

CHILDREN'S SERVICES

PARENT HANDBOOK 2020

- **Mallee Minors Child Care Centre**
 - **Ouyen**
 - **Sea Lake**
- **Underbool Early Learning Centre**
- **Murrayville Early Learning Centre**



Welcome - we hope you enjoy your time with us!

Mallee Track Health and Community Service

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Mallee Track Health and Community Service

Children's Services Regulation (MMCCC)/Education and Care Regulations (Kindergarten)

Mallee Track Health and Community Service is a not for profit, government funded agency providing a broad range of health, wellbeing and community services to the communities of the 'Mallee Track'.

MTHCS is an Approved Provider/Licensee of children's services in the following communities;

Ouyen	Long Day Care (MMCCC) (CCS Funding) 3 Year Old Preschool (MMCCC) (CCS Funding) Vacation Care Program (MMCCC) (CCS Funding) Funded Kindergarten (Kindergarten) 3 Year Old Kindergarten 4 th Term (Kindergarten)
Underbool	Integrated – Long Day Care (CCS Funding) Funded Kindergarten (MMCCC) Wrap Around Care (MMCCC) (CCS Funding)
Murrayville	Integrated – Long Day Care (CCS Funding) Funded Kindergarten (MMCCC) Wrap Around Care (MMCCC) (CCS Funding)
Sea Lake	Long Day Care (MMCCC) (CCS Funding) Funded Kindergarten (Kindergarten) 3 Year Old Kindergarten (Kindergarten) Wrap around care (Kindergarten) (CCS Funding)
Manangatang	Funded Kindergarten (Kindergarten) 3 Year Old Kindergarten (Kindergarten)

At the moment MTHCS receives funding from the Department of Social Services (DSS) for long day care programs. This funding arrangement changed on 2nd July 2018 from Budget Based Funding to Child Care Subsidy. All families will need to be registered with Centrelink to receive the Child Care Subsidy. This includes making a claim for the Child Care Subsidy and giving information about making a claim for the Child Care Subsidy and giving information about your family, whether you are working, receiving a payment from Centrelink, studying or volunteering. Once you have registered with Centrelink they will provide you with a Customer Reference Number (CRN) for you and your child. When you enrol your child into our child care service you will need to provide these numbers and your child's date of birth to our service.

In addition, some families can get extra help paying their child care fees on top of the Child Care Subsidy. This is called the Additional Child Care Subsidy. Your family may be eligible to receive this extra help if:

- You are in circumstances that require practical help to support your child's wellbeing.
- The child's grandparents who are on income support are looking after their grandchildren.
- You are experiencing temporary financial hardship and you need more financial support for a short time to help pay for child care.
- You are receiving an income support payment such as a parenting payment, Newstart allowance, Disability Support Pension or Youth Allowance and are doing training, study or another activity that will help you find work.

Kindergarten programs are funded by the Victorian Government utilising a per capita formula based on the number of enrolments at the kindergarten. There are a range of criteria that agencies must meet to be eligible for funding and deliver kindergarten programs.

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Children's services programs delivered by MTHCS (as outlined above) are licensed under Children's Services Regulations 2009 and the Children's Services Act 1996 (Long Day Care and Integration programs) or Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2010 for (Funded Kindergarten programs). The Act and the Regulations detail the requirements for operating a children's service and cover the whole scope of operations including; building requirements; staff qualifications; safety of children.

In Victoria, the Department of Education and Training (DET) is responsible for ensuring regulatory compliance and under law are allowed to enter licensed children's services premises without notice to observe the program and audit compliance.

In addition to scheduled 'accreditation inspections' MTHCS must provide periodic reports to DSS and DET about the program including; quality of the program; attendances and utilisation; budgets and financial reports.

A copy of the Children's Services Act 1996, Children's Services Regulations 2009, the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2010 is available at the appropriate centre for parents and families to access.

Privacy Policy Statement

In order to comply with the Children's Services Regulations and to support the delivery of a high quality program, we are required to collect personal information from you about you and your child before and during the course of enrolment in our service.

We are committed to protecting your privacy and we abide by the National Privacy Principles contained within the Privacy Act 1988. The information we collect will not be divulged to another person unless necessary for the care or education of your child, to manage medical treatment, expressly authorised by you-the parent or prescribed in the Children's Services Regulations 2009.

You may request to seek access to the information held about you and your child and we will provide access without undue delay- this access might be inspection of your child's records or by providing copies of information.

We will take reasonable steps to ensure that the details we keep about your family are accurate, complete and up to date but we seek your assistance in ensuring changes are notified to us so that we may continue to provide a high level of service to you and your family.

All privacy related comments, feedback or requests should be directed through the service manager or the MTHCS privacy officer - Mrs Pam Vallance.

Service Philosophy

In consultation with Staff and families, Mallee Minors Child Care Centres underwent a process together to decide on a relevant and current service statement to guide our practice and the running of the service:

Our service now has a service statement relevant to all Mallee Minors Child Care Centres. This statement is:

'Our team is committed to work in partnership with families to provide a flexible and nurturing environment'.

Each Centre has also developed their own individual Philosophy. This has been compiled from input by Educators and Families and is reflective of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework Principles that the Centre uses to guide their practices. Each Centre has on display a copy of their individual Philosophy.

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Child Safe Standards

Mallee Track Health and Community Service are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, as well as our staff, families and volunteers.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and in line with our policies and procedures. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety.

We have robust staff and volunteer recruitment processes, human resource management system and regular training on child abuse risks for all staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally diverse backgrounds, and providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000

If you want to report abuse call Child Protection Intake on 1300 664 977

Should you have concerns please speak to your Service Area Coordinator, or contact MTHCS Child Safety Officers Grant Doxey or Nadiene Lynch (03) 50921111

Dates for 2020

Long Day Care Commencement 2020	
Ouyen Tuesday 28 th January	Underbool Tuesday 28 th January
Murrayville Wednesday 29 th January	Sea Lake Tuesday 29 th January
Child Care Completion 2020	
Ouyen Wednesday 23 rd December	Underbool Tuesday 15 th December
Murrayville Wednesday 16 th December	Sea Lake Tuesday 22 nd December

School Terms for Kinder and Vacation Care Programs 2020	
Term 1 First day of Kinder for Underbool Thursday 30 th January 2020 Murrayville Friday 31 st January 2020 Ouyen Thursday 30 th January 2020 Sea Lake Thursday 30 th January 2020 Manangatang Monday 4 th February 2020	Term 1 28 th January to 27 th March
	Term 2 14 th April to 26 th June
	Term 3 13 th July to 18 th September
	Term 4 5 th October to 18 th December

Public Holidays	
Australia Day	Labour Day
Good Friday	Easter Monday
ANZAC Day	Queen's Birthday (if a week day)
AFL Grand Final Day (Friday before AFL Grand Final)	Pinnaroo Show Day (1 st Wednesday of October) - Murrayville
Melbourne Cup Day (1 st Tuesday of November) - Sea Lake, Ouyen & Underbool	

Mallee Track Health and Community Service

Administration and Operation

Centres, Office hours, Addresses and Phone numbers

MTHCS Early Years Services office hours vary from site to site.

