

*Cootamundra  
Centenary  
Pre School  
Association Inc*



**PARENT HANDBOOK**

# Cootamundra Centenary Pre School Association Inc

## Parent Handbook

Welcome to the Cootamundra Centenary Pre School. Cootamundra Pre School is a Community Based, non-profit organization that caters for 40 children daily. Your child has become a member of this Pre School and so have you. We hope your child's experiences at Pre School will be happy and rewarding.

### PHILOSOPHY

As educators of young children we feel the provision of a non-threatening, non-sexist, unprejudiced, safe, happy, stimulating and sensitive environment is of paramount importance. We believe that the environment for young children should encourage inquiry, choice, creativity, curiosity, problem solving and risk taking - an environment that facilitates and supports children's play and learning.

Essential to the learning process is the interaction of children to adults, children to children and the Pre School to the wider community. Children are active natural learners, and are given the opportunity to develop socially, cognitively, physically and emotionally as individuals - developing positive feelings of self-worth. We encourage children to become caring and empathetic members of our community, treating their peers with respect and warmth, and helping them to realise that the way you treat others will in a way determine the way others treat you.

As Educators we recognise the importance of treating each child and family with dignity and respect, and as individuals with a variety of backgrounds, needs, tastes and opinions. We honour diversity - exploring, acknowledging and valuing our similarities and differences. Every parent has the right to feel secure in the knowledge that their child is being cared for in a nurturing, caring, stimulating and challenging environment. We aim to provide an environment in which families feel welcome and comfortable, free to offer any advice or suggestions as they see fit - to have as little or as much input into the programme as they wish.

As a result of the multitude of programmed play activities offered, knowledge, attitudes and skills are sharpened. (Children learn through play). To foster positive growth in children it is necessary for our Pre School to provide a learning environment where the child is free to make choices about the way they use materials, thus encouraging creativity, problem solving and communication. The evaluation of our programme enables us to determine whether or not we are providing the most

developmentally appropriate practices, materials and learning experiences for a particular child, as well as the group as a whole.

It is essential to have a caring, enthusiastic and committed group of people working together as a team, focused on providing high quality Pre School Education and care of young children and their families. We place great emphasis on a close familiarity and understanding of the various theories of child development, and what current research is telling us. We recognise the important role we play in the lives of families, and in the broader sense, the community in which we live and work.

Pre School is a vital link between home and the school system, providing opportunities for children to develop important intellectual, social, emotional, communication and physical skills, essential to a smooth and successful transition to school.

## **PRE SCHOOL STAFF**

This is a two unit Pre School, those being Blue and Red Rooms. The Director is the Authorised Supervisor and is responsible for the day to day running of the Pre School, the supervision of staff, parent and community liaison and works in conjunction with the Management Committee. The Director teaches in the Blue Room and together with the Red Room teacher is responsible for the education program. Both these positions require qualifications in the form of University training (Teaching, Early Childhood). In each room there is an assistant who supports the teacher in the preparation and implementation of the program. There is an Administration Clerk who works from an office next to the Blue Room at Pre School. The Clerk's hours of attendance are posted on the office door. The Clerk is responsible for maintaining all financial records and preparation of fee accounts.

## **MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

This committee is elected annually and is responsible for the general management and financing of the Pre School to the standard approved by the Department of Community Services who provide our licence. The Committee employ and liaise with staff, helps to prepare and monitor a yearly budget, oversees the collection of fees, maintain the building, playground and equipment and organise fundraising events.

The Committee positions and duties are:

President - oversees management, liaises with committee and staff.

1st Vice President - supports President, liaise with clerk on wage issues.

2nd Vice President - liaise with clerk on fee matters.

Secretary - keeps minutes, handles correspondence.

Treasurer - monitors budget, presents reports, oversees accounts etc.

Publicity Officer - liaises with local paper and community organisations to report pre school matters.

Fundraising Committee - organises fundraising.

## **ORIENTATION**

Orientation commences in Term 3 with an Open day/Enrolment day. Parents and children can visit Pre School to learn about the facilities, meet the staff and complete enrolment and subsidy forms. During this enrolment day your child will be invited to play with the toys, do craft activities, and enjoy the outside play equipment, providing the opportunity to get to know the Pre School grounds, rooms and other children.

