



## Heathcote East OSHC – Parent

## Handbook





## Welcome

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Heathcote East Out of School Hours Care and hope that your journey with us is an enjoyable experience. Heathcote East OSHC is committed to high quality education and care and we encourage families to feel comfortable and secure in their new environment.

This publication has been designed with families needs in mind and with the intention of answering questions about our centre and the service it provides. If you would like further information on the service's organisation or on any matter you wish to discuss, please do not hesitate to contact us.

## Operational Information

Heathcote East Public School Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) is located in the grounds of Heathcote East Public School located at 5 Mimosa Street, Heathcote. The Centre is housed in the building closest to the National Park, behind the school hall, on the school site.

The Centre comprises a large classroom with kitchen, eating area, outside toilets and internal storage. HEPS OSHC is well equipped, and has some of the comforts of home including a lounge area, games and caring staff. The service caters for up to 45 children ranging from ages 5 – 12 years of age and a minimum of 2 educators attendance each day. We are open 50 weeks of the year 6:45 – 8:45am & 3:15 – 6pm School term and 7am – 6pm during school holiday, closing for 2 weeks over the Christmas and New Year period and Public Holidays. The Centre is staffed on strict staff to children ratios. 1 staff member per every 15 children for Before and After School Care, and for Vacation Care. On excursion days (out-of-school in vacation care periods) the staff to student ratio is 1 staff member for every 8 children.

Our coordinator, is a Diploma Trained educator who is rostered on for each shift. Ashley is a qualified room leader that oversees the provision of quality experiences to every child and works collaboratively with the educators to assist in the implementation of a responsive and meaningful program. A large naturalistic outdoor play space allows for an integrated and holistic approach to teaching and learning and a space were educators can foster children's capacity to understand and respect the natural environment.

**Address:** 5 Mimosa Street, Heathcote NSW 2233

**Parking:** Available in Mimosa Street but limited. Parking is also available at the end of Parklands Avenue, with entry via school gate and a short walk across playing fields.

Parents of students with disabilities may arrange to drive into the staff parking area but will not be able to drive into school grounds.

### Contact numbers:

**Phone:** 9520 9066 (answering machine available)

**Email:** [heps.oshc@bigpond.com](mailto:heps.oshc@bigpond.com)

### Enquiries:

**Ashley Stephenson:** 9520 9066

For enquiries regarding eligibility for fee reduction, contact the **Family Assistance Office** (Phone 13 61 50)

OR

Visit the local **Family Assistance Office** at **CentreLink** or **Medicare**.

**Forms must be completed and lodged with FAO prior to families receiving a fee reduction.**  
[www.familyassist.gov](http://www.familyassist.gov)

<b>CCB Approval Numbers:</b>	<b>Before School Care</b>	<b>1-4XE5C5</b>
	<b>After School Care</b>	<b>1-4XE5E1</b>
	<b>Vacation Care</b>	<b>1-4XE5HE</b>

## Management Structure

Heathcote East OSHC is a non for profit Parent committee run and operated education and care service. The Approved Provider of the service is Heathcote East Public School P&C and the service is managed by Ashley Stephenson, who is also the Nominated Supervisor. In the absence of the Nominated Supervisor, another responsible person, named a Certified Supervisor, will be placed in charge of the day-to-day operations. The responsible person in charge of the service at any given time is communicated through a poster in the foyer.

## Parent Management Committee

**HEPS OSHC** is a non-profit organisation, which is administered by the Heathcote East Public School Public School P & C Association Incorporated.

The HEPS P & C Association is responsible for the employment of HEPS OSHC staff and the management of the Centre.

A Parent Management Committee is elected at the AGM of the P & C Association, for a period of one year. All families of the children attending Heathcote East Public School are invited to nominate for a position on the committee. Community members are also eligible to be nominated for positions on the P & C.

A written report regarding the Centre and its happenings is presented at each P & C Association meeting by either the OSHC Parent Representative and/or OSHC Treasurer.

An annual Financial Statement (audited) is prepared for presentation at the AGM, to be held on the first Monday in March each year.

Meetings of the Management Parent Committee are held once a term. The dates of the meetings will be advertised in the school newsletter and notice put with the sign in/out sheets in the OSHC room.

### **All parents are welcome to attend.**

Parents/guardians are invited to offer ideas and assistance. This can be done through Parent Management Committee meetings or by submitting comments and suggestions either verbally, by email and/or in writing to the Centre Supervisors.

Surveys may be sent home at different times throughout the year to ascertain level of parent satisfaction with programs and procedures.

## Philosophy of the Centre

### **Acknowledgement:**

We recognise that the Darawal people are the landowners and original custodians of the Heathcote East Lands.

## Vision

Heathcote East OSHC aims to provide a distinctive, high quality child care service that promotes learning and development with particular emphasis on play, social interactions and recreation.

Heathcote East OSHC recognizes that middle childhood is the important stage that bridges the chasm between early childhood and adolescence. Staff at HEPS OSHC work together to create an environment that is both supportive and challenging, providing interactions that foster social, emotional, physical and cognitive development through a fun play based program. Each child will be treated as an individual in a friendly atmosphere where positive self-esteem is enhanced and curiosity and initiative will be fostered.

Our program is guided by the “My Time, Our Place” framework and therefore values input from the children as well as from families, staff and the local community. High quality care is provided by qualified and experienced staff which complements and supports the values of the school and the community.