Centre	Office Hours	Address & Phone Numbers
Ouyen Mallee Minors Child Care Centre	Monday to Friday 8:00am to 6:00pm	Hughes Street, Ouyen Ph 0350 910 292, 0350 921 077 Fax 0350 921703
Ouyen Vacation Care Program - School Holidays only (MMCCC)	Wednesday & Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm	Matheson St, Ouyen Ph 03 5091 0292, 03 5092 1077
Ouyen Preschool	Monday, Tuesday & Thursday Wednesday 4 th term 8.00am to 2.00pm	78 Oke Street, Ouyen 0350 921 347
Underbool Early Learning Centre (MMCCC)	Tuesday & Thursday 8:00am to 5:30pm	43 Cotter Street, Underbool Ph/Fax 0350 946 273
Murrayville Early Learning Centre (MMCCC)	Wednesday & Friday 8:00am to 5:30pm	Cnr Francis & Gray Street, Murrayville Ph/Fax 0350 952 137
Sea Lake Mallee Minors Child Care Centre	Monday & Tuesday 8:00am to 5:30pm	55 Mudge Street, Sea Lake
Sea Lake Preschool	Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8:00am to 3:30pm	Ph/Fax 0350 701 387
Manangatang Preschool	Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday 8:30am to 3:00pm	Robinvale Sea Lake road, Manangatang Ph/Fax 0350 351 368

Session times, Placement Allocations and Fees

Children can access any of the MTHCS Early Years Services at any time throughout the year.

- Long Day Care, Ouyen CC 3yr old Kinder and Sea Lake 3yr old Kinder fees are calculated at the hourly rate of \$9.50 per hour per session time. To receive a reduced fee for these services, families must apply for the Child Care Subsidy via their MyGov, CentreLink account.
- All funded kindergarten, Ouyen 3yr old preschool and Manangatang 3yr old preschool are charged at a term fee.

Centre	Fees	Session Type	Session Day	Session Times	Placement Allocations
Ouyen Mallee Minors Child Care	One full day \$95.25 (9.5hr)	Long Day Care	Monday to Friday	8:00am – 12:45pm 12:45pm – 5:30pm	24 Children 6 wks – 12yrs
	One half day \$45.13(4.75hr)	3 Year Old Kinder	To be confirmed	8:00am – 12:45pm Teacher from 8.30am – 12.45pm	24 Children 3yrs – 12yrs
	One full day \$76.00 (8hr) One half day \$38.00 (4hr)	Vacation Care Ouyen	Wednesday and Friday, School Holidays only	9:00am – 1:00pm, 1:00om – 5:00pm	30 Children 6yrs – 12yrs

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Ouyen Preschool	\$210 Per Term	4 Year Old Kindergarten	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday	8:30am – 1:30pm	24 Children 3yrs – 5yrs
	\$150 Per Term	3 Year Old Preschool	Wednesday 4 th Term only	Time to be confirmed	24 Children
Underbool Integrated Service	One full day \$85.50 (9hr) One half day \$42.75 (4.5hr)	Long Day Care	Tuesday and Thursday	8:00am – 12:30pm 12:30pm – 5:00pm	24 Children 6 wks – 12yrs
	\$210 Per Term	4 Year Old Kindergarten		8:30am – 4:00pm	24 Children 3yrs – 5yrs
	\$4.75 (1/2hr) \$9.50 (1hr)	Wrap around		8:00am – 8:30am 4:00pm – 5:00pm	24 Children 3yrs – 12yrs
Murrayville Integrated Service	One full day \$80.75 (8.5hr) One half day \$40.38(4.25hr)	Long Day Care	Wednesday and Friday	8:30am – 12:45pm 12:45pm – 5pm	24 Children 6 wks – 12yrs
	\$210 Per Term	4 Year Old Kindergarten		8:30am – 4pm,	24 Children 3yrs – 5yrs
	\$9.50 (1hr)	Wrap around		4:00pm – 5:00pm	24 Children 3yrs – 12yrs
Sea Lake	One full day \$85.50 (9hr) One half day \$42.75 (4.5hr)	Long Day Care	Monday and Tuesday	8:00am – 12:30pm 12:30pm – 5pm	24 Children 6 wks – 12yrs
	\$210 Per Term	4 Year Old Kindergarten	Wednesday, Thursday and Friday	10:00am – 3:00pm	24 Children 3yrs – 5yrs
	\$140 Per Term	3 Year Old Kindergarten	Wednesday and Thursday	8:30am – 1:30am	
	Per session \$23.75 (2.5hr)	Wrap around		1:30am – 4:00pm	
Manangatang	\$210 Per Term	4 Year Old Kindergarten	Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday	8:45am – 1:45am	20 Children 3yrs – 5yrs
	\$210 Per Term	3 Year Old Kindergarten		8:45am – 1:45pm	

Fees Policy

All Fees will set by Mallee Track Health and Community Service

- Long Day Care – Ouyen, Sea Lake, Underbool and Murrayville – Full day or Half day fee
- Integrated service – Children accessing Long Day Care after Kindergarten at Underbool and Murrayville and before school at Underbool – Session fee
- Underbool, Murrayville, Ouyen, Sea Lake and Manangatang Kindergartens – Term fee
- 3 Year Old Kindergarten at Ouyen Child Care – With in the Full day or Half day fee
- 3 Year Old Kindergarten at Sea Lake Kindergarten and Manangatang – Term fee
- Children accessing Wrap around care after Kindergarten at Sea Lake – Session fee
- Vacation Care – Full day or Half day fee

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- All fees are payable on invoice from Mallee Track Health and Community Service.
- Fees are nominated in the Parent Handbook.
- A receipt is issued once payment has been processed. This will include the parent's account name, date of payment, amount, subsidy entitlement if applicable etc.
- A statement will be issued including child's name, date attended, and fees due.
- Statements for all Early Years Services are issued on a fortnightly basis.
- Fees for Murrayville, Underbool, Ouyen, Sea Lake and Manangatang Kindergarten are payable at the start of each term on invoice from Mallee Minors Child Care Centre.
- Fees for Vacation Care Program are payable 'as you go', a statement is issued on a fortnightly basis.
- Parents will not be charged a Long Day Care, Integrated or Wrap around care fee if the booked day falls on a public holiday.
- Fees must be paid for all permanent bookings regardless of whether the child attends on that day or if the child is absent.

Payment Method

Preferred Option:

- Debit Success service with Direct Debit transfer, Credit card or BPay. A form providing bank details and giving permission is required to be completed. Families are able to arrange payments weekly, fortnightly or monthly through this service.

Other options:

- Payment to Mallee Track Health and Community Service through your own Direct Debit set up.
 - **Direct deposit** details are **BSB 013756 Account No. 290605963**
- please add **prefix MM**, your **child's surname** and **child's first initial** as reference (**e.g. MMsmithj**), so Administration staff at the hospital are able to distinguish between the services that operate out of MTHCS.
- Eftpos or credit card facilities at Ouyen or Sea Lake Mallee Track Health and Community Service main administration office.

Cash and Cheque:

Early Years staff are unable to handle cash or cheque payments.

- Cash to be paid at Ouyen or Sea Lake Mallee Track Health and Community Service main administration office.
- Cheque payments should be made out to Mallee Track Health and Community Service and can be paid at the Ouyen or Sea Lake Mallee track Health and Community Service main administration office or can be sent to PO Box 130 Ouyen Vic 3490.