In Term 4 we will hold a Parent Information evening for all new parents. This will provide parents with the opportunity to learn more about Pre School, the program and what will happen on the first day. It also provides an opportunity for parents to meet other parents who's children will be attending Pre School the following year.

## **ENROLMENT**

While names can be taken over the phone and placed on class lists, parents must complete an enrolment form before their child starts Pre School. The enrolment form, together with Fee Subsidy Form (if appropriate), and Blue Book (for immunisation records) must be brought to Pre School prior to your child's first day.

## **THE PRE SCHOOL DAY**

- \* Pre School begins at 9.00 am and finishes at 3.00 pm. Staff prepare activities prior to this time. Staff are not responsible for children outside session hours.
- \* Parents must bring their child right in to Pre School and ensure staff are aware he or she has arrived. Parents are responsible for collecting their children on time within the grounds and must sign their names in the Sign-In/Out Book at both times. Please let us know if you are going to be delayed picking up your child. Each child will have a named 'pocket' where notes, receipts and other important information will be placed. This needs to be checked by a parent each day.

- \* Parents will complete a list of people permitted to collect their child on their child's enrolment form. Anyone collecting their child who is not on this list must give a written permission note from parents to the teacher. Parents must also give staff prior notification of this.
- \* Parents may complete a form to allow their child to travel by bus to Pre School. This form states that parents accept full responsibility for their child as they travel on, change and get off the bus. It is preferred that only country children use this service, to ensure staff see as many parents as possible each morning. It is also advised that some time be allowed to let your child settle in to Pre School in Term 1 before introducing them to the added excitement of the bus.
- \* Quiet Time is generally from 2.00 pm until 2.30 pm. This is a chance for all children to take a break and regain some energy for the afternoon. Children are not expected to sleep but will lie quietly and listen to stories and/or music. They will need a cot-sized sheet to cover the Pre School mattress and perhaps a blanket in winter. Quiet time is discontinued in Term 4 in preparation for school.
- \* On enrolment, parents must provide emergency contact names, addresses and phone numbers and any custodial information relating to their child, including a photograph of the non-custodial parent. Emergency contact names will be used should a parent be out of contact and their child is ill or injured at Pre School. Any information provided (including court order details) will be kept confidential.
- \* Parents need to be aware that developmental records are kept for the benefit of your child's progress and are maintained confidentially. These are kept for six months once your child leaves Pre School and are available for parents to see if you approach your child's teacher.

Our timetable is flexible so as to meet the needs of each particular group of children. It generally follows these guidelines:

	<u>FULL DAY</u>
9.00 am	Children arrive, free indoor activities
10.45 am	Calendar/Story
11.00 am	Fruit time
11.15am	Outdoor activities
12.30 pm	Grouptime
1.00 pm	Lunch
1.40pm	Storytime
2.00pm	Quiet time
2.30pm	Grouptime- music and movement
3.00pm	Children depart

In first and fourth term we implement a sun-safe routine ensuring limited outdoor play between 11 am and 2pm.

## THE PRE SCHOOL PROGRAM

At Pre School we provide a program full of hands-on activities catered to the various age group, and allowing the children to learn about the world around them.

Our program aims to provide children with a foundation of essential skills and knowledge, in preparation for school, while also placing an emphasis on the importance of the product not being as important as the actual act of doing. Through our program we provide the children with the tools to continue their learning beyond the classroom and throughout life.

In providing learning experiences, we aim to encourage the children's development in the following areas:

### Social and Emotional Development:

- To have fun!
- To feel safe, secure and confident in their environment.
- To develop the ability to deal positively with situations that may provide frustration, sadness and anger for them.
- To encourage positive attitudes towards themselves, their families, their peers and the community as a whole. They learn through interaction with others about sharing and taking turns.
- To encourage independence and responsibility for their actions and belongings. Self-help skills are reinforced and developed. The children are involved in dressing themselves, packing up equipment used, negotiation and selection of equipment used, washing their hands and toileting themselves. All of these skills encourage and develop independence.
- To develop empathy for others and to begin to develop an awareness of how their actions affect others.
- To feel comfortable expressing their ideas, thoughts and feelings.
- To be treated with respect, warmth and courtesy.
- To learn to get along with their peers and resolve differences without harm to one another - physical or emotional.

### Cognitive Development:

- To encourage children's curiosity and their desire to make sense of their world, learning to learn! Providing a programme which encourages inquiry, and to ask and learn from "What?", "Who?", "When?", "Where?", "Why?", and "How?"
- To develop and enhance sensory exploration of their environment.
- To provide a challenging, stimulating and rewarding environment for the children to grow and learn in.

