



# St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre



## Parent Handbook

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# Welcome to St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre

On behalf of everyone here at St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre I welcome you and your family to our Centre. We look forward to a long and happy association with you as we work in partnership to provide the best learning environment for your child.

Please read this information carefully to assist you in settling your child into the Centre and to answer any questions you may have. If you require more detailed information please do not hesitate to consult with the Centre Manager or one of our team members. The Centre's Policy Manual is available from the front counter for you to view at any time.

St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre commenced child care operations in 2011 with the opening of an Early Learning Centre and an Outside School Hours Care service to meet our communities growing needs. The Early Learning Centre caters for children 2 years of age and up. The Early Learning Centre also includes a Three Year Old Program.

The Centre is operated by the St Simon Peter Catholic Primary School Board under the licence held by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Trustees (Inc).

The Centre is managed on a day to day basis by the Centre Manager. The School Principal is the Operator overseeing all aspects of the Centre.

The Centre participates in the National Quality Framework. Please feel free to consult with the Centre Manager or a staff member if you would like more information about this process.

Nicole Harley  
Centre Manager

# What do we believe in?

Our Philosophy is developed collaboratively with staff, children, families and community determining a set of values and beliefs in regard to early childhood education and the building of relationships and community and challenging discrimination, promoting social justice.

Our service philosophy is a living document that reflects the knowledge, beliefs and values of our early childhood educators, children, families and the wider community. The Centre Vision is the overarching statement that supports and shapes our service.

The best interest of children is our primary consideration when referencing and reflecting on our educational programs. We acknowledge that the rights of the child are to be upheld in our daily practice, routines, experiences and events. This includes evaluating daily practice, the timing of routines, the development of programs and the organisation of staff.

We acknowledge that children are competent and capable within their own right, and come to us with knowledge, skills and unique ways of being. We advocate that all children have ability and knowledge to make a valued contribution to society.

Our environments reflect a holistic approach to learning and provide endless opportunities and possibilities that support children's wellbeing and education.

Our space and resources are arranged in the environment to empower and support children to actively engage in co-constructing their journey. Our physical environments and the atmosphere are designed to support and enhance children's learning.

## Our Vision

Achieving excellence in care and education for all families, children and educators that enter our Service.

# Our Philosophy

At St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre we believe in building a welcoming, nurturing and secure environment for both children and their families.

Educators provide opportunities that develop children's interests, curiosity and strengths through a child based environment.

Our Curriculum follows the principles and practices of the EYLF where educators encourage children to learn through play, facilitating their own learning with support through scaffolding and intentional teaching.

We focus on engaging children in a stimulating and warm environment and strive to provide natural and open ended resources.

As a team we embrace and respect all children and their families' cultural and individual beliefs and diversity.

As educators we use reflective practice for continually improving and enhancing outcomes for children.



# Our Goals

- To promote the concept of equal opportunity in all aspects of operating the service.
- To recognise and promote the value of play.
- To provide a caring environment in which parents, children and educators feel safe and secure.
- To promote the developmental, social, emotional and intellectual needs of children within the Centre.
- To actively encourage parent participation in the management of the Centre and with the activities of the Centre generally.
- To recognise and meet local community needs by encouraging community participation in the operation of the service.

# Centre Management

The Centre is operated by the St Simon Peter Catholic Primary School Board under the licence held by the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia Trustees (Inc).

The Centre is managed on a day to day basis by the Centre Manager. The School Principal acts as the operator overseeing all aspects of the Centre.

Parent involvement is very important to ensure the service is meeting family needs. All families are eligible to be elected onto the Parent Consultative Committee known as CPAG (Child Care Parent Advisory Group) and are welcome to have their input through this committee into the operations of this service at any time.

The minutes of these meetings are available on request. You are welcome to read them at any time. The Parent Advisory Committee is responsible for raising issues on behalf of families who use the service.

## Approved Provider

An Approved Provider is a person or an entity who holds a Provider Approval granted under the Education and Care Service National Law. This approval authorises the Approved Provider to operate an approved education and care service. Our Approved Provider is the Catholic Education Office.

## Nominated Supervisor

The Nominated Supervisor is the person with responsibility for the day-to-day management of an Approved Service. The National Law requires that Approved Providers must not operate a service without a Nominated Supervisor for that service. In the absence of a Nominated Supervisor, a Certified Supervisor will need to consent to filling the Nominated Supervisor role. Our Nominated Supervisor is Nicole Harley.

## Responsible person

Under the National Law a responsible person must be physically present at a Centre at all times that an Approved Service operates. A Responsible Person can be: The Approved Provider; or The Nominated Supervisor; or a Certified Supervisor who has consented to be placed in day to day charge of the service.