In the case of a cheque being dishonoured, parents will be responsible for paying the dishonour fee.

Fee Subsidies & Exemptions

Long Day Care:

To claim the Child Care Subsidy and Additional Child Care Subsidy, families will need to complete an online Child Care Subsidy assessment using their Centrelink online account through myGov.

- Step 1. Sign in to your myGov account. If you don't have one, you will need to create a myGov account.
- Step 2. Link myGov to Centrelink. You can do this under Services.
- Step 3. Select Centrelink

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- Step 4. Select Make a Claim
- Step 5. Select Families
- Step 6. Complete the Child Care Subsidy Assessment.

You will be asked to provide some new information and confirm your current details, including:

1. Combined family income
2. Activity level of parents
3. Type of child care service

If families do not complete their assessment, they will not receive any child care fee assistance and be out of pocket for full child care fee amount.

The Subsidy can not be claimed at the end of the financial year when you do your tax.

The Subsidy is paid direct to your child care provider to ensure they can manage the service day to day operational expenses.

Preschool:

Parents attending a funded kindergarten program who are eligible for a fee subsidy should provide the relevant information and documentation (proof of status) on the enrolment form for their child.

Fee subsidy is available to the following groups;

- Health Care Card holders
- Pensioner Concession Card holders
- Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Temporary protection/ Humanitarian visas 447,451,785 or 786
- Department of veterans Affairs Gold Card
- Triplets or quadruplets

Families eligible for fee subsidies do not have to pay kindergarten fees (note long day care fees are still payable at the set rate if applicable).

Under the Victorian Government's 'Early Start Kindergarten' program, eligible 3 year olds may be able to attend a kindergarten program for no charge if they meet the following criteria;

- Child will be 3 by 30th April on year of entry, and
- Child is known to child protection services, or
- Is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander

Non Funded Attendance:

Families are only able to claim the Kindergarten subsidy from one Kindergarten at a time.

- If children are accessing Sea Lake, Ouyen or Manangatang Kindergarten as an additional Kindergarten, term fees will apply.
- If children are accessing Underbool or Murrayville Kindergartens as an additional Kindergarten, Child Care Fees will apply.
- Families will be required to complete a Complying Written Agreement if claiming the subsidy, or a Relevant Arrangement if not claiming the subsidy.
- All families must confirm booking arrangements prior to enrolling into care.

Overdue Fees

- Any family who is 4 weeks late with their fees will receive a reminder phone call. A discussion regarding payment options i.e. Payment in full or arranging an affordable payment will be discussed.
- Payments will be monitored.
- If after 2 weeks of being notified of your bad debt, full payment, part payment or a payment plan agreement has not been made, management will suspend your child/ren's bookings.

Exceptions will be considered on a case by case basis and at the discretion of management.

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If there are difficulties associated with the payment of fees, we welcome the opportunity to discuss this in preference to suspending or cancelling your booking.

All discussions will be treated in confidence and with sensitivity.

Our goal is to ensure your child/s participation in the program whilst working pro-actively to respond to any financial barriers which may prevent participation.

Payment Plan

Families who are having genuine difficulty paying their fees will be encouraged to commence a payment plan with the Early Years Program Leader.

The payment plan will be designed to clear debts while maintaining regular payments, and it will be sustainable for both parties. The recommended payment each fortnight is 25% - 50% (this % may change depending on families ability to pay) of the family's regular fees in addition to any new fees accruing.

The Early Years Program Leader will write the payment plan and terms of agreement, and the family and Early Years Program Leader will sign a copy for each to keep.

Cancelling Long Day Care

Permanent Bookings:

If the child will be leaving any of the programs, the Ouyen Mallee Minors Child Care office and the Kindergarten educator must be advised as soon as possible.

Casual Bookings:

If you wish to cancel your child's casual booking you must give notice by 6.00pm the night before your child is due to attend. This can be done by:

- Calling the Ouyen Mallee Minors Child Care Centre office (during office hours) or
- texting a message to 0429 921 111

If this does not occur, the normal booking fee will be charged.

The phone message will be noted on the Daily Booking Sheet.

Permanently booked days for the Long Day Care program may be swapped at the discretion of centre management.

Absences

If your child has a permanent booking and they will be absent, you are required to contact the Ouyen Office as soon as possible. A message can be left on the answering machine for after hour's calls. Normal fees will be billed for all absentees.

- In order to have your co-contribution to your child care fee waived:
 - The Centre your child attends must be at full capacity;
 - And you must have given prior notification or notified the Ouyen Office on 0350 921077 or 0350910292 before 8:30am the morning of your child being absent;
 - And another child (within the Regulations of Staff/Child ratios) on a waiting list is able to fill the absent booking at the Centre your child would have attended.

If a child is absent for more than 42 days in a financial year, your service may still be able to charge a fee to families and receive the subsidy. However, for this to occur, the absence must be due to specific reasons or full fees for your booking will be charged.

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There is no limit on these days but you may be required to provide documentation to support the absence. The additional absence days reasons are:

- Illness (with a medical certificate), or another absence due to sickness of the child, a carer, carer's partner or sibling, supported by medical certificates.
- Temporary closure of a school or pupil-free days.
- Up to 28 days following a period of local emergency and the service is closed or the child is unable to travel to the service due to the emergency.
- Shared care arrangements due to a court order, parenting plan or parenting order, where a copy has been provided to the service.
- The child is not immunised, the absence occurs during the immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner certifies exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child.
- Attendance at preschool.

Diversity & Inclusion

The aim of MTHCS is to provide a service setting that allows children to realise their full potential regardless of race, colour, religion, gender or ability.

This aim is supported through access to a variety of resources to be integrated in to the program and through creating an environment where diversity is recognised and appreciated.

The service also aims to support the child's realisation of themselves and their 'identity'.

Types of Education & Care

There are a number of options available for families in relation to the type of care they can nominate.

- **Permanent** bookings are available for families who wish to reserve a place for their child on a regular day or session with in that year. A permanent booking for your child means that you must pay for their attendance regardless of whether they are absent for illness or other reasons. Parents will not be charged a long day care fee if the booked day falls on a public holiday.
- **Casual** bookings are available for families whose needs vary from week to week. We ask that families appreciate that the centre is a busy place and that there is not always the capacity to cater for casual requests. A child who attends the centre on a casual basis does not have a definite place at the centre and their place is subject to availability of care on the day.
- **4 Year old Preschool** bookings are available for families with children eligible to attend preschool at Ouyen, Underbool, Murrayville, Sea Lake and Manangatang Kindergartens.

Priority of Access

Our aim is to provide places to families with the greatest need for childcare support first as stipulated by the Australian Government Priority Access Guidelines.

Children who are enrolled at the centre or whose families are seeking a place at the centre will be given Priority of Access in accordance with the guidelines that have been established by the Australian Government. Below is the Priority of access levels which the centre must follow when filling vacancies.

Priorities

- Priority 1: a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2: a child of a single parent or parents who satisfy the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the 'A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999'
- Priority 3: any other child.

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Within these main categories, priority should also be given to the following children:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- children in families which include a disabled person
- children in families which include an individual whose adjusted taxable income does not exceed the lower income threshold of \$45,114 for 2017-18, or who or whose partner is on income support
- children in families from a non-English speaking background
- children in socially isolated families
- children of single parents.