- To encourage and develop problem solving skills.

### Learning and Communication skills:

- To encourage the children to express themselves freely and openly.
- To encourage participation in group and individual experiences that extend language skills i.e. reading books, puppet play, singing, picture talks, role- playing, conversations with peers and adults.
- To listen carefully to all children and show respect for what they have to say.
- To develop conversation skills and listening skills.

### Physical Development:

- To provide opportunities for the children to develop confidence in their gross and fine motor skills.
- To provide opportunities for the children to practice newly acquired skills and offer support when needed.
- To develop co-ordination, balance, flexibility and strength.
- To develop an understanding of the importance of good health, hygiene and healthy nutritional habits.

The children will become aware of their physical self - what makes them different from their friends, what makes them an individual - "special".

## **OCCASIONAL CARE**

Pre School offers occasional care to children who are enrolled at Pre School. This is subject to a place being available.

## **SETTLING IN AT PRE SCHOOL**

Parents are encouraged to stay as long as necessary to help their child become familiar with the Pre School and the staff. Children can be distressed, and at times take a longer time to settle in. Don't worry if this happens to your child. Call a staff member and say goodbye to your child, letting them know that you will be returning. It is not a good idea to "sneak away" this may upset your child even more.

If you are worried, don't hesitate to ask staff for advice, and please call at any time to check how your child is going. As your child becomes used to Pre School and its routines they will feel more secure and thoroughly enjoy their day.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

At the start of each year children can choose a locker where they can hang their bag and belongings each week.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Full Day</u></b> hat fruit drink (for lunch) frozen drink (for bag in summer) spare clothes sheet lunch</p>
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### **Points to note:**

- \* On arrival, your child can put their lunch, morning tea (piece of fruit, cheese and biscuits etc) and drink on our trolley.
- \* Dress your child in practical play-clothes and sensible shoes. We have lots of fun and tend to get messy, so it's best not to put your child in his or her best gear. Also try to make sure your child's clothes are easy for them to handle.
- \* All belongings must be clearly marked with your child's name and placed in a bag that is easy for them to open and close.
- \* Toys from home are not encouraged (unless as a comforter for Quiet Time) as they can easily get lost or broken.
- \* Children need to bring two drinks, one for lunch/morning tea and one to be kept in their bag to access during outside play.

## **BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT**

The staff at Pre School follow a policy of positive reinforcement. We try to ignore negative behaviour and focus on all the 'good' things a child does. However if a child's behaviour is adversely affecting other children we will try 'time out' and remove the child from the group for a short period. This does not mean we will isolate the child from the group, but will occupy the child elsewhere. We set limits, give choices and explain reasons for any 'rules'. We never strike children and avoid punishing them, preferring to redirect them in a positive way.

- \* All policies are available for parents to read.

## HEALTH

Sick children - if your child is sick at Pre School and in the opinion of staff should not be in attendance, you will be asked to take him or her home. Parents will be contacted and if unavailable, other contact people (named on child's enrolment form) will be asked to collect the child. Parents are requested to inform staff if their child is/has been unwell and staff are required to maintain an Illness Register detailing all illnesses. Parents are asked to notify the Director of any infectious diseases contracted by their child. If your child is unwell, has signs or symptoms of illness or has commenced a course of antibiotics, please consult your doctor as to when your child should return to Pre School. This way, your child, and others are protected from unnecessary exposure to illness.

Medication - non-prescribed/over-the-counter medications will not be administered at pre School (exceptional circumstances can be allowed for with written instructions from the child's Doctor on the Doctor's letterhead and signed by the Doctor. Eg: antihistamines for a child suffering severe allergic reactions). Staff will administer prescribed medications after 48 hours of the child starting the medication. The medication must be clearly labelled with a pharmacy label stating the child's name, dose rate/times and date of prescription/dispensing.

Parents are to hand the medication to a staff member and fill in the medication form on arrival at Pre School. Parents are required to sign the medication form on collection of the child at the end of the day and collect the medication.

Accidents - All staff have current First Aid Certificates (in accordance with Departmental regulations). In the event of a serious accident, staff will always call parents (or emergency contacts) and if necessary, the ambulance or your doctor. Parents will be given a copy of all accident reports.

