms of cross-infection. This includes clay, playdough, sand, water and other sensory materials. Nevertheless, we will provide a comprehensive learning program for the children which complies with current health requirements and minimises risk.

SPECIALIST CLASSES

Some modifications will need to be made to our specialist classes in order to minimise cross-interaction between the ELC children and other areas of the school. There are also restrictions still in place in terms of the gymnasium being closed and particular sporting equipment not being able to be used. Specialist classes will therefore be modified accordingly.

Library – Our Librarian, Ms Cindy Requin, will visit the ELC classrooms to conduct Library sessions. The children will still have the opportunity to borrow a book to take home.

PMP – As we are unable to use the gymnasium, a modified outdoor Physical Education session will be implemented for 4 year old classes by Mrs Jenny De Nardis as an alternative to PMP.

Music – Our music sessions are implemented by an external provider who are currently not implementing face to face sessions. Music sessions will therefore resume from the start of Term 3.

HEALTH AND HYGIENE

The children will engage in frequent hand washing and sanitising throughout the day. They are familiar with this routine from Term 1.

- Appropriate coughing and sneezing procedures will continue to be promoted.
- Tables and surfaces within the classroom will be cleaned frequently throughout the day with hospital-grade disinfectant.
- Toys and equipment will be regularly disinfected during the day, at the end of the day, and the end of the week.
- Where possible we will increase the amount of fresh air and ventilation indoors by opening windows or adjusting the heating / air conditioning.

CLEANING

Our school-wide professional cleaning contractor will complete a full clean and sanitation of the ELC building, bathrooms, and surfaces every evening. They will also complete additional cleaning of the bathrooms, taps, door handles and high-touch surfaces mid-way during the day. This will ensure that cleaning and hygiene is maintained at an optimal level.

COMMUNICATION PROCEDURES

As communication with ELC Teachers will be limited at drop off and pick up times, if you need to contact your child's class teacher to discuss any matter, this can be done via phone or email at the following times – 8.15 to 8.45am or 3.15 to 3.45pm.

Meetings can be arranged with your child's class teacher as required. These will be conducted via Microsoft Teams at a suitable time.

The classroom journal page will be posted electronically to the classroom portal page so that you can read about what has been happening in the program from home.

WHAT TO BRING

Please ensure that your child brings their morning tea, lunch and a drink bottle as per usual. The children's lunch boxes and drink bottles will be stored in their lockers to prevent cross-infection. Can you also please return your child's smock and bedding if you have taken them home for laundering.

ELC PLAYGROUND

Please note that the ELC playground is closed for use before and after ELC program hours in order to comply with health, social distancing and social gathering requirements. We are permitted to use the playground with the children during program hours.

CONTACT DETAILS

If you need to contact your child's classroom during the day regarding your child's collection arrangements or any other matter, please phone the classroom directly.

Waratah Room 03 9828 3932

Blue Gum Room 03 9828 3931

Wattle Room 03 9828 3037

Banksia Room 03 9822 3068

Head of ELC 03 9828 3075

OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

Before School Care and After School Care is available through 'After The Bell'. You must be registered to use this service. All enquiries and bookings need to be made in advance with 'After The Bell'. Please contact admin@afterthebell.com.au or phone (03) 9758 6744.

FAMILIES WHO ELECT TO CONTINUE TO SELF-ISOLATE

We understand and respect that there may be some families who elect for their child to continue to self-isolate at home. If this is the case, could you please confirm your intentions to do this by emailing the Head of ELC, Sarah Bethune – sbethune@stcatherines.net.au. Please be advised that the Learn@Home program will not be implemented in its current format once we return to the classroom programs.

ALL MEASURES INCLUDED IN THIS BOOKLET ARE IN ACCORDANCE WITH:

- The Department Of Education And Training (Det): Physical Distancing Guidance For Early Childhood Services
- Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (Ahppc) : A statement from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee about COVID-19 in Children and Early Childhood and Learning Centres
- Independent Schools Victoria Covid-19 Protocols For A Return To On-Site Learning

These procedures and arrangements are subject to change at any given time in accordance with updated information from the above education and health authorities.

All procedures and protocols are to be implemented until further notice.