We believe at Heathcote East OSHC that children must have some control over their learning, be able to learn through experiences, be given the opportunity to learn and explore with other children and have endless opportunities to express themselves.

Mission Statement:

**Our mission** at Heathcote East OSHC is to provide a positive “Home like” Environment which is safe and enjoyable providing care for our children, families, staff and community.



## Our educators

Are our most precious resource, each staff member brings fundamental personal qualities to the center such as empathy, compassion, respect and warmth. We support and value all input into decision making by our staff and encourage them with their professional development. We acknowledge the importance of working as a team to provide high quality care and education and further understand our role as advocates for the children and their rights

### **We believe that educators will:**

- Be positive role models
- Provide an atmosphere that is welcoming and friendly
- Provide structured and unstructured learning
- Provide an aesthetically pleasing and supportive physical environment
- Encourage all stakeholders input in the decision making process
- Build and maintain secure, respectful and confidential relationships with families and the local community
- Listen to and observe the children closely, ask questions, and explore the children's ideas.
- Provide experiences that "provoke" children's thinking and learning.
- Document the children's work so that they can talk to each other and the children and better understand the children's thinking and education in general.
- Build on the strengths, competencies, and curiosities of the children
- Encourage, support, and develop collaborative learning
- Have less structured rooms, but carefully planned spaces and well-organized materials, so that children are free to spend more time on projects that interest them and are often able to move between activities at their own pace
- Offer a wide variety of basic art media, including paints, clay construction, drawing, and collage
- Listen to and implement children's ideas for projects on which to work
- Display the children's creations and photographs, showing the children at work at OSHC
- Build a portfolio of children's work at OSHC
- Make a great effort to communicate with parents and to help parents feel involved in their child's project work
- Excel when their individual talents and contributions are acknowledged and valued.

We believe in the vital nature of lifelong learning and acknowledge the importance of experience, formal qualification, ongoing learning and reflective practice. We believe that knowledge and understanding of child development and care giving practices is essential to enhance the curriculum and the uniqueness of each child.

### **Our Children**

We believe that children in our care:

- Are paramount to our work
- learn through play and experimentation

- are individually unique
- are entitled to be secure and safe
- Achieve maximum learning potential in an environment which encourages self-discipline, independence, self-esteem and curiosity.
- Feel safe, supported and respected
- Be acknowledged for their unique identity
- Have their developmental cultural, spiritual and personal interests recognised and developed
- Feel that their sense of well-being is nurtured
- Build and maintain positive relationships
- Are strong, interested, capable and curious.
- Learn best working with others: with other children, family, teachers, and the community.
- have "the hundred languages" through which show us what they know in many ways – they move, draw, paint, build, sculpt, do collages, act, sing, play music and more
- Learn from the spaces they are in – they need beautiful, orderly space where everything has a purpose and can help children learn.
- Are capable of long-term, sustained learning when the topic is of interest to them.
- Have the potential and promise to become well rounded individuals with the encouragement of a nurturing, supportive and relaxing environment.
- Are recognized as individuals with rights and allow them to be involved and included in an environment that is free from stereotypes, discrimination and judgements.
- Have a voice that we respect and value. We encourage a sense of belonging to our service and give all children the opportunity and pathways to make open, respectful and reciprocal relationships with others in a positive way. We support our children in their development of autonomy and independence and understand that each child develops differently.

### **Our Environment**

The physical environment is regarded as a teacher in children's learning. The presentation and organisation communicates respect and a message of care toward children's learning. It is a valuable learning resource providing children with an appreciation of beauty and aesthetics through the provision of rich materials, resources and surroundings. Learning environments are responsive to children's interests, individuality and knowledge of the setting and take with

them a sense of belonging. We believe that the environment should promote a sense of wonder yet guarantee the health, safety and wellbeing of all children, families and educators.

#### **We believe our environment will:**

- be safe and stimulating
- be accepting of each child's individual needs and backgrounds
- values safety and health of all people
- encourage parent contribution
- be visually pleasing
- support inclusion of an access for children with additional needs
- value individual expertise of and contribution by staff
- be Fun
- be Nurturing
- be Child-oriented
- Collaborative
- be Facilitative of life-long learning through play-based

#### **Our Program**

##### **We believe our program will:**

- be accessible to parents
- demonstrate respect for child diversity and inclusion of all children
- offer a large variety of interesting and challenging experiences for children to choose from
- encourage promotion of self-esteem
- include support people to facilitate participation of children with additional needs be underpinned by a commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and respect each child's right to play and leisure opportunities.
- Promote the importance of play especially child initiated play. Offering children, a balance of structured and unstructured activities to choose from.
- Acknowledge that children have been at school all day and want to relax, interact with friends and have fun, therefore our program will encourage children to make their own choices based on individual needs, strengths, interests, age and energy levels.

- Recognise that children's voices are the most important part of our program for that reason all children are given the opportunity to have input into the program with ideas and suggestions.

Encourage group projects where children are empowered to work together, to show respect, care for and appreciate their natural environment.

- respond to the individual interests and needs of children
- reflect staff knowledge of child development

Emergent curriculum & Project work

**An emergent curriculum** is one that builds upon the interests of children. Topics for learning experiences are captured from conversations with children, through community, or family events, as well as the known age appropriate interests of children.