Immunisation - Pre School is required to keep a record of each child's immunisation status. In the event of an infectious disease, parents of children who are not fully immunised will be informed and may be required to keep their child at home. Please present all immunisation records at your interview.

Headlice - If staff discover headlice, they will inform parents who are expected to follow any recommended treatment. The child may return to Pre School only when the headlice have disappeared.

Smoking - Pre School is a smoke-free environment. There will be no smoking at any time.

Sun Safety - As part of our Sun Safety Policy, children are encouraged to wear a hat

and sunscreen at all times when playing outside.

Child Abuse - It is mandatory for Early Childhood staff to report suspected cases of child abuse to the Department of Community Services.

## **PARENT INVOLVEMENT**

All parents are welcome to visit Pre School at any time. There are many ways parents can be involved in their child's Pre School life.

Parent Participation Program - To enable parents to participate in their child's education and share any skills they have we have set up a parent participation program. Parents have the opportunity to join us during the day, for half an hour or longer. Parents can help prepare craft materials, do an art/craft activity with the children, read a story, teach the children a new song or dance, or just come along and join in activities with the children. This is a great opportunity to see your child "at work". Rosters are usually available to fill in towards the end of each term for the following term.

Excursions - Departmental regulations require that Pre School ask extra adults to accompany staff and children on walks to the library, Fire Station, Town Hall, Schools etc. An excursion is a planned activity in which the staff become responsible for the children outside the Pre School. Pre School will require written parental consent. The permission form gives details of where the excursion is to, how we will get there, for how long and at what cost.

Maintenance - You may volunteer to fix toys and equipment, maintain the garden, even clean the gutters!

Washing - If you are unable to do roster due to work or other commitments, doing a load of Pre School washing over the weekend is a great help. A washing roster will be available to fill in at the end of each term for the following term.

Fundraising - Please support any fundraising activity that comes along. It could be a sausage sizzle, catering, make-a-cake or selling raffle tickets to family and friends. The fundraising Committee always welcomes any extra help you can give.

Meetings - These are a great way to see how our Pre School is managed and for you to have some input. Always short, fun and on the 4th Thursday of each month at 7.00 pm.

## **FINANCE**

Funding for our Pre School is received from the NSW State Government through the Department of Community Services (DOCS). This amount covers part of the income needed to keep our Pre School running. Other income comes from fees and fundraising. Fundraising is an important part of our income that is necessary to keep fee increases to a minimum and so keep Pre School education available to all members of our community.

## **FEES**

Our aim is to provide affordable Pre School education for all children in our community.

Fees are charged on a per term basis and are set and reviewed annually by the management committee. Accounts for Term 1 will be issued during the first week of the new school year and will be payable by week three of that Term. Accounts for Terms 2, 3 & 4 Fees will be issued in advance during the last two weeks of the previous Term and payment **must** be received by week one of the following Term. All fee monies received will be receipted. An Economic Needs Subsidy is available, following Departmental policy, for families on a low income. Application forms for subsidy may be obtained from the Director and must be returned **promptly** to receive any benefit.

Cootamundra Centenary Pre School is a registered Child Care provider, through the Family Assistance Office. Once fees have been paid most families, no matter what their income, are entitled to claim Child Care benefits through Centrelink. Please ask the clerk for the required receipt.

More information relating to fees may be found in the Pre School Fees Policy, which must be read and signed by all parents on enrolment. All sessions must be paid for whether a child attends or not. For families with more than one child attending Pre School in the same year, (or whose children attend multiple days), and who do not qualify for any other subsidies, the following fee structure will apply:

- First and second day                      - Full rate fee
- Third day & subsequent days       - 25% fee discount applied
- This discount cannot be applied to occasional care days.

If a Monday Afternoon session (2 hours) is offered for 3 year olds, this is charged at a flat fee and no economic subsidy or sibling subsidy is available.

For children who leave before the end of Term, the following procedure will apply -

\*two weeks notice must be given by completion of the form below;

\*if no notice is given and the child is absent, fees will still be charged until Pre School has been notified.

.....  
I wish to advise that as from ..... (date), my child/children .....will no longer be attending Cootamundra Centenary Pre School. I understand that I am required to give two (2) weeks notice to Pre School.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Parent/Guardian)

Dated \_\_\_\_\_  
.....