## Educational Leader

The role of the Educational Leader will be to lead the development and implementation of the educational curriculum in the Centre. Our Educational Leaders are Bree Spicer and Alison Dungate.

# Staffing

All staff employed by St Simon Peter Early Centre hold a minimum Certificate Three qualification. We employ an Early Childhood Teacher, Diploma trained qualified educators and Certificate Three trained educators.

We believe in always striving to improve, and staff are encouraged to undertake further study and are involved in professional development throughout each year.

# Parent Involvement

Parents are our biggest support. Their encouragement and assistance, in whatever way, such as coming to a parent night, collecting bits and pieces, help with a busy bee, inviting a grandparent to come in and read a story or attending a special event day is of invaluable assistance.

You are encouraged to become involved with the program of the Centre and your ideas and suggestions will be greatly appreciated. We are always happy to have people come into the Centre with interesting things to show, sing, teach and make with the children, especially activities of a multicultural nature. You are also welcome to come in and visit at any time.

You can be involved by explaining your child's temperament, stages of development and likes and dislikes to the educators. Even though a parent's life is very busy, we would appreciate a few minutes to talk about how your child is progressing. Tell the staff the little things they need to know e.g. changes in sleeping patterns, any development you observe, the cold your child appears to be contracting or how an activity was enjoyed.

To give the children the best opportunity for development, educators and families work hand-in-hand. We want children to gain the best that is possible from our Centre, so please do keep in touch and discuss your joy, problems, concerns and feelings with the staff.

# Important Information About Our Centre

The following information will help you to understand the administrative requirements of enrolling your child and the operational policies that you need to know.

## Hours of Operation

The Centre is open from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. for Long Day Care throughout the year. The following half day sessions are available:

Morning Session - 7.00 am - 12.30 pm      Afternoon Session - 12.30 pm – 6.00 pm

## Enrolment

Should you wish to enrol your child, you will need to know the following enrolment procedures.

- Submit a completed enrolment form. Enrolments are classed as “informal” until the Customer Reference Numbers and Date of Birth of the child and the claiming parent are provided. Once these details have been provided, the enrolment is formalised and CCB and CCR can be claimed.
- Provide any necessary documentation, e.g. child’s birth certificate, immunisation record, custodial papers, court orders, medical conditions, etc.
- Provide information regarding your child’s health
- Name all persons who may deliver or collect your child from the Centre. These persons must be over 18 years of age. It is your responsibility to ensure your nominated people are responsible and available when required.

The details required on the enrolment form are needed by our educators to help them take the best possible care of your child. It is also a licensing requirement. All information is strictly confidential. If any of the details on the enrolment form change you are asked to advise the Centre Manager immediately.

## Priority of Access

The Australian Government has set specific priorities of access to childcare services.

The Australian Government requires the Centre to provide access to the service according to the following priority of access. This means that when the Centre is full, those families who are third priority may be asked to alter their care arrangements to allow a family with higher priority to access the service.

First priority:	<i>Children at risk of serious abuse or neglect.</i>
Second priority:	<i>A child of a single parent or of parents who satisfy the work/training/study test under section 14 of the Family Assistance Act.</i>
Third priority:	<i>Any other child.</i>

## Where To Find Everything

In the Centre foyer you will find everything you need to know about our service including:

- Our Philosophy
- Parent handbook
- Staffing information
- Service Approval
- Policy Manual

If you are unsure where to find anything, please ask for assistance from one of the team.

## Children with Additional Needs

Our Centre caters for children with additional needs.

Children with additional needs that cannot be catered for within the usual day care routine will be integrated into the whole group with additional support from an Inclusion Support Facilitator. Referral to the Inclusion Support Facilitator or other professionals is made either directly by the parent, or by the Centre Manager after permission is given by the parent. Where possible, support will be obtained prior to the commencement of care. This will ensure transition into care is successful for all concerned.

## Current Fees

Our fees are reviewed on an annual basis. Our current fee schedules:

<b>Morning Session</b> 7.00 am - 12.30 pm	<b>Afternoon Session</b> 12.30 pm - 6.00 pm	<b>Full Day</b> 7.00 am – 6.00 pm
\$54.00	\$54.00	\$89.00

## Payment of Fees

Our Centre's operation is dependent on maintaining fees. Please read the following information carefully.

- This service complies with the Priority of Access guidelines required for the Federal Government Child Care Benefit Scheme (CCB).
- Permanent bookings will be given preference.
- Casual bookings will be subject to availability.
- Fees for enrolled children will be charged on a weekly basis, one week in arrears via direct debit. Children can not start at the Centre until direct debit has been completed.
- Fees are still charged for non attendance including holidays and sick days.
- A late fee of \$2 per minute or part thereof will be charged directly onto your account for each child who remains at the Centre after the Centre has closed.