We view all children as competent, resourceful individuals who are encouraged to direct their own learning. Projects are the emergent, ideas and interests which arise from the children. Projects may last one week or may continue throughout the year. Throughout a project, educators help children make decisions about materials needed and the direction of the experience. Through our emergent curriculum children are learning what they want to learn with the help of their parents, educators and community.

#### **Our families**

##### **We believe families will:**

- Be an integral part of who we are.
- Be welcomed into a, positive, safe and caring environment where every family is valued.
- Be acknowledged for the uniqueness and diversity that each family brings to the service.
- Have open communication through various mediums and value all interactions.
- Be supported through difficult times and decisions and we are always here to help in any way we can.

- provide ideas and skills, which make them active partners in the children's learning

### **Our community**

We believe community to be our key support network, to nourish relationships within our local and wider communities we will:

- Acknowledge the original custodians of the land.
- Believe in a positive and proactive approach to our environment and encourage educators and children to discover respect for the land, nature and animals. We will continue our journey towards a sustainable future for the well-being of all in the community and promote sustainability in our center.
- Welcome community involvement recognizing it as an evolving resource benefiting the child, family and community. We believe in rich relationships within our organization. We desire and promote professional and personal growth resulting in acceptance, support and celebration of each other.

### **Quality Improvement**

Heathcote East OSHC participates in the Quality Improvement System every 2-3 years, which is administered by the Department of Education and Communities. As part of this process the service is committed to the continual improvement of service's practices, policies and procedures to assure children and their families receive the highest level of education and care.

The service is awaiting assessment under the National Quality Standards for Education and Care services however our most current Quality Profile is available at the service or alternatively can be viewed at [www.mychild.gov.au](http://www.mychild.gov.au)

The service is furthermore registered with the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority and is licensed by the Department of Education and Communities (DEC), who regularly visit the service to ensure that a high standard of education and care is maintained for your child.

### **Fees**

Child Care Benefit is available to eligible families.

A non-refundable fee of \$50 per child is to be paid on enrolment to be paid annually per family.

Fees processed on a weekly basis, every Monday.

It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure there are sufficient funds in the account

Parents who are more than one week in arrears will be issued with a statement, which must be paid immediately. Failure to pay this account may result in your child's place being terminated and legal advice will be sought to recover any unpaid fees and all legal fees will also be added to your account.

### **Child Care Benefit**

Families must register with the Department of Human Services (DHS) by completing a "Claim for Child Care Benefit for Registered Care" provided upon enrolment or by visiting [www.humanservices.gov.au/centrelinkonline](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/centrelinkonline). You will receive an assessment notice which will provide you with information about your family and child's Customer Reference Number (CRN). This will need to be supplied to the service upon enrolment. Full fees will apply until the service receives information stating that you are eligible for Child Care Benefit. Parents are required to inform DHS of any changes that may affect their assessment. Please note that if you do not register with the Department of Human Service (DHS) or you do not provide the service with the correct information than you may not be entitled to receive Child Care Benefit (CCB) or the Child Care Rebate (CCR).

### **Child Care Rebate**

Child Care Rebate (CCR) is a payment to assist with your child care costs. The Child Care Rebate is not income tested however you must meet the work, training or study-related criteria. You may be eligible to receive this rebate even though your family income is too high to receive Child Care Benefit. The Child Care Rebate pays up to 50 per cent of your out-of-pocket expenses for child care up to an annual cap.. You may choose to receive the Child Care Rebate on a weekly or fortnightly basis, paid either to the service as a fee reduction or directly to your

bank account. Alternatively you can choose to receive the Child Care Rebate payments quarterly or annually as a lump sum directly to your bank account. To be eligible for CCR, both you and your partner must have had work, training or study-related commitments at some time during a week or have an exemption. No minimum number of hours is required.

It is important to note that the payment method you choose for Child Care Rebate will be applied for the entire financial year. A new payment method cannot be applied until the start of the next financial year unless exceptional circumstances apply. You may change your payment choice for the next financial year by logging on to your Centrelink account online between April and June of the current year.

For further information about your entitlements please refer to the factsheets provided in your enrolment package or visit [www.mychild.gov.au](http://www.mychild.gov.au)

### **Absences – CCB/CCR**

Each (Permanent booking) child is entitled to 42 days of absence per financial year while claiming Child Care Benefit and Child Care Rebate. An absence may be defined as: a public holiday, sick day, holiday or occasional absence. Once the initial 42 days have been exhausted, additional absences may be claimed in certain circumstances. These absences must meet the additional absence criteria defined by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). If any additional absences do not meet the criteria than full fees will apply.

Absences cannot be claimed if your child has not started at the education and care service or you have ceased care. You also cannot claim an absence if you have notified the education and care service that you are withdrawing your child out of care on a set date and then change your mind and remove your child earlier.

If your child is to be absent for any reason, we ask that parents notify the education and care service on each day of your child's attendance. Please let the centre know if your child is ill with an infectious disease to allow the educators to keep an eye out for similar symptoms in other children.

### **Our Educators**

Our service staff are dedicated to providing you and your child with high quality education and care. Heathcote East OSHC believes that high quality educators provide a high quality service and therefore all educators working directly with children must have a qualification or are actively working towards a qualification, as prescribed in the National Regulations.

In addition, a suitably qualified and experienced educator must be appointed to lead the development and implementation of the educational program in the service with this person having a suitable qualification and experience, as well as a thorough understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework to be able to guide other educators in their planning and reflection, and mentor colleagues in their implementation practices. The Educational Leader of the care and education service is Ashley Stephenson.