Within these three categories priority is also given to the following children:

- Children of employees of MTHCS

Waiting Lists

If a placement is not available at your chosen centre, you may be offered a place at an alternative location or you may be offered alternative days/ times.

If preferred days and sessions are not available, your child's details may be placed on a waiting list- waiting lists are reviewed regularly.

If casual bookings are available - these may be offered if suitable.

Staffing

MTHCS employs a range of staff within the centres who all bring a variety of experience and knowledge to the children.

Prior to employment, all staff working within children's programs must complete a satisfactory police records check and a working with children's check.

Qualifications of staff vary depending on the program and ratio requirements - as determined by the Children's Services Regulations 2009, qualifications include;

- Bachelor in Early Childhood Education (or equivalent)
- Diploma in Children's Services
- Certificate III in Children's Services

All staff at MTHCS have completed or are studying for a children's services qualification. Staff also attend in training and professional development to maintain their enthusiasm and knowledge of contemporary practices within the area of early years education and care.

Mandatory training completed by staff includes;

- First Aid & Basic Life Support
- Management of Anaphylaxis
- Administration of auto-injection device
- Asthma management
- Fire & Emergency management
- Inappropriate Workplace Behaviour
- Hand Hygiene
- Manual Handling

Teacher/Room Leader at each Centre

Ouyen Long Day Care Over 3 Room – To be confirmed

Ouyen Long Day Care Over 3 Year old preschool – To be confirmed

Ouyen Long Day Care Under 3 Room – Lisa Bursill

Underbool Preschool and Long Day Care – Bree O'Shannessy

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Murrayville Preschool and Long Day Care – Flynn Hayes
Vacation Care – Danielle Reeves
Sea Lake Long Day Care – Maddy McInerney
Sea Lake Preschool – Bronwen Alday and Sandra George
Ouyen Preschool – Louise Fitzpatrick-Leach
Manangatang Preschool – Merrilyn Grant

The Children's Services Regulations 2009 specify the basic ratios of staff to children as: -

- o 1 staff to 4 children under 3
- o 1 staff to 15 children over 3
- o 1 diploma qualified or teaching staff member to every group of 12 children under three years old
- o 1 diploma qualified or teaching staff member to every group of 30 children over three years old

From time to time, MTHCS has students or volunteers who attend the centre, all students and volunteers are supervised by staff at all times.

Enrolment and Admission

The Long Day Care program takes enrolments for children between the ages of 6 weeks and 12 years of age. The number of school age children attending the centre at one time must not exceed 30% of the total number of places. Ouyen and Sea Lake – 7 children, Underbool – 6 children and, Murrayville - 7 children.

The Vacation Care Program takes enrolments for children already attending Primary School (5 years to 12 years of age). The child must already have attended School in the year they wish to attend Vacation Care.

For kindergarten programs, children must be aged 4 by 30th April of the year of entry for a funded kindergarten place. Early Start programs are available to eligible 3 year olds in Underbool and Murrayville. The criteria - must be aged 3 by 30th April of the year of enrolment and be of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Islander or have had contact with Child Protection Agency. The child can not start at the service until they are 3yrs old so as to keep in line with Educator/Child Ratios.

MTHCS has a number of responsibilities in relation to admission of your child into the service as per the Children's Service Regulations 2009. All information required by the centre is outlined in the enrolment form. We ask that parents complete all of the information required on the form. Failure to do so will put staff and the centre in breach of the regulations.

Under NO circumstances can a child commence care without the appropriate forms completed, including custody orders. This is a legal requirement.

Please talk to staff at the centre if you have any queries in relation to any of the details on the enrolment form.

Steps in the enrolment and admission process are:

1. Make initial contact with the centre. A link to the online enrolment form will be emailed to you.
2. Complete the online enrolment form.
3. A parent information pack will be given or posted out to you.
4. Sign any other forms supplied in the pack.
5. Return any other forms supplied in the pack to Early Years Ouyen Office and if desired, make an appointment with the centre to discuss your child's care requirements with the service manager or room leader.
6. We ask that you bring your **child's maternal health book** with you for staff to sight, this is required to be sighted at all services attending. As of 1st January 2016, new laws require your child to be

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immunised to attend Child Care and Pre School. A copy of your child's immunisation history statement is required, or an exemption must be obtained if your child is not immunised due to a medical reason.

7. Once your place has been confirmed, refer to the orientation process outlined in the parent handbook- confirmation of enrolment will be provided once your enrolment form and all paperwork has been given to the office, acceptance of enrolment pack is not to be taken as confirmed enrolment.

All families' records are kept on computer and on file. We ask families to keep their child's records up to date. Any changes during the course of the year should be made by logging onto the QK Enrol website and updating and uploading any details and forms or by completing a 'change of details' form available from staff at each centre to enable service records to be updated by admin staff.

If you have a change in any of the following please let the staff know:

- o Child's diet
- o Child's allergies or medical requirements
- o Change of address/phone
- o Immunisations updates
- o Change of work/study; address/phone
- o Change to emergency contacts or Additional authorised persons (authorised nominees)
- o Custody orders

Parent Access and Custody

The Children's Service Regulations 2009 require the service to keep all records of custody and access arrangements for the children. During enrolment, parents are asked to provide copies of any custody and access papers.

- o **PLEASE NOTE THAT THE STAFF WILL NOT PERMIT A CHILD TO LEAVE THE CENTRE WITHOUT APPROPRIATE WRITTEN AUTHORISATION FROM PARENTS/LEGAL GUARDIANS OR AUTHORISED NOMINEES NAMED ON THE CHILD'S ENROLMENT FORM.**
- o A parent who is prohibited by a court order from having contact with the child will not be permitted to collect the child from the centre.
- o Persons unknown to staff will be questioned on their arrival and custody forms will be checked. If a person is not listed they will be unable to collect the child from the Centre and parents will be notified by phone.

Please Note: Staff will contact Police if the safety of the child or service staff is threatened:

- o **If the situation escalates and becomes potentially violent whilst waiting for the Police and custodial parent, staff must consider the safety of themselves, the children and other educators.**
- o **If the situation becomes threatening towards any educator or children, then the child should be released to the non-custodial party. The safety of the child taken by the non-custodial party will become the responsibility of the local Police, Federal Police, government agencies and the court system.**

Staff are to follow the Personal Threat – Code Black Procedure and record as much information as possible about the non-custodial party. Staff will also be required to complete an Incident Report for the relevant government departments.

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Child Abuse

Mallee Track Health and Community Service is committed to ensuring the health, wellbeing and safety of all children within their services, not just in early years.

- It is a legal requirement of all child carers to report suspected maltreatment of children, or those children at risk of maltreatment. This should be reported to the manager of the service. Assistance can be given if needed to inform the Department of Health and Human Services/Child Protection.
- The family services team can often provide positive support and assistance for families who may not be coping with the challenging tasks of parenting- this service is available without judgement. The family services team works with families to try and avoid contact with DHHS Child Protection Unit. For more information, please speak to staff or contact Child FIRST/Orange Door on 1800290943

Arrival & Departure of Children

Children must be escorted to and from the centre by an authorised person. The person who delivers the child is required to sign the child in using the Qik Kids Kiosk, recording the time of arrival. The person who is collecting the child must sign the child out using the Qik Kids Kiosk, recording the time of departure, so that in case of an emergency, there is an accurate record of attendance.