When paying fees parents are encouraged to pay the Clerk directly, particularly if paying in cash. A receipt will either be issued immediately or will be left in the child's pocket for collection. Currently the Clerk's hours are 9.00 am - 1.00 pm Monday and Wednesday, and 9.30 am - 1.30 pm on Thursday. If this is not convenient, fees may be placed in the fee box in the Red Room. Please make sure fees are **securely** placed in an envelope, and if not enclosing the remittance advice, make sure the child's name, room and day/s of attendance are clearly marked on the envelope. Cheques are preferred if this method of payment is chosen. Families experiencing genuine financial difficulties are encouraged to speak to the President or the Fees Officer. Please read the Fees Policy closely for the procedure on outstanding Fees.

Please Note, a Membership Fee for each family is charged on the first fee account issued. This membership fee is a requirement by law and allows parents voting rights at Committee Meetings. The charge is **\$10.00** a year for each family. New parents (and continuing parents) are strongly encouraged to attend the Committee Meetings, which are informal and lots of fun.

Also included in the first fee account is an annual insurance cost of **\$5.00** per child which is a compulsory payment by Pre School for Children's Personal Accident Insurance. A non-refundable deposit of \$10 per session is to be paid when enrolling for the following year. This deposit will be deducted from the invoice for Term 1.

## **LAST DAY OF SCHOOL**

The designated last day of school is set aside as a cleaning day for staff and therefore no children will attend Pre School on that day.

## **SUGGESTIONS & GRIEVANCES**

The Pre-school encourages open communication between committee, staff and families, and family and community thoughts and ideas. Suggestions may be made directly to a staff member or committee member. Alternately, a suggestion may be made in writing and placed in the "fees box" in the Red room. Responses to suggestions will be made personally, at the monthly meeting or in the newsletter.

Grievances may be communicated

- directly to a staff member or committee member
- in writing, and placed in the " fees box" in the Red classroom
- in verbal or written form at a committee meeting (personally or through a committee member)

Grievances may be expressed anonymously. All grievances will be dealt with discreetly. A record of the grievance will be made in a Grievance Register. Depending on the nature of the grievance, responses may be communicated in writing to the person making the complaint, or to families in general via the newsletter.

If after using the three avenues for making a complaint, you remain dissatisfied with our response, you may wish to write to :

The Advisor  
Department of Community Services  
PO Box 2062  
WAGGA WAGGA NSW 2650  
ph : (02) 6921 3800

or

NSW Ombudsman  
Level 24 580 George Street  
Sydney NSW 2000

Ph 02 92861000  
Fax 02 92832911  
Tollfree 1800 451 524

**\* DAILY FEE RATES \*\***

**Cootamundra Centenary Pre School Association Inc**  
**351 Parker Street**  
**Cootamundra NSW 2590**

Telephone: 6942 2276 Fax: 6942 1115

**FEES FOR 2007:**

Income	Full Day
Up to \$20355	\$7.50
\$20356 - \$27476	\$12.60
\$27477 - \$40794	\$18.75
Over \$40795 (Full fees)	\$22.00

Occasional Care is charged at \$22.00 for a full day and is to be paid on arrival.

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**351 Parker Street**  
**Cootamundra NSW 2590**

Postal Address: PO Box 354  
Cootamundra NSW 2590  
Phone: (02) 6942 2276  
Fax: (02) 6942 1115

## STAFF INFORMATION

<b><u>BLUE ROOM</u></b>	Director/Teacher:	<u>Katrine Jones</u> Diploma of Teaching(Early Childhood) 14 years experience
	Assistants:	<u>Michelle Fuller</u> 19 years experience <u>Vicki Sutherland</u> Child Care Certificate 3 17 years experience
<b><u>RED ROOM</u></b>	Teachers:	<u>Diana Hill</u> Diploma of Teaching (Early Childhood) 21 years experience
	Assistants:	<u>Vicki Sutherland</u> Child Care Certificate 3 17 years experience <u>Marie Robinson</u> 17 years experience
<b><u>CLERK</u></b>		<u>Susan Schmidt</u> Associate Diploma of Business (Accounting) 23 years experience

## COMMITTEE INFORMATION 2007

<u>PRESIDENT:</u>	Tracy Guthrie
<u>VICE PRESIDENTS:</u>	Kerrie Murphy Ros Hicks
<u>SECRETARY:</u>	Alice Crawford
<u>TREASURER:</u>	Virginia Tooth

## *Notes*