#### **The centre personnel consist of:**

- Approved Provider who is responsible for the overall management of the service.
- Director/Nominated Supervisor (Diploma Qualified, who is also responsible for the overall management of the service.
- Casual Educators (Working towards a university degree, Child Care Certificate/Certificate in Child Care Studies/Associate Diploma (in Social Science-Child Studies)/Diploma in Community Services (Children's Services).
- Trainees (who are studying Certificate III in Child Studies or Diploma in Child Studies).

All staff hold up to date Working with children check, First Aid Certificate, Anaphylaxis and Athma Training & Child Protection Training.

Heathcote East OSHC have regular educator and staff meetings to ensure that educators are well informed, providing a high quality programme and are involved in critical reflection and continuous improvement. Students from various Colleges, Universities and local High Schools may visit the service to gain practical experience as part of their training. Students may need to observe your child as a requirement of their studies. They, like the educators, will retain confidentiality regarding their observations of the children and information gained throughout their visit. Permission is to be granted upon enrolment for student observation however an educator will discuss student requirements with individual families prior to this taking place.

## Our Educational Programme and Practice

The service has a clear statement of philosophy that has been established from a sound knowledge of early childhood pedagogy and reflects the principles of the National Law and the Early Years Learning Framework (My Time, Our Place).

Heathcote East OSHC offers a developmentally appropriate play-based programme, which is based on the emergent curriculum philosophy. This philosophy describes the kind of curriculum that develops when exploring what is “socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful to children” (Jones and Nimmo, 1994). “Emergent curriculum arises naturally from adult-child interactions that allows for “teachable moments”. It connects learning with experience and prior learning and includes the interests of children, teachers and parents, responding to their interests rather than focusing on a narrow, individual, or calendar driven topic. It is process rather than product driven” (The Gardner School, 2003-2004).

In 2009 the Council of Australian Government’s (COAG) introduced the Early Years Learning Framework. The Early Years Learning Framework describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning. The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning as play is the best vehicle for young children’s learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. The Framework also recognises the importance of communication and language (including literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development.

The Framework conveys the highest expectations for children’s learning and communicates these expectations through the following five Learning Outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
- Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners
- Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

Rich learning centres are set up in the classrooms so that small groups and individual children can explore constantly varying provisions. The educators find responsive ways to incorporate the interests being explored and choose experiences that are interesting, inviting, age and developmentally appropriate, open-ended and that maximise each child’s opportunities for learning. If a particular area is of interest to children, the educators may choose to repeat it often until the intense interest passes or use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend their learning. The children have the freedom to modify or add provisions to suit their own interest and needs which contributes to each child’s sense of agency.

To know how to plan and proceed with the children’s interests, the educators will listen to and observe the children closely whilst at play. Educators will ask questions; discover the children’s ideas, hypotheses, and theories; and provide occasions for discovery and learning. The educators will work together to record these discussions and observations and communicate these through written and visual documentation. Each child’s learning and development is assessed as part of an ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluation and critical reflection is regularly used to implement the program.

## Communication with Families

Communication takes on a variety of forms at Heathcote East OSHC. It is essential that families read all notices and signs when entering the service to check for up-coming events of interest, special requests and other pertinent information. Information about the programme, centre happenings and articles/information relating to children/families is frequently posted onto our online facebook group.

## Partnerships with Families

“Partnerships with families contribute to building a strong, inclusive community within the service. Continuous, honest and open two-way communication with educators assists families to feel connected with their children’s experience in education and care and helps them develop trust and confidence in the service. Shared decision making with families supports consistency between children’s experiences at home and at the service, helping children to feel safe, secure and supported.”

Guide to the National Quality Standard (3) ACECQA (2011), p.148

Family participation in any education and care service is an important part of making the service a true part of the community and creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive and supports a sense of belonging for children, families and educators. Heathcote Sunshine Kids welcomes and facilitates family participation and open communication by encouraging families to engage with their child's education and care. Families are invited to attend parent committee meetings, assist with projects and odd jobs, attend social gatherings, share their culture, skills and experiences with children and educators, come into the service to spend time with their child, attend excursions and special events and provide ideas and input into the children's curriculum. There are a number of ways this is encouraged and families can choose which practice reflects their families culture and individual preferences.

## Orientation and Enrolment

A smooth transition from the home to an education and care service is essential for both children and their families. If children feel nurtured, safe and happy within their new environment, families will feel more confident that their child is being well cared for. An orientation and enrolment process that children and their families can follow is essential for this smooth transition to occur.

As part of our orientation process we invite you and your child to meet with the centre coordinator to enable an individualised enrolment and orientation process. An appointment will need to be made at a mutually convenient time by contacting the centre coordinator. Throughout this time you will meet with the centre coordinator and your child will have the opportunity to spend time in the OSHC room which will assist them in their transition and enable them to become familiar with their new environment and educators. This is a very important process for you and your child and we encourage all families to participate.

### .Daily Requirements – OSHC

The following will need to be provided on each day of attendance:

- Spare change of clothes: please send three full set of clothes in case of water, painting or food related accidents
- Jumper: even if it is hot as the weather can change quickly.