Always bring your child into the centre and speak to staff to make sure they are aware that your child has arrived. Information can also be shared as to the estimated time of departure and who will be collecting the child and any other instructions that may be required for the day.

The front doors and gates must be closed carefully each time you enter or leave the building, for protection of all children.

Parents may stay as long as they wish.

Children attending the centre by bus will be greeted by staff at the bus and signed in accordingly by staff.

Children attending the centre by child care vehicle from Kindergarten, school or a private residence by Mallee Minors staff will be signed in and or out accordingly by staff using the Qik Kids Kiosk and transported in a registered MTHCS vehicle in the appropriate car restraint.

Late Pick-Ups

Each Centre's opening and closing times must be strictly adhered to.

It is the parent's responsibility to have taken the child into their care by these times.

If a child is collected late,

- The staff member will record this information on the Daily Booking Sheet so Administration staff can record as a note in the child's enrolment file.
- The parent will still sign the child out on Sign In/Sign Out Kiosk.
- Staff will assist the family by having a conversation about alternate arrangements that could be made for the collection of the child.
- Administration Staff will contact the parent to notify them of their first and final late collection warning.
- If a child is recorded as being collected late after the first and final warning, a late fine will be imposed to meet additional staff costs:
- \$1 per minute per child. If a family is in default more than 3 times, the fine will double.

If we are unable to contact anyone (including authorised nominees) and a parent has not contacted the Centre by end of session/day:

- Staff will wait with the child until parents or authorised nominees can be contacted.

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- A member of management or another Early Years staff member may be called in to allow staff to go home.
- Police may be used to assist in locating parents.

Aims of the Children's Program

Curriculum:

Educators aim to create positive learning environments by working with families to guide experiences for each child. Educators will observe children and facilitate their learning to provide each child with an individualised portfolio by documenting their learning throughout the year. Children and their families will be encouraged to participate in the ongoing process to promote engaged learning. The role of family and community within children's learning is important and recognised. Our service takes a family centred approach within our education and care programs- input from families is encouraged at any stage and can be supported through a number of ways including;

- sharing of experiences away from the centre (e.g. holidays & weekend activities of significance to the child)
- sharing of areas of particular interest to the child
- sharing of significant events within the Child's family or environment
- sharing of significant cultural or religious events

The curriculum within children's services programs at MTHCS is based upon recognised early childhood frameworks;

- The Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (VEYLDF),
- Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
- and the 'My Time ,Our Place'- framework for school age care

The frameworks guide our work with children through three elements;

- Principles- these guide our work with children and assisting each child's progress towards learning outcomes
- Practices- relate to how we put our principles into action using a 'pedagogical' approach (skills and knowledge that help children to learn)
- Learning Outcomes- recognise that each child progresses at their own individual rate. Support and guides individual learning programs for children

Learning and Play:

Staff plan to the children's individual interests and needs to develop children's skills across the learning outcomes of Identity, Community, Wellbeing, Learning and Communication. Children are encouraged to learn at their own pace, guided by their interests and skills and facilitated by their child care educator.

VEYLF Learning Outcomes:

Through these learning outcomes we are able to enhance children's skills in the following areas;

- **Identity: Children have a strong sense of identity.**
This is achieved by:
 - Children feeling safe secure and supported, by building secure relationships with family first then with consistent carers.
 - Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency, by building on relationships and feeling that they belong.

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- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities by working together, negotiating sharing, discovering new challenges and self-control.
- Learning to interact to others with care, empathy and respect by showing concern and helping others, participating in dramatic play and feeling respected and recognised for who they are.
- **Community: Children are connected with and contribute to their world.**
This is achieved by:
 - Children developing a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal rights and responsibilities necessary for active civic participation, by understanding that they can belong to many different groups in the community and that they have a right to be heard as well as others having that same right.
 - Responding to diversity with respect, by showing concern for other's but also coexisting with others and recognising similarities and differences between people.
 - Becoming aware of fairness by thinking critically about choices they make, whether it's fair or bias and to be able to act with compassion and kindness.
 - Becoming socially responsible and show respect for the environment by contributing to group activities as well as caring for and understanding about the impact we have on the environment.
- **Wellbeing: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.**
This is achieved by:
 - Children becoming strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing, by cooperating and working with others, coping and understanding their emotions and feelings and being aware of other's emotions and feelings.
 - Taking increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing by understanding their own body needs of hunger, thirst, special awareness, personal hygiene, coordination, good nutrition and safe play.
- **Learning: Children are confident and involved learners.**
This is achieved by:
 - Developing dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity by using play to investigate and explore ideas, persisting and persevering even when it's difficult and by following their own ideas and creativity.
 - Developing range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesising, researching and investigating by adapting to new situations, make predictions, use trial and error to wondering what would happen if..
 - Transferring and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another by making connections between experiences and practicing what they have learnt.
 - Children resourcing their own learning through connecting with people, places, technologies and natural and processed materials by exploring through their senses, experimenting with different materials and pulling apart and putting things back together.
- **Communication: Children are effective communicators.**
This is achieved by:
 - Interacting verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes by responding to what they see, feel, hear, taste and touch and able to be understood in their home language.

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- Children engage with a range of texts and get meaning from these texts by listening and responding to sounds and patterns in speech and stories and responding to written words and symbols.
- Expressing ideas and make meaning using a range of media by re-enacting stories with their own culture, creating art with writing equipment, sculpture, dance, drama, music and movement.
- Beginning to understand how symbols and patterns work by connecting patterns and symbols to speech and text and making understanding relationships between sorting and comparing attributes of objects and materials within their day.
- Using information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking by roleplaying with real or imaginary props and technologies in everyday life to make sense of their world.

Programming & Evaluation:

Within the centre, the 'Educational Leader' works with parents and other educators to provide a high quality program tailored to each child's unique and individual needs and interest.

It aims to honouring and creating an awareness of cultural diversity and equity.

We incorporate an emergent curriculum so modifications and extensions can be made to the program.

Records for the children will include:

- written observations
- developmental checklists/ learning stories
- Information about children's favourite activities
- anecdotal and running records
- comments and feedback from parents
- group observations
- photographs

Information gathered is then used to develop each child's program

The written program is displayed on the noticeboard, in each room. Staff assess the success their program by:

- achievement of goals for individual children and the group
- suitability of resources
- desired / spontaneous outcomes
- children's responsiveness to experiences
- feedback

Observations of all children enrolled in our service will be documented and kept for future reference and reflection, e.g. through use of portfolios. Children's portfolios or other records will be available for a child's family members to look at but remains the property of the Service for the duration of the child's enrolment.

Portfolios and children's records will be added to regularly by educators, families and children and reflected upon by educators to ensure programming for each child remains relevant to their interests and developmental stage.

Children's Progress:

If you wish to discuss your child's progress please contact the Educators and we would be happy to arrange a convenient time to discuss your child's development.

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For children transitioning to school a transition statement will be developed with parent input toward the end of the year. The 'Transition Learning & Development Statement' requires you to consent for it to be forwarded to the child's school.