Anyone experiencing difficulties in meeting their fees can speak to the Centre Manager to make mutually agreeable arrangements. Failure to do so may result in the cancellation of your child's place.

### **Non Attendance Guidelines**

We encourage families to advise the Centre if their child will not be attending their session wherever possible. Please do not phone the school office, contact the Centre on 93016857.

### **Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate**

CCB is a payment from the Government that helps families with the cost of care. CCB reduces the cost of your child care fees. It is available to you if you are a parent, foster parent or grandparent with children in your care who are attending a child care service approved by, or registered with the government. There are certain eligibility requirements you must meet to obtain CCB. CCB is means tested. Full fees will apply and must be paid until you are formally enrolled for CCB. Please let the Centre Manager know if you have children attending another service and are claiming a multi child percentage.

CCR is additional assistance to you if you are using approved care for work, study or training reasons. The CCR covers 50% of your out of pocket costs for approved child care. CCR does have a yearly limit.

CCB and CCR can be paid directly to the Centre to reduce fees or can be paid directly to families with families paying full fees to the Centre. Families who are not eligible for CCB may still be eligible for CCR. For further information please see the Centre Manager or visit their website [www.familyassist.gov.au](http://www.familyassist.gov.au) or call the Department of Human Services DHS on 136150.

**It is the responsibility of the parent to register for Child Care Benefit. Information and forms can be accessed from the DHS Office. Please note that without Customer Reference Numbers and date of birth information for parent and child the Centre will be unable to pass on your fee reduction.**

### **Lump Sum Payment Families**

Families who wish to receive a lump sum payment, instead of having their fees reduced during the year, still need to have a Customer Reference Number and to be assessed by the Department of Human Services. The service still needs to have your Customer Reference Number and date of birth for parent and child so your usage can be submitted through the Child Care Management System.

**Please note:** The forms that you sign for the purposes of CCB are legal documents, and we are asked to remind you that giving false information is a criminal offence. It is your

responsibility to notify the Department of Human Services DHS if your circumstances change.

### **Allowable Absences**

As with most Child Care Centre's absences must be paid for. Each family is entitled to 42 days of absence per financial year while claiming CCB. An absence may be defined as: a sick day, holiday or occasional absence.

### **Additional Absences**

You may receive CCB for absences after the initial 42 days. For all absences beyond the first 42, CCB will only be paid if evidence is provided showing that the absence has occurred under permitted circumstances.

***Parents need to ensure that absences are signed for on the attendance record next time they visit the Centre to remain eligible for C.C.B.***

## **Confidentiality and Records**

St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre has a duty to keep adequate records about staff, parents and children in order to operate responsibly and legally. The Centre will protect the interests of the children and their parents and the staff including appropriate privacy and confidentiality. Archived records will be stored in a safe and secure manner in accordance with Child Care Services Regulations. Please refer to our Confidentiality, Privacy and Records policies for further information.

## **National Quality Framework**

The National Quality Framework is a Government initiative which sets a National standard and benchmark. The aim is for greater consistency between services and to continue to improve the level of education and care provided. The National Quality Standard is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework.

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive 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
- a national body called the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

## National Legislative Framework

The National Legislative Framework is established through an applied laws system and consists of:

- the *Education and Care Services National Law*;
- the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

## National Quality Standard

The *National Quality Standard* sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. The *National Quality Standard* is divided into seven Quality Areas:

1. Educational program and practice.
2. Children's health and safety.
3. Physical environment.
4. Staffing arrangements.
5. Relationships with children.
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
7. Leadership and service management.

## National quality rating and assessment process

Services will be assessed and rated against each of the seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. They will also be given an overall rating. The rating and assessment process aims to drive continuous quality improvement at services and provide families with better information for making choices about their children's education and care.

## Quality Improvement Plan

All services are required to develop and maintain a Quality Improvement Plan in relation to the seven quality areas. Our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) is available in the foyer which highlights our strengths and areas we have identified that we would like to continue to improve on.

For more information regarding the National Quality Framework please speak to one of our educators or visit the website [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

## Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework is a National Framework for children birth to 5 years. Educators use the framework in partnership with families to develop learning programs that are responsive to children's interests, ideas, strengths and recognise that children learn through play.

The Framework has five learning outcomes that educators will help children develop in

- 1) Children have a strong sense of identity

- 2) Children are connected and contribute to their world
- 3) Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- 4) Children are confident and involved learners
- 5) Children are effective communicators

The Australian Government's *Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming* describes the principles, practices and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.