- Drink bottle filled with water only. Please ensure your child can recognise and manage their own drink bottle.
- Sun Safety Hat

### Daily Requirements – Vacation Care

The following will need to be provided on each day of attendance:

- Spare change of clothes: please send three full set of clothes in case of water, painting or food related accidents
- All meals – morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea
- Jumper: even if it is hot as the weather can change quickly.
- Drink bottle for toddlers:
- Sun Safety Hat
- Drink bottle: filled with water only. Please ensure your child can recognise and manage their own drink bottle.
- Morning tea, Lunch & Afternoon Snack: include a main lunch item, diary item and snack in a lunch box that they can manage independently and can be placed into the fridge

### Complaints and Feedback

Our service values the feedback of educators, staff, families and the wider community in helping to create a service that meets regulation and the needs of enrolled children and their families. We encourage open communication through opportunities to respond and feedback on the program and other aspects of service provision. A component of this feedback is the ability to put forward a complaint or concern and have this managed appropriately with due consideration for accountability and quality improvement. We encourage families to bring their complaint or concern to the attention of centre staff immediately so that it can be dealt with promptly. We aim to address any concerns with the emphasis on resolving issues in a professional and confidential manner.

Communications will aim at all times to be open, honest and confidential. Our service will offer a variety of ways to communicate and provide feedback including:

- Day books

- Daily program - will have a section dedicated to comments or feedback on the program and activities
- Interactions
- Formal feedback and comments
- Surveys
- Family meetings

A formal complaint should be forwarded to the Nominated Supervisor and your complaint will be dealt with in the strictest confidentiality. Any educator or staff member involved in handling complaints will ensure that information is restricted only to those who genuinely need to be notified in order to deal with the complaint. If information specific to the complaint needs to be disclosed to others during its resolution, the complainant will be informed. Your complaint will be documented by an educator or staff member, and placed on the complaints register. The complaint will then be forwarded on to the most appropriate person to investigate the complaint. This will include the Nominated Supervisor and the approved provider. Actions to address the complaint will be determined. Once the outcomes or resolutions are agreed on, all persons involved in the original complaint will be notified and informed of any actions for improvement that will take place as a result of the complaint. The Department of Education and Communities will be notified of any complaint made to the service alleging a breach of regulation within 24 hours of the complaint being made.

## Celebrations

We encourage families to let their child share special celebrations with us at the service. Mother's day, Father's day, Christmas, Easter and Birthdays are all celebrated. The service aims to provide inclusive practices by delivering a curriculum that is welcoming of our wider community therefore if you have a family celebration that you wish for your child to share at the service please indicate this upon enrolment and speak with centre educators.

Birthdays can be celebrated in a variety of ways, including families providing a traditional birthday cake, cupcakes, donuts, muffins, fruit platter or a non-food treat such as balloons or stickers to share. The service requests that individual cakes, such as cupcakes or donuts are sent for birthday celebrations and not whole cakes or slab cakes. When families bring in a cake for a birthday celebration they will be required to provide a list of ingredients so that educators can take the needs of children with allergies and special dietary requirements into account. Families of a child who has any allergies or specific dietary needs may freeze cakes at the service that can be thawed on "birthday days" or provide an alternative treat or snack.

## Children's Health and Safety

It would be appreciated if children did not bring toys or valuables from home unless they are required for a special event. Toys from home can become lost or broken and it saves a lot of heartache if these items are left at home. It furthermore encourages children to continually be in an area which is not constantly supervised by the educators and these toys may provide a risk to the younger children in our environment. Other items that should not be brought into the service or left in your child's bag, due to the health, safety and well being of all children attending the centre are:

- Cigarettes
- Cigarette lighters
- Creams – suncreams, nappy creams etc unless accompanied by a letter and given to your child's educator
- Headache tablets
- Medications
- Poisons
- Safety pins, rubber bands, hair clips etc
- Mobile phones
- Cosmetics
- Plastic nappy/shopping bags
- Any other item that could potentially cause harm to a child

## Clothing

Children need protective, comfortable and appropriate clothing and footwear to explore their environments. Clothing needs to protect children from injury and sun exposure while promoting self-help abilities. Appropriate footwear will fit a child's foot correctly and ensure comfort. We understand that family's cultural backgrounds will influence what the children wear, and these choices will be respected. However, we may need to apply reasonable judgment in certain circumstances. It is the health and safety of all children that will guide educators in their suggestions and actions in relation to clothing. The following items are not to be worn as they are dangerous and limit your child's participation in the environment and you may be asked to return with more suitable item:

- Shoes that are too big, give little protection or have raised heels

- Thongs (with straps) or gumboots
- Sleeveless dresses and/or shirts
- Necklaces, ribbons, capes and scarves

Please ensure that everything that comes into the service is clearly labeled with your child's name. Labeling all items including socks, shoes and underwear assist centre personnel to locate the owner. Please check the lost property box regularly for any missing items. This is located in the foyer and is allocated by playrooms for your convenience. The centre takes no responsibility for any lost items.

### **Arrival and Departure**

It is the responsibility of educators and families to ensure the safe arrival and departure of children at the education and care setting and the completion of statutory documentation. Practical and safe approaches will promote a smooth transition between home and the service, assure the completion of the required records for the claiming of the *Commonwealth Child Care Benefit* and confirms children's presence or absence from the service. This ensures a child's arrival and departure at the service continues their safe care and custody. It is therefore a family member's responsibility to sign your child in and out each time they attend the service. Failure to sign for your child's attendance is putting the services license in jeopardy as well as your Child Care Benefit. Please be aware that full fees will be charged for any unsigned attendance, as Child Care Benefit or the Child Care Rebate cannot be applied for these days.