The statement aims to;

- summarise the strengths of a child's learning and development as they enter school
- identifies their individual approaches to learning and interests
- indicate how the child can be supported to continue learning.

Parent Involvement

Parents are the primary caregivers of their children and we believe good communication between parents and staff complements what you do at home.

Parents are welcome to attend the Centres at any time to observe their children and join in activities. Parents are encouraged to speak to the educator regarding any concerns they may have about their child's progress.

There are a number of ways in which communication between the centre and the families may occur including;

- Informal talks on arrival/ departure
- Parent/ staff interviews
- Newsletter
- Parent committee
- Notices displayed at the centre
- Surveys
- Compliments, concerns & suggestions- feedback forms
- Communication book

Parents and carers are welcomed and encouraged to participate in activities with your child at the centre. These include:

- Assisting on excursions
- Lending objects for units of study
- Coming and talking about your job
- Helping your child at home with the concepts we are studying here (see newsletter)
- Helping your child prepare for "Show and Tell"
- Helping to provide treats or other items for our parties
- Attending your child's birthday party
- Coming in to read to the children
- Volunteering to help with projects or games

Please speak to your child's teacher about becoming involved and they will set up a schedule for you.

Orientation Process

We believe orientation is an important process that enables parents and children to feel welcome and safe in the new surroundings.

All families are encouraged to attend an orientation that suits the needs of their family situation. The precise format and length of orientation will depend on each individual child and family.

Please discuss your child's needs with the service manager or staff in service manager's absence – from the beginning and throughout this process – in order to appropriately tailor this program to your needs.

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For children entering the kindergarten program, the teacher may arrange for an interview with the parents if the child has not previously been attending the centre.

Transitioning Between Home and the Centre

There are many ways that staff and parents can work together to help your child manage the change. Staff members are available to help during this important 'settling in' time. Staff are aware that every parent and child adjusts differently and needs time to feel comfortable and secure in a new situation.

What to expect:

Most infants up to 6 or 8 months make a smooth transition to a new environment, leaving is often harder for the parent than the baby.

A child between 6 months and 3 years may scream, cry or cling when you say goodbye. Children at this stage need more experience to be sure they can trust you to come back. It may take several weeks for your child to feel comfortable and secure in a new situation.

Older children take their cues from you. If you look at the new arrangement as the best for everyone in your family, children from 2 to 6 generally adapt quite well.

Preparing your child:

Toddlers and older children will benefit from many chances to talk about the new arrangements. During your orientation visits you can discuss transition routines where you can prepare your child for the events that will happen when they attend the centre without you e.g. "when I drop you off we'll find a puzzle for you to play with, then I will say goodbye and it will be time for a story and then morning tea". You can talk about the building as you drive in and the activities your child may do whilst at the centre or you may even wish to take a photo of the room or outside area to show others in the family.

Saying good bye:

Separation can be stressful for both the parent and the child, especially in the early days. Please help us to make this time less stressful by adhering to the following guidelines:

- o Sign in together and greet staff
- o Follow centres routine for lunchboxes and drink bottles. Establish a departure routine e.g. wave at the window, play with a puzzle, cars etc.

ALWAYS SAY GOODBYE, please do not attempt to sneak out without saying goodbye to your child.

- o Say goodbye... Give your child a good-bye kiss and explain that it is time for you to leave and you will return later. Connect this with an activity e.g. "I'll be back to pick you up after you have had (lunch, sleep, afternoon tea etc.).
- o As difficult as it may be, make your good-bye short and sweet, even if your child is crying. The longer the goodbye, the longer the child will cry.
- o Mallee Minors staff have experience in handling these difficult, but normal occurrences. They will comfort your child and involve him/her in an activity. Most of the time, your child will have stopped crying before you get out of the parking lot of the facility.
- o Do not linger around after you have said goodbye, this can confuse your child and prolong the crying.
- o You are more than welcome to ring the centre during the day to see how your child is coping.

End of day routine

Both parents and children may be low on energy and patience at the end of a long day.

Staff understand that at the end of the day a parent's work is still not finished with the usual tasks of caring for your family for the rest of the evening.

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- It is not uncommon for children to become unsettled when you arrive to collect them. They may need time to process their day for the transition from child care back to home.

Parents and staff can assist this transition by:

- Maintaining a predictable pick up schedule
- Let staff and the child know if you are going to be later than usual
- Being just as friendly and firm about going home as you were in leaving them in the morning.

Rituals can help

- Picking up belongings, checking locker
- Helping to put away materials
- Saying goodbye to staff and children

Staff would be happy to discuss your child's specific needs; we also have literature and resources available on the subject.

Health & Safety

Immunisation:

With the new law 'No Jab No Play' commencing from 1 January 2016, children will be required to be up to date with their vaccinations before they can commence at early childhood education and care services (excluding outside school hours care).

An exemption will be required for those children who cannot be immunised due to medical reasons. Early childhood services have been provided with information to assist parents to access immunisations and obtain the necessary documentation within 16 weeks of commencing at the service. During this time, the Service will encourage parents to have their child immunised. If he/she is not immunised then these children may need to be excluded from the Centre during outbreaks of infectious disease, e.g. measles, whooping cough. This policy does not apply to children who are not yet old enough for certain immunisations.

This policy is designed to protect the child who is not immunised due to age or for medical reasons and it also reduces the potential spread of contagious diseases in our community.

The service would expect that all children be up to date with the childhood immunisation schedule.

Sickness:

The wellbeing of each child is of highest priority. Children must be kept away OR will be sent home if they appear unwell or have suffered

- vomiting (in previous 48 hours),
- diarrhoea (in previous 48 hours),
- fever more than 38°C,
- Conjunctivitis,
- Meningococcal infection, Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)
- Symptoms of chicken pox, measles, mumps,
- Or have an undiagnosed rash.
- A written doctor's certificate may be required after evidence of such symptoms.

It is recommended that children, who are physically unwell (an indication would be very unsettled/lethargic/pale/temperature/chills and/or requiring Panadol or Nurophen prior to attending), shall be excluded from attending school, pre-school and childcare centres.

We also ask that if you do administer medication to your child on the day that they attend Child Care or Kinder, that you inform staff as this will assist them in understanding and caring for your

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child's needs more thoroughly. You are welcome to send along the child's medication if they require additional doses for the day; a medication form must be completed.

Educators will have discretionary power to send a child home in order to protect all children. A strict Exclusion Policy (see government guidelines) will be enforced, much as there is sympathy for the plight of working parents.

Regulations about infectious/communicable diseases are displayed at the centre. All parents will be notified if there is an outbreak of an infectious disease.

Whenever possible with the outbreak of any infection illness/disease, written information will be available for parents.

Parents or Emergency contacts will be notified as soon as possible of an illness or infectious disease in a child. Appropriate care will be provided until the child can be removed from the centre. In case of serious accident, illness or emergency whilst a child is in our care, a staff member will accompany the child by ambulance to the casualty section of the hospital, or a doctor.

Minor Accidents:

Any accident or injury that occurs to a child whilst they are in our care will be documented. Staff will inform parents as soon as practical either by phone or at collection time and parents will be required to sign the form to acknowledge they have been informed of the incident.