[www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Documents/EYLF\\_Ed\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Documents/EYLF_Ed_Guide.pdf)

The following is an extract from *Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*. **“A VISION FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING”**

'All children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

Fundamental to the framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by *belonging, being and becoming*. From before birth, children are connected to family, community, culture and place. The earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children's first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.'

## **BELONGING**

Experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. *Belonging* acknowledges children's interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

## **BEING**

Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world. Being recognises the significance of the here and now in children's lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life's joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.

## **BECOMING**

Children's identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. Becoming reflects this process of rapid and significant change that

occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

## Arrival and Collection of Children

Our primary concern is the welfare and safety of your child. We therefore request that you comply with the following requirements.

### Signing In and Out

Signing children in and out of the Centre is a daily requirement. It is also a legal requirement that we must follow. These records are used in the case of emergency and for calculation of your fees and Child Care Benefit. If you do not complete these records you will not be eligible to claim Child Care Benefit. If you fail to complete the attendance register you will be asked to sign and date the record on your next visit to the Centre.

The following policy applies to all families.

Only parents or person nominated on the enrolment form may pick up/drop off the child. No child will be allowed to go with an adult unless they have been nominated or the Centre notified in writing. If an unauthorised person arrives to collect your child, the child will not be released until your authorisation (preferably in writing) has been obtained.

### Late Collections

If you are unavoidably detained and unable to collect your child at the agreed time you must telephone the Centre and advise them of your expected time of arrival. If you need to arrange for another person to collect your child you must provide full details about this person to the Centre. If you have not contacted the Centre and your child has not been collected by the agreed collection time, the Centre will attempt to telephone you, or if this is not successful, the emergency contact people listed on your child's enrolment form, to arrange for his/her immediate collection.

The Centre has a policy of charging a fee to parents who are late to collect their children from the Centre. This fee is to cover the costs of staff overtime hours. The Centre's policy requires that Crisis Care and the Department for Child Protection is contacted to advise them of the situation if a parent is more than 30 minutes late without explanation and no-one else can be contacted.

### Family Access

We will work in partnership with families at all times and welcome your input and access to the service according to the following guidelines:

## Communication with Parents

Staff at the Centre are supportive of children and their parents. Both parents of the child will be treated equally. Without legal documentation staff cannot act as though one parent is more fit than another to the legal rights of their child. Parents may visit the Centre at any reasonable time whilst their child is in care. You are requested, however to give consideration to the time of day so that other children are not disturbed e.g. rest time. Any concerns you have may be discussed with your child's educator or the Centre Manager at any reasonable time. All information about your child will always be treated with the up most confidentiality.

Where a child attending the Centre is not living with both parents/guardians, or where disputes arise in relation to responsibility of the child the following will apply:

- Parental responsibility remains with both parents/guardians jointly and individually except where it is altered by an order of the Family Court of Australia. In the absence of such an order the child will be released to either parent/guardian who is an authorised person to collect the child on the enrolment form.
- Where a non-enrolling parent cites an Order of the Family Court giving him/herself lawful access to the child, the Centre Manager will contact the enrolling parent to confirm the existence of the order and seek their direction on how to respond to the non-enrolling parent. Staff will not try to interpret or act on any court order without the approval of the enrolling parent.
- The child will only be released into the care of the enrolling parent/guardian, or other person specifically authorised by the enrolling parent/guardian, except when Department for Child Protection or Police specifically direct otherwise under the provisions of the Child Care Services Act.

## Children's Safety on the Roads

In the case of a parent or guardian arriving at the Centre to collect their child in a visibly intoxicated or unfit state to drive, they will be encouraged to contact an alternative adult to drive them and the child home, or the Centre will offer to call a taxi at the expense of the parent/guardian

**Where human life is at risk, any part of the above may not be able to be complied with and in such circumstances the police will be immediately informed. In such circumstances the Centre staff will follow the Centre's Emergency Action Plan.**

Parents are responsible for supervising their children in the car park. We ask that parents please take extra care in the car park and follow the speed limit.

## Termination of Care

In extreme circumstances it may be necessary to terminate a child's care. Exclusion of children from the service will only occur after all other avenues of communication and support have been exhausted and when:

- Professional advice confirms a child is in psychological danger as a result of an unusually prolonged inability to settle into care away from the parent.
- A child puts the majority of children at risk through inappropriate behaviour.
- The parent continually fails to observe Centre hours of operation and/or fails to pay the required fee.

## Complaint Procedures

Please let us know if you are unhappy with any aspect of the service we provide for you and your child.