The service will only allow parents or persons stated in writing on the enrolment form or 'Signed Authority to Release Form' to collect your child from the service. If you are unable to collect your child from the service, you will need to inform centre staff that another person is collecting your child. If they are not a person authorised on your child's enrolment form an 'Authority to Release Form' will need to be completed and provided to an educator upon arrival. Please ensure that your contacts are aware that photo identification will be required.

Upon arrival please escort your child to an educator. Under no circumstances are children to be left in an area not being supervised by an educator. Always acknowledge your arrival and departure by encouraging your child to say hello and goodbye.

### **Custody Arrangements**

If you have a legal agreement outlining custody or restraining arrangements, please provide the education and care service with a copy for our records. Parents are requested to notify the Nominated Supervisor immediately if any legal circumstances change.

### **Late Arrival Fee**

A late fee of \$10 for 10 minutes or part thereof will be charged to any family who has not collected their child from the service by closing time. Your child's position may be in jeopardy should this occur more than 3 times in a calendar year. We also ask that families respect educators roles and responsibilities in the morning and not arrive prior to 6:45am for OSHC and 7am for Vacation Care

### **Behaviour Guidance**

Taking a positive approach to behaviour guidance means trying to understand why a child behaves in certain ways. It also means encouraging acceptable forms of behaviour by using strategies that build children's confidence and self-esteem, and providing children with support, guidance and opportunities to manage their own behaviour. Educators will try to recognise why a child behaves in a certain way, and encourage more acceptable forms of behaviour through a positive approach. If your child's educators are having difficulty managing your child's behaviour they may seek a meeting with you to discuss a behaviour management plan. It is expected that families work in collaboration with their child's educators with any area of concern and follow-up on referrals should this be requested.

### **Illness and Communicable Disease**

The health, safety and well being of children, families and educators at the service is a priority. Centre personnel reserves the right to send home or refuse attendance to any child that is considered unwell or the specified time frame has not been adhered to. If your child is unwell or showing signs of an infectious or contagious disease, we will contact you immediately and you will be required to collect them from the service. If you are unable to be contacted we will contact the emergency contacts nominated on the enrolment form. Please respect this policy and do not send your child if they are unwell.

If your child seems unwell or has a high temperature educators will:

- decide if the child requires exclusion from other children.

- take the child's temperature using an axillary thermometer.
- lay the child down, remove excess clothing, encourage the child to drink small and frequent amounts of cool water.
- contact the parents or emergency contacts to notify them of the child's condition.
- request that they collect the child from the service.
- record the child's illness on an "Unwell Child Checklist" which parents will be required to sign upon arrival.

There are circumstances where a child is too ill to attend the service and needs to stay home for treatment and recovery. It is the policy of this service not to admit any child who has a communicable disease. Exclusion periods are recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and based on the time a child is infectious to others. Children will not be admitted back into the service until the required exclusion period has passed, even if a certificate of clearance has been provided. Please refer to the recommended minimum exclusion periods information sheet provided to you upon enrolment.

Please notify the service if your child has been exposed to or has a communicable disease or illness. A doctor's clearance is required prior to re-admittance to the service for any communicable disease or illness or the required exclusion period has passed. Any diarrhoea, vomiting, or high temperature must be clear for at least 24 hours before returning to the service. A child who is receiving medical treatment, such as anti-biotics, must also remain at home for 24 hours after the initial dosage.

## Immunisation

The service is required to maintain up-to-date immunisation records for all children and educators. Parents are requested to supply proof of immunisation upon enrolment and are responsible for advising the service of any updated immunisations. The Australian Immunisation Register must have a record that your child has been immunised to retain eligibility for Child Care Benefit. Please refer to the National Immunisation Program Schedule provided upon enrolment for further information.

If a parent chooses not to have their child immunised or the child is homeopathically immunised, then the child will be excluded during an outbreak of a disease that is prevented

by immunisation for the length of time that is recommended by the NSW Department of Health. A "Contentious Objection Form" will need to be supplied to the service in these

## Administration of Medication

If your child requires medication whilst at the service, you must complete an 'Administration of Medication Form' on a daily basis, even if the medication is required for more than one day. If the medication is prescriptive, please ensure that it is in its original named container, clearly marked with the medical practitioners' instructions. Any medication must be handed directly to an educator so that it can be stored in an area inaccessible to children. Educators will confirm medications administered to children and this form will be signed to indicate that the medication has been administered. Homeopathic, naturopathic, over-the-counter or non-prescribed medications will only be administered if a medication form is complete and is accompanied by written instructions and dosage from a health professional prescribing or dispensing the medication along with the associated effects and risks.

The service will facilitate effective care and health management of children with medical conditions including, but are not limited to asthma, diabetes or a diagnosis that a child is at risk of anaphylaxis. If your child has asthma, diabetes, allergies or another medical condition, a specific health management plan must be completed in consultation with your child's medical practitioner. Please discuss your child's particular requirements with the centre personnel upon enrolment.

It is often difficult to diagnose young children with asthma, as many children have asthma like symptoms of a cough and wheeze. Some children may have their first asthma whilst in the education and care service and have not previously been diagnosed with asthma. As a result, any child who has difficulty breathing or has a first attack of asthma in the education and care service will be administered reliever medication. No harm is likely to result from giving a reliever medication to a child without asthma.