Medication:

Medication must be provided by the child's parents including the following -

- Original container. Medication will only be administered from the original container.
- Original label that is clearly readable and identifies use by date.
- Child's name clearly on the container.
- Any instructions attached to the medication or related to the use of the medication.
- For prescribed medications, the container must contain the original label with the name of the child to whom it is prescribed.
- Any verbal or written instructions provided by the child's registered medical practitioner.

Medications must be handed to staff in the room for safe storage-

- a medication form must be completed to enable us to administer the medication to your child.

Self-Administration of Medication

- **Our service does not permit children to self-administer medication.**
- Medication may only be administered by the service with written authority signed by the child's parent or other responsible individual named in the child's enrolment record that is authorised by the child's parents to make decisions about the administration of medication.

To comply with the Children's Service regulations **medications not meeting the specified labelling criteria (including over the counter and homeopathic medicines) will not be administered.**

Medical & Healthcare Needs:

If your child has any specific medical or healthcare needs or conditions, please notify staff. We will work with you to develop a management plan for any conditions and develop a risk reduction plan so that we may provide the best care and support for your child.

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Allergies & Anaphylaxis:

Staff at MTHCS children's services receive training on Anaphylaxis and severe allergic reactions. Parents are required to advise the centre in writing if their child has been diagnosed with anaphylaxis by a registered medical practitioner, this is done by completing the appropriate section on the enrolment form.

The centre will provide an action plan for anaphylaxis which must be completed and returned prior to commencement of the child's care at the centre. A risk reduction plan will also be completed.

The centre has an anaphylaxis procedure which is available for review at any time and will be provided to parents of a child with diagnosed Anaphylaxis at enrolment.

Parents are responsible for informing staff of a diagnosis of anaphylaxis or any relevant allergies their child(ren) have.

Children with a diagnosed anaphylactic reaction cannot attend the centre without their medication (adrenaline auto-injection device)

When a child attending the Centre has been identified and documented as having a food allergy or anaphylaxis e.g. eggs, specific dietary needs or food exclusions, strategies will be put in place to reduce the risk of contamination. These strategies may include:

- Checking all children's lunch boxes for any allergen, dietary or exclusion foods.
- Discreetly position the children with allergy, dietary or exclusion foods away from the children who contain these foods in their lunch boxes during meal times.
- Enforce hand washing and hygiene practices.

See www.allergyfacts.org.au for resources and information related to asthma and allergies

Asthma:

Staff at MTHCS children's services centres will endeavour to ensure that children who suffer from an asthma attack whilst attending the centre are cared for appropriately and according to Asthma Victoria guidelines.

Each parent / guardian is required to advise the centre in writing if their child has been diagnosed with an asthma condition by a registered medical practitioner; this is done through completion of the appropriate section on the enrolment form.

The centre will provide to the parent / guardian upon enrolment, an Asthma Record Card and Asthma First Aid Plan which must be completed and returned prior to the commencement of the child's care at the Centre. A form from the Dr is also acceptable. A risk reduction plan will also be completed.

The centre has an Asthma procedure which is available for review at any time and will be provided to parents of a child with Asthma at enrolment. The Asthma procedure details the responsibilities of parents and staff and the action that will be taken in the event of an Asthma attack, or suspected Asthma attack.

Parents are responsible for informing staff of a diagnosis or history of Asthma at enrolment or if this should be diagnosed after enrolment as soon as is possible.

Parents must ensure that Asthma medication is not left in the child's bag but is personally handed to a member of staff when dropping the child off.

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First time asthma or suspected asthma attacks:

If it is suspected that a child is having a first time asthma attack, staff will immediately administer first aid, phone 000 for an ambulance and notify the parent / guardian.

See www.asthma.org.au for information and resources related to asthma.

Food Nutrition and Beverage:

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea are always social occasions. They provide the opportunity for your child to rest for a short period and to socialise with other children and adults. Meal times provide the children with the opportunity to develop self-help skills, and the ability to choose what they would like to eat from their lunch box after their healthier options are explored first.

Meal times are flexible and are based on individual's routines developed by parents and to suit daily requirements of the children. We ask that you provide lunch for your child in a labelled container, and place in the refrigerator, in the Centre. Food/bottles may be heated at the centre.

It would be appreciated if parents could remember to provide healthy lunches. We ask for safety reasons that NO GLASS bottled drinks (including infant formula etc.) are brought into the centre. The Centre provides milk and water, fresh fruit, dry biscuits and cheese for morning and afternoon tea. We encourage water as the drink of choice. On some occasions, staff will prepare additional foods such as yoghurt, muffins or other substitutes for morning or afternoon tea. These additional foods allow children to explore different tastes, textures and smells.

Children will not share food, plates or utensils. Food that falls on the ground will be discarded. Children are encouraged to be seated while eating and drinking for health and safety.

We recognise that microwaves are an efficient and safe way to heat infant formula and cow's milk. Please advise staff of an alternate method of heating you child's bottle if microwave is not your choice. Breast milk is heated using a bottle warmer.

Allergies and special diets will be catered for, as well as the differing needs of some children (e.g. babies, vegetarians etc.) If your child has a food allergy, please advise staff so that an allergy plan can be completed or if your child has specific dietary needs, food exclusions for cultural, medical or other reasons, please advise staff at enrolment or through a Change of Details Form so staff can consider this in our operation plan and meal time routine.

To promote healthy diet and nutrition MTHCS recommend not to bring the following foods at the centres;

- Fizzy drinks and energy/ sports drinks
- Lollies or foods with high sugar or fat content

We support children to;

- Drink water
- Eat fruit and vegetables
- Distinguish between healthy and 'sometimes' foods
- Explore with foods that are unfamiliar

Parents are reminded that Mallee Track children's services operates a 'nut aware' policy and strategies will be put in place when children with nut allergies/anaphylaxis are attending the centre. Families may be asked to reduce/restrict any nuts or nut containing food products in lunch boxes during this time.

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Behaviour Guidance Policy

At MTHCS children's services, the behaviour and guidance techniques used by the staff are based on Early Childhood theorists.

- Guidance of children is based on age and developmental stage expectations, and will be positive and supportive
- Consistent routines will be provided to enable the children to know what to expect and what is expected of them
- Staff will attempt to change the environment rather than the child's behaviour.
- Staff will try and avoid conflict by distracting from a situation or giving another toy to play with
- Staff will support children in understanding and appreciating the rights, feelings and needs of others
- Staff aim to provide the children with clear explanations as to why the behaviour is unacceptable- learn limits and rules of the group
- Staff will treat all children with respect as individuals and will role model positive behaviours
- Parents are asked not to discipline any child other than their own at the Centre
- No child within the Centre will be subject to corporal punishment. No punishment shall be associated with food, rest, toilet learning or isolation

In our approach, we try to avoid making the child feel frightened, ashamed, embarrassed, insecure or bad about him/herself. Remember that toddlers need to have many successful experiences so that they feel good about themselves and develop a positive self-image.

Sun Safe Policy

MTHCS children's services centres have developed this policy to aim to ensure that all children attending the centre are protected from skin damage caused by the harmful UV rays of the sun.