We welcome all parent feedback, including your grievances and complaints, as these will help us to improve the services we provide. All concerns or complaints will be dealt with in a prompt, positive and sympathetic manner.

## Parent Complaint Procedures

If a parent has a complaint about any aspect of the service they may discuss their problem with the relevant staff member or with the Centre Manager. If the parent feels the problem is not resolved they may take the matter to the Operator for resolution, either through the Centre Manager or by writing directly to the Operator (School Principal).

Parents are also entitled to direct their complaints to the Education and Care Regulatory Unit *1<sup>st</sup>Floor, 111 Wellington Street, East Perth WA 6004 Ph: (08) 65518333.*

# Settling Your Child into The Centre

For some children it is a new experience separating from their family. Often short visits before commencing care can ease the child in to our routine. It is important that you talk to your child about coming to the Centre and what they can expect. Some children are happy to separate as soon as they see the equipment and resources while others may be reluctant and shy. When you are ready to leave, tell your child you are leaving and that you will be back later in the day. Please don't leave without saying goodbye as this may cause distress for your child.

We require all children to attend 3 orientation sessions before starting care. This gives children an opportunity to explore their new environment before familiar with our educators and feel a sense of security ready for their first day. It is also a good opportunity for families to get to know our educators.

Remember we are only a phone call away and you can call the Centre anytime to see how your child is going.

**Please see our Orientation Policy for further details.**

## ARRIVAL ROUTINE

Sign your child in. Assist your child in putting their own bag away. Settle your child in with a book, puzzle or table activity. Remain with your child, until you and your child

are ready to say goodbye. When leaving we always suggest saying goodbye to your child rather than sneaking out. If parents sneak out children can become distressed as they can think their parent has disappeared and might not come back. Your child's educator will always be on hand to help you and your child say goodbye.

If you are worried, please feel free to telephone the Centre during the day for reassurance that your child has settled. The staff will always tell you honestly how your child is. Be aware that some children settle quickly and others take longer or may be distressed by group care. Our staff will assess your child's emotional needs and discuss this with you. Regular attendance also helps a child to settle.



## Our Child Care Program

Young children have only one go at their childhood. They need an early childhood in which they have plenty of time to explore alongside adults who respect their interests and how they learn. Both the EYLF and the National Quality Standards (NQS) support putting children's interests at the Centre of any childcare program. At St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre, we encourage child-initiated experiences, where children use their personal choice to direct their own learning.

For young children, this learning will most likely occur through play. This is considered 'best practice' in early childhood as it is developmentally appropriate and allows children to be leaders in their own learning. In the ELC, we truly value play and the physical, social, emotional and cognitive benefits it provides children. We facilitate many types of play including:

- Dramatic (eg. pretending to be doctors, using the play-kitchen)
- Sensory/manipulative (eg. playdough, puzzles)
- Exploratory (eg. using magnifying glasses to look at insects, treasure hunts)
- Physical (eg. obstacle courses, running, playing with balls)
- Rule-based (board games, circle games, outdoor games)

Due to this focus on child-led play, you may discover that your child will not bring 'work' home every day. Please do not take this to mean that your child is not learning. Children are constantly learning through their play and interactions. We also find that some children simply are not interested in creating artwork or doing craft. We will never force children to do these activities, as we value the choices they make. Please take time to have a look at our curriculum to see what the children are currently exploring.

## The role of the early years educators at St Simon Peter

At St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre, we consider our role as 'partners in play' with the children. We are responsible for providing an engaging learning environment, suitable resources and a positive attitude. We engage in play with the children, while still encouraging their independence. As educators, we work daily to ensure that we are *supporting* play.

We as Educators provide a balance between child-led, child-initiated and educator-supported learning and recognise spontaneous teachable moments as they occur. We also believe our role involves encouraging children to share in the decision making and direction of what will happen during the day. You may find that the tables are bare if you are one of the first families to arrive to the Centre. This is because we aim to give children choices over the resources they would like to have available to them.

Our educators are supportive and encouraging, and communicate with the children in a friendly, positive and courteous manner to establish a warm and caring relationships. Each day, the staff will discuss your child's day with you.

You will find your child's curriculum displayed in their room. We invite you to have input into its development. We love to hear what is happening at home or the highlights from your weekend so we can include these ideas and expand upon them in our curriculum forming a strong link from home and the Centre for children.

*In our service we use Kinderloop. Kinderloop is an app that provides a secure way for educators to share information with families about their child's learning, interest and time at the Centre. It is also used to keep families up to date with Centre news. Kinderloop is a private closed loop and families are sent an invitation to join. For more information on Kinderloop and how it is used please speak to our of our edcuators.*

## Centre Routines

The activities that happen at the Centre are built around the daily routines. Children need routines to help them to settle and feel comfortable in the Centre. Please discuss your child's routines with their educator.