## Sun Protection

Australia has the highest incidence of skin cancer in the world and sun exposure during childhood significantly increases the risk of developing skin cancer and melanoma. As a result, the service aims to develop in children positive attitudes towards protecting themselves from the sun, and ensure the children are protected from the harmful effects of UV rays.

Upon enrolment to the school each parent will be requested to purchase a legionnaire style hat for use in outdoor activities. Permission will also need to be granted for the educators to apply Cancer Council 30+ sunscreen to children. Children are encouraged to put sunscreen on themselves as they arrive at the center via our sunscreen station located near the sign in / out sheets. Centre personnel will apply 20 minutes prior to going outside during the day. Children will be required to wear sleeves and collars when playing outside and the service will arrange outdoor experiences in shaded areas wherever possible. Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing will be provided with spare clothing when outdoors and parents will be reminded of their responsibilities for adhering to the education and care services Sun Safety policy.

## Emergency and Evacuation

Emergency and evacuation situations in an education and care service can arise in a number of circumstances and for a variety of reasons. In the event of an emergency or evacuation situation, the safety and wellbeing of all educators, children, families and visitors to the service are paramount and as such, Heathcote Sunshine Kids is committed to identifying risks and hazards of emergency and evacuation situations, and planning for their reduction or minimisation, and ongoing review of planned actions around handling these situations.

As a result, specific procedures around each potential emergency situation are regularly rehearsed and evaluated to ensure full awareness by all educators and children. An emergency evacuation plan is displayed in each room. In the event of an emergency centre personnel will:

1. Direct the children to the closest and safest exit, taking the fire bag located in the room.
2. Take the children to the High School field (34 Wilson Parade) either through the front OR back gate, depending on the location of the fire or alternatively along side the adjacent shop (The Avenue)
3. Use books, drinks, etc in the fire bag to settle the children on the grass and reassure them as rolls are marked and are cross-referenced with sign in/out rolls.

In the event that the nominated assembly areas are not appropriate or if the evacuation is for an extended period of time, children will be relocated to an alternative location. Families will be advised of this location through written communication on the front entrance to the centre and the supervisor in charge will also be present to inform families upon arrival.

The statutory bush fire danger period runs from October 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> and as the education and care service is located close to the Royal National Park a Bushfire Evacuation Plan has been developed to increase the preparedness of educators, children and families. Our EXTREME fire trigger response measure is to ensure all children are able to be collected from the service within 10 minutes of evacuation procedures taking place. Please be aware that if you do not have a person who satisfies this requirement, then your child will not be able to attend until the fire trigger response has been downgraded. For a CATASTROPHIC rating the education and care service reserves the right to close the centre to ensure the health and safety of children and educators.

## Accidents and Injuries

Even in the safest environment accidents and injuries do occur. Any incident, injury or trauma that may occur at the service will be recorded on an 'Incident, Injury and Trauma Record'. If your child has sustained an injury or caused harm to another child throughout the day, you will be required to sign an Incident, Injury and Trauma record, indicating that you have been made aware of the incident, injury or trauma. A copy of this report will be given to you for your own records, if requested at the time, or be made available upon request. If the certified supervisor deems it necessary, you will be contacted to collect your child to seek medical or dental treatment. If you cannot be contacted and your child requires medical attention, centre personnel will take the necessary steps required. Any medical expenses incurred will be the parent's responsibility.

## Visitors and Excursions

The service believes that visitors and excursions are an essential part of the programme as they provide the opportunity to expand and enhance a child's experience, explore different environments and engage in meaningful ways with their communities. You will be informed in advance of any planned visitors or excursions. Parents are required to give permission for their child to participate in any experience conducted. Notes regarding such activities will be forwarded via email. Visitors or excursions will be organised on different days of the week to ensure all children are able to enjoy the change in the programme and a fair distribution of the costs amongst the service.

Extra curricular programs are additional to our visitors and excursions provided at the service. These programs will be for children whose families wish for them to become involved in these experiences and therefore will incur additional payment. The service attempts to provide a range of cost effective programs to promote children's learning and development. Programs are arranged on differing days of the week to ensure all children have the opportunity to participate.

## **Nutrition and Dietary Requirements**

### **Service Responsibilities**

Heathcote East OSHC aim is to provide food and beverages, as well as food and nutritional education that is consistent with the national dietary guidelines for children and adolescents and national infant feeding guidelines. The service will follow state regulation, food safety principles and national dietary guidelines that are appropriate to the child's age, cultural background or medical needs.

The service will provide safe drinking water for children at all times, and ensure they have adequate fluid intake during their time at the education and care service. Children will be able to eat when they are hungry through progressive meal time procedures, however eating as a group will be encouraged.

### **Families Responsibilities**

Families are requested to send healthy food options to the care and education service for their child to consume at meal times. Items such as chips, lollies, chocolates, sweet biscuits, cakes, chocolate coated items or sweet sugary drinks do not meet the service's nutrition requirements and we require your cooperation in this matter. If items contravene the "Nutrition and Dietary Requirements Policy" children will be encouraged to take these items home or consume after a healthier piece of food has been eaten. Families will be reminded of the services policy via written communication should they send something which contravenes the "Nutrition and Dietary Requirements Policy". A note suggesting an appropriate alternative will be placed in your child's lunchbox to ensure the child is unaware of the reasons for this communication.

## **Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis**

Food allergies in children are common and can be due to peanuts, other tree nuts (brazil, cashew, hazelnuts, almonds), fish, shellfish, eggs, wheat, milk, milk products, soy, seeds and some fruits. Children who have had previous anaphylactic events should be identified upon enrolment. Parents will be asked to complete an "Action Plan for Anaphylaxis" in consultation with their child's practitioner. This form and any required training will be carried out prior to the child commencing care.

Heathcote East OSHC is a "Nut Free" environment. Nut products such as peanut butter, nutella, chocolate, muesli bars as well as tree nuts are not to be consumed by any child or adult within the centre. We understand that for some families this may create packing your child's lunch somewhat challenging, but ask for your understanding in this matter.

## **Food Safety and Storage**

To minimise risks to children being educated and cared for by the service, safe practices for handling, preparing and storing food are required. All food and beverages prepared by families that are perishable items are to be stored in the fridge. These include:

- raw and cooked meat or foods containing meat, such as casseroles, curries and lasagne;
- dairy products, for example, milk, custard and dairy based desserts;
- seafood;
- processed fruits and vegetables, for example, salads;
- cooked rice and pasta;
- foods containing eggs, beans, or other protein rich foods, such as quiche and soy products;
- foods that contain these foods, such as sandwiches and rolls.

## Sustainability

As an education and care community, we encourage and increase the awareness of environmental responsibilities and implement practices that contribute to a sustainable future. Children will be supported to become environmentally responsible and show respect for the environment through daily practices, resources and interactions. Environmentally sustainable practices are embedded into the operations of the education and care service and involve educators, children and families in order to be successful. The concepts of “reduce, reuse and recycle” are part of our everyday practices and therefore we ask that all families provide meal items that are free of waste or “nude food” to reduce the amount of landfill waste. We ask that families use paper, foil or a sandwich container instead of plastic bags/wrapping for sandwiches and yoghurt be sent in a reusable container or purchased in individual tubs, as this can be reused for creative purposes. All food items are separated by children for composting, worm farming, reusing in the curriculum or for landfill and our aim is to reduce the quantity of landfill waste within the service.

Other ways you can assist with the centres environmental responsibilities are by using ‘The Useful Bag’ to bring in items that can be reused with in the service, such as:

- Cardboard boxes from kitchen
- Kitchen rolls (no toilet rolls)
- Take away containers
- Old saucepans/cooking items
- Magazines/Paper
- Building plans
- Linen i.e. flat bed sheets
- Natural items i.e. nuts, pine cones etc
- Wrapping paper
- Milk bottles and lids
- Plastic bottles
- Plastic cups/containers
- Plastic containers
- Funnels
- Baskets
- Plastic/Terracotta pots
- Jewellery
- Greeting cards
- Old CD’s
- Material
- Ribbons
- Corks
- Egg cartons
- Buttons

Bigger items that can be sourced are old car tires, building supplies such as plumber’s pipe, pieces of wood, tiles, bricks and pavers, pieces of furniture, cable reels, large tree stumps or

tree cookies (small sections of trees), mirrors, old computers for internal pieces or any other items you might think we can use.

## Rest Time Procedures

Heathcote East OSHC will ensure that all children have appropriate opportunities rest and relaxation in accordance with their individual needs as educators are required to “take reasonable steps to ensure that the needs for sleep and rest of children being educated and cared for by the service are met, having regard to the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children.” (Regulation 81). Therefore, we provide an “chill out” area with lounges, cushions and quiet activities for children to retreat to when needed.

## Confidentiality and Privacy

Heathcote East OSHC recognises and respects the importance of privacy and confidentiality as an individual right and a basis for building partnerships and pursues the highest standard in the protection and preservation of privacy and confidentiality. These guidelines apply to anyone employed or visiting the care and education service, including family members. As a result, all information is kept in a secure manner to prevent accidental or purposeful access by persons not involved in the operation of the education and care service. Families will be requested to sign and abide by the centres ‘Confidentiality and Privacy Policy’ upon enrolment and if behaviour by a family member contravenes this policy their child’s position may be in jeopardy.

Visitors to the care and education service cannot take video recordings or photographs of children throughout their stay, unless prior permission has been granted. If you or a family member is visiting the service please be mindful of this policy. The educators are more than happy to take photographs on your behalf and place onto your child’s online portfolio.

## Social Media

Social media sites such as “Facebook” and “Twitter” is part of our everyday life and we acknowledge their importance for connecting with family, friends and the wider community. The care and education service has guidelines for educators and families regarding their participation in online communication, to ensure that the confidentiality and privacy of

children, families, educators and the service is maintained. The following guidelines apply to families and educators associated with Heathcote East OSHC

- It is important for educators to maintain their status as a professional and therefore online friendships with centre personnel is not permitted, unless these were established prior to their association with the care and education service;
- Families and educators are urged to not post anything that would offend any other staff member, parent or child using the service;
- Families and educators are asked to not post anything that could be construed to have any impact on the centre's reputation;
- No photographs of children, families and educators, or any other information that may identify children, families or educators, be posted on social media sites.

## **Child protection**

All staff are trained and required by law to report and suspected child abuse as mandatory reporters. Child protection education will be embedded into the program throughout the year to support families and children.