Routines are built around the regular events of the day, i.e. arrival, mat sessions, snacks/drinks, resting and departure and take into account the developmental needs of individual children, children's attendance patterns, climate and physical environment, the numbers and ages of children within a given group, children with additional needs, new children entering the group and parents' expectations.

Flexibility is built into routines so that children's involvement in activities and any special needs are accommodated.

## Meals

Meals form a significant part of the daily routine. Meal times will provide positive learning experiences for children who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Parents/Guardians will be expected to provide lunch to meet each child's nutritional needs whilst they are at the Centre, however the Centre will provide breakfast for children who are present before 7:45am, morning tea, afternoon tea and late snack for children who are present after 5:30 pm. Due to allergies we request that NO nut products are brought into the Centre.

When your child is attending they will require:

- \* A bottle of **water** labelled with your child's name.
- \* A healthy lunch in a lunch box with your child's name.

Please make sure that any food allergies, strong dislikes and special dietary requirements your child might have are recorded on the enrolment form and discussed with the Centre Manager.

## Sleep Time

Sleep and rest times are another daily routine for the children at our Centre. Please discuss your child's current sleep patterns with their educator.

Staff will provide an opportunity for children to sleep /rest within the Centre's routine. At no time will a child in this Centre be forced to take a sleep.

## Nappies and Toilet Training

Staff at the service will treat children with respect and follow the wishes of the enrolling parent in relation to toileting. Children will begin toilet training when they are developmentally ready.

**St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre does not launder nappies on site and asks that children wear disposable nappies if they are not yet toilet trained.**

Your child should arrive at the Centre in their own clean nappy and have clean disposable nappies in their bag. The Centre will have a supply of nappies for emergencies.

It is important that we work in partnership with parents in meeting children's toilet training needs.

## What Should Your Child Wear?

It is important that children are dressed in comfortable clothes that do not restrict their enjoyment or participation at the Centre. The Centre recommends that children wear loose fitting clothing that protect as much of the skin as possible for outdoor activities.

Shirts that cover the shoulders and have collars and sleeves that are at least elbow length, and longer style skirts and shorts are most suitable. Darker colours are recommended as they are less likely to reflect UVR on to the skin.

Please dress your child suitably for play activities in clothes that you do not mind getting grubby with paint, mud, sand or glue. We do provide aprons but clothes can still get stained. Children need to have a pair of shoes and a large brimmed hat (no caps) both clearly marked with their name.

You will also need to provide an extra set of clothes in your child's bag to change into should the need arise. Clothes that assist your child to self-toilet are beneficial for their own self-confidence. We recommend that at least two pairs of spare underwear are included.

Your child's bag and all personal items should be clearly labelled with your child's name. This helps to minimise loss of items.

### **Personal Toys**

We understand that many children would like to bring toys to the Centre, however, 'sharing' these with other children can be a difficult concept for a child to grasp. We believe it is better to leave personal toys at home and ask that you support and encourage this policy.

Children are welcome to bring a security/comfort toy. Please ensure these toys are clearly labelled with the child's name. No other toys are to be brought into the Centre. Great distress is caused to children by their own toys being lost, broken or played with by other children. Whilst care is taken, the Centre will take no responsibility for broken or lost toys that do not belong to the Centre.

Sometimes children accidentally put Centre toys into their bags and take them home. Please return these toys to the Centre on your next visit.

### **Special Events**

We consider that special events which happen during the year provide an excellent learning and socialising opportunity for the children.

Programmes will reflect the cultural differences of all families using the service. The Centre will celebrate special events with the children that reflect the cultural heritage and ethnic origins of children attending the service.

### **Birthdays**

Children's birthdays are a special day that we enjoy celebrating with them. If parents wish the Centre to celebrate their child's birthday they may provide cupcakes or small treats such as freddo frogs for morning or afternoon tea.

**All cakes and treats must be provided in original packaging with the ingredients displayed for safety reasons.** Please be aware that we can not offer homemade cakes/slices due to allergies. The staff will encourage the children to sing "Happy Birthday". Parents are more than welcome to celebrate the occasion with us if they can.

### **Supervision**

The Centre will maintain high levels of supervision of children at all times.

St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre will ensure staff supervision of children is appropriate to the activities children are engaged in; the characteristics and developmental level of the children; the setting in which the activities are taking place; the potential risks to children's safety; and the experience, knowledge and skill level of staff

**The staff:child ratios contained within the Child Care Services Regulations will be strictly adhered to at the Centre.**

**These ratios are: 2-3 years 1:5 3-6 years 1:10**

### **Guiding Children's Behaviour**

St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre will provide a secure, loving and stimulating environment which encourages children to co-operate, enhances their self esteem and encourages their ability to interact with others where positive behaviour is promoted. Educators will build relationships with children based on mutual respect and trust. Where a child continues to display behaviour that is of concern parents/guardians will be consulted and asked to work with the educators to ensure consistent expectations.

All children who attend St Simon Peter Early Learning Centre have the right to enjoy their play and friendships, and participate in the activity program within a supportive environment among people who are caring and co-operative. The Centre staff will encourage children to speak about any concerns they may have and will ensure the program reflects and encourages core values such as friendliness, acceptance, respect, kindness, tolerance and co-operation.

You are encouraged to discuss your child's behaviour with the staff to ensure consistent behaviour expectations between home and the Centre. Limits will always be clearly expressed in positive terms and reinforced consistently in a developmentally appropriate way.

### **Rules and Limits**

We have the following limits in place at the Centre to protect the safety and wellbeing of every child and ask parents to discuss these with their child:

- Respect for other people and their property.
- Children are discouraged from throwing sand and toys
- Only walking inside and under the verandah areas.

- After indoor and outdoor activity times, all children are expected to help pack away the equipment.
- **No hat. No play!**

Developing a supportive relationship with the children encourages them to learn skills in self-regulation.

If children consistently display unacceptable behavior, a senior staff member will ensure:

- The expectations of the child's behaviour are realistic and appropriate to their developmental level.
- The child understands the limits.
- There is no conflict between Centre and home expectations.
- The child's needs are being met.
- The child has no impediments which may cause the unacceptable behaviour e.g. poor hearing, communication difficulties, illness or emotional distress.
- The child is not copying observed behaviour.
- Events at the Centre have not encouraged the behaviour.
- Consequences of the behaviour do not encourage it to persist.
- Strategies are consistently followed by all educators in contact with the child.

### **Alternative care**

If after the child has been given every chance to respond positively and parents have been provided with written responses regarding the strategies used to improve their child's behaviour, and if and all methods fail to result in a positive change, the Centre Manager will discuss alternative care with the parent, in consideration of the health and safety of other children in care.

### **Sustainable Practice**

We believe in the importance of embedding sustainable practices into our daily routines. We work in partnership with children and families to promote sustainable practices. This can include turning the lights off when we go outside, water conservation, recycling, using our water tank and worm farm. Our service has a sustainability plan to find out how you can be involved please speak to one of our educators.

## **Health and Safety Issues**

### **Hygiene**

In group care situations one of the most troublesome problems is controlling the spread of infections among the children and staff.

The application of universal hygiene procedures will be followed at the Centre at all times to control the spread of infection. Staff model a high level of personal hygiene at all times and place emphasis on the children learning and understanding why hygiene is important. Hand washing is central to this system and children will be introduced to washing their hands before all clean tasks (i.e. meals) and after all dirty tasks (i.e. after using the toilet) as soon as they are developmentally ready. We ask that parents wash their children's hands on arrival and departure each day.

## Immunisation

Immunisation of children who attend the Centre will help to limit the spread of infection. We encourage parents to immunise their children against all diseases appropriate to the child's age. A record of your child's current immunisation status will be kept at the Centre. Children who are not immunised will be excluded from care during outbreaks of some infectious diseases in accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines (guidelines can be obtained from the office), even if the child is well. This is to limit the spread of infection and protect unimmunised children.

## Exclusion

As a protection for all children and staff the following exclusion policy applies to all children enrolled in the Centre.

Children with infectious diseases will be excluded from the Centre in accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines (guidelines can be obtained from the office). A clearance certificate from your child's doctor is required to pronounce the child fit for child care before your child can return to the Centre.

If your child is unwell at home, please do not bring him/her to the Centre. **Children who have more than a slight cold should not be brought to the Centre** and may not be accepted at the Centre Manager's discretion. Fevers, vomiting, diarrhoea or unexplained rashes are some of the indications that a child should not be brought to the Centre.

## Unwell Children at the Centre

The Centre is not able to care for children who are ill. The following policy has been developed to protect your child and the other children attending the Centre.

It is important that the Centre Manager or the child's educator be notified if your child has been unwell or received an injury since last attending the Centre.

In the event your child becomes ill whilst at the Centre, you will be contacted and asked to collect your child. Where the Centre Manager has asked you to seek medical advice regarding your child's health, you will be given details about your child's symptoms and information of any illnesses that have recently affected children and/or

staff at the Centre to relay to the doctor. The doctor will need to provide a Clearance Certificate that pronounces your child fit for care before they can return to the Centre. On your child's enrolment form you have given approval for an ambulance or doctor to be called if urgent medical attention is required. Every effort will be made to contact you or your nominated emergency contact people as soon as possible. All medical and ambulance costs are the parent's responsibility.

In the event of an outbreak of a communicable disease at the Centre, families and the Health Department will be notified.

## Medication

The giving of medication to children will be strictly monitored to ensure the child's safety and welfare.

Wherever possible, medication should be administered by parents/guardians at home. However, we are aware that this is not always feasible. Therefore, to ensure children's safety and welfare, the giving of medication at the Centre will be strictly monitored. Parents/guardians should consider whether the child who requires medication is well enough to be at the Centre and to keep the child home if they are unwell.



You must never leave medication in your child's bag. You must inform a staff member and complete an Authority to give Medication Form. At the end of the day you must collect the medication from staff.

Where medication is needed for long term treatment (eg. Asthma, epilepsy, ADHD), or your child has severe allergies (anaphylaxis) the Centre will need you and your child's doctor to complete a 'Special Health Needs Support Plan', and/or an 'Emergency Action Plan'.

Medication will only be administered by Centre staff if:

1. It is prescribed by a doctor and has the original pharmaceutical label detailing the child's name, the name of the medication, the required dosage, the date of dispensing and the expiry date; OR
2. It is still in the original pharmaceutical packaging (ie. Non-prescription medication), indicating the name of the medication, the dosage, age appropriateness and the expiry date; AND
3. The parent has completed and signed an authority to give medication form on the day that it is to be administered.

If a child is receiving medication at home but not at the Centre, the Centre should still be notified of the purpose of the medication, its nature and the possible side effects it may have on the child while they are in care.

## **Occupational Safety and Health**

Our Centre is concerned with protecting the health and safety of children and staff at the Centre.

In the interest of Occupational Safety and Health and the well-being of the children, the Centre is a smoke-free zone. This includes all indoor and outdoor play areas and anywhere that is within sight of the children. We request that parents adhere to this. Staff are vigilant to identify and remove any hazards that may create a risk to children or themselves. All equipment, toys and play areas are checked regularly to ensure they are clean and safe for children's use.

## **Sun Protection**

To ensure all children attending the Centre are protected from skin damage caused by harmful ultra-violet rays of the sun, the following applies: Children will be required to wear a hat which protects the face, neck and ears whenever outside i.e. legionnaire style or broad brimmed hats (no caps) and will be encouraged to use available areas of shade during outdoor activities. SPF 30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen will be provided for children and applied 20 minutes before going outside. Outdoor play will not occur in extreme heat or at the hottest time of the day. Staff will act as role models, by wearing hats, applying sunscreen and seeking the shade wherever possible.

## **Safety Drills**

Safety drills will be practised to ensure that children and staff are familiar with the procedures should an emergency occur.

Emergency evacuation and safety drills will be practised at the Centre at least four times a year. Evacuation procedures are displayed in the reception area. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with these procedures.

## **Accidents**

Despite every precaution, accidents will occur at the Centre from time to time. The following policy will be implemented to protect your child and keep you informed should an accident occur.

You are required to provide written authority (included in the enrolment form) for staff of the Centre to seek medical attention for your child if required. In the case of a minor accident, staff who are qualified in First Aid will attend to the injured child and apply First Aid. Depending on the injury, you will be contacted at the time of the accident or informed about the incident when you arrive to collect your child.

If a serious accident occurs which requires more than simple first aid treatment you will be contacted immediately or, if you cannot be contacted, your emergency contact

person will be phoned. Your child's injuries will be assessed and either an ambulance will be called or your child will be taken to a local clinic or medical practitioner for medical treatment. A staff member will accompany your child until you are able to be there. You will be asked to sign an accident report completed by the person in charge at the Centre at the time of the accident and be provided with a copy of this report.

### **First Aid, Asthma, Anaphylaxis Qualifications**

It is a requirement that at least one staff member with a current First Aid, CPR, Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualification is on duty at the Centre at all times children are on the premises.

All staff at the Centre are required to maintain a current Senior First Aid Certificate. First Aid will only be administered by qualified First Aiders in the event of minor accidents or to stabilise the patient until expert assistance arrives.

A fully equipped First Aid Kit is maintained at the Centre.

### **PLEASE NOTE THAT:**

**Enrolment in the Early Learning Centre is not a guarantee of enrolment in the school. For further details on enrolment in the school or for an Application Form please contact the School Office.**

**Thank you for taking the time to read our Parent Handbook.  
Please speak with the Centre Manager if you require any further information.**

**Further Information**

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