- It is implemented throughout the year, but with particular emphasis in Terms 1 and 4 (January to April and September to December as per cancer council recommendations).
- A hat will be given to your child at the commencement of the year and it will be kept at the centre. Hats must be worn for outdoor activities when the UV rating is 3 or above.
- Sunscreen will be supplied and applied to children with parent consent and staff before each outdoor session and at regular intervals during the outdoor time.
- If families choose to supply sunscreen for their child, the sunscreen will need to be clearly labelled with the child's name.
- Children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play.
- Management will ensure there are sufficient numbers of shelters and trees providing shade in the Centre grounds.
- Excursions and all other outdoor activities will be scheduled before 11am and after 3pm daylight saving time whenever possible. The availability of shade will be considered when planning excursions and outdoor activities.
- The Sun-Smart policy will be reinforced in a positive way through parent newsletters, noticeboards and meetings.

When enrolling their child, parents will be:

- Informed of the Sun-Smart policy
- Advised of the practice of application of SPF 30 Broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen to their child (if your child requires a different product than the one the centre provides- please provide this)
- Required to give authority and consent for staff to administer sunscreen.

See www.sunsmart.com.au for information and resources on skin cancer and sun protection.

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Hygiene Control

All the staff at the Centre are aware of the importance of hygiene in childcare. Staff are asking for your assistance in using the **hand rub on arrival and departure** of the centre for **yourselves and your children** as a strategy for reducing infectious germs. We understand that the hand rub may cause irritation to delicate skin on your younger children and would appreciate your assistance in washing their hands with soap and water on arrival and departure.

Staff are aware of the need for personal hygiene, wearing disposable gloves for nappy changes and blood spills, as well as washing their hands after nappy changes, toileting, nose wiping, or preparing and serving food.

Staff maintain a high degree of cleanliness in all food preparation, bathroom and toilet/nappy change areas.

The rooms are cleaned nightly by cleaners and all areas maintained by staff throughout the day. If your child has a dummy then you should also provide a plastic container for it to go in.

Environment

Mallee Track accepts responsibility for promoting and maintaining a high standard of safety management within all activities. Staff and service users are responsible for identifying potential hazards which must be identified and brought to the attention of the service manager, so measures can be taken to reduce risks. Prior to children and families arriving at the centre, staff conduct a visual assessment of the environment to identify any potential hazards or areas requiring attention.

Each Centre is equipped with recycling bins and every effort will be made to reduce waste, recycle rubbish and unused materials.

Rest Times

Rest or quiet times are an essential part of the day for all of the children in the Centre. Some of the children use this time to sleep; others play quietly in a peaceful and relaxing environment. The transition from play to sleep or lunch to sleep aims to be a smooth and consistent one, in an environment where the children feel secure.

- The lights are lowered, soothing music is played and the staff spend time helping each of the children to bed whilst encouraging independence in dressing and undressing.
- Individual children's sleep routines are developed with the help of a child's parents to complement the routine that is followed at home. Staff will endeavour to actively follow through any requests parents have, such as limiting sleep times.
- Children are welcome to bring along any security items, such as dummies or teddy. Beds and cots are supplied at the centre.
- Parents/guardians must provide bedding for children requiring a rest time. Bedding will be sent home on the last day of the week the child attends for laundering. Please return them each week.

Nappy Service

If your child does not have enough nappies for changes during the day, we will have spare nappies stored for these emergencies.

If your child requires a spare nappy you will be notified beforehand, and if used, a charge of \$1 per nappy will be added to your childcare account, this is to enable us to continue to provide this service for all children.

Please be aware that if you are unable to be contacted, a nappy will be provided for your child at the \$1 cost.

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Children's Clothing

Children should be dressed in play clothes so there will not be a problem about spoiling good clothes. We encourage children to be as independent as possible- it is a good idea to dress them in clothing that can easily be removed for toileting and rest times, as well as sun safe clothing that covers the shoulders giving protection from the harmful UV sun rays.

Smocks are provided for use by children, however, we support learning through participation and sometimes "messy" activities such as paint, wet sand and water can find its way around smocks and onto clothing.

A complete set of spare clothing should be kept in your child's bag in case of accidents with extra items to cater for temperature changes in between seasons.

Shoes should be well fitting, comfortable and suitable for outdoor play and climbing.

Children's Library

The kindergarten programs at Underbool and Murrayville offer preschool children the opportunity to borrow from their library throughout the year. When children are ready to care for books, they may borrow a book from the library to read at home. Books are to be changed by parents at the beginning of sessions. A cloth bag (approximately 40cm x 30cm) must be provided and used to carry and store the book. Please encourage your child to enjoy and care for books by reading the stories and supervising the use of books.

Working Bees

At Underbool and Murrayville Centres the parent committee is responsible for upkeep of the grounds and a major working bee is held each year to carry out maintenance to equipment and the yard, if required minor working bees are held during the year. Your assistance is always appreciated.

Birthday Parties

Birthdays are a special time and we like to celebrate them by holding an informal celebration for each child by singing happy birthday. You are welcome to bring a special snack for your child to share at kinder/child care. You are welcome to join your child during his/her birthday celebration. If you choose to send party bags to the centre, please make sure there is one for every child in the class. Gifts for the birthday child are strictly optional although we recommend that the child receives the gift outside the centre.

What to Bring

Please name all items

- Back pack or nappy bag to carry child's belongings in
- Healthy lunch and water in a bottle
- Formula or bottles of milk
- Nappies and nappy cream if used
- Snuggle/dummy if used
- Bedding- Cot sheet and blanket , pillow (if used) if child having a sleep/rest
- Spare clothing, jacket for cold/wet weather
- Suitable closed in shoes
- Sun screen if not using centre's
- Ventolin, antihistamine, Epi-pen if prescribed

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Information on Display

In accordance with the Children's Services Regulations part 4 regulation 40, the following information will be clearly displayed at each children's service;

- Hours and days of operation
- Licensee details
- Names of all nominees
- Name of Primary nominee
- Name of the licensee, approved provider or nominee currently present and in charge of the day
- Outline of the educational or recreational program
- Fees
- Emergency evacuation procedure
- Name and phone number of person whom complaints to be addressed to
- Address and phone number of responsible office of Department
- List of information available for inspection under regulation 41
- If applicable, notice stating children at risk of anaphylaxis present

Concerns & Grievances

The service's aim is to welcome parent's comments and concerns in any area of our work and encourage parents to speak with us if you have any concerns or comments that may help us improve our Centre or our performance.

Where a parent has a concern regarding the care of their child, they are encouraged to raise the issue with the service manager directly or through Comments, Concerns and Suggestions forms available at each centre. Anonymous comments, concerns and suggestions can be made and the service will respect this wish. However, anonymous comments, concerns and suggestions are difficult for us to respond to individually and it can sometimes be difficult to put in place improvements if the issue is unclear. Anonymous feedback will be dealt with to the best of our ability given the information provided. If the matter is not dealt with to their satisfaction, they may request a meeting with the Mallee Track Health and Community Service Director of Community Services to discuss the issue.

If the grievance or concern is unable to be resolved the parent may wish to contact the Children's Services Adviser, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Bendigo on 5440 3111.

Policies and Procedures

In addition to the policies and procedures outlined above MTHCS children's services have policies and procedures in place as required by the Children's Services Regulations 2009 these include but not limited to all;

- Admission requirements and enrolment procedures
- Arrangement for payment of fees
- Employment of qualified staff
- Educational or recreational programs
- Behaviour management
- Delivery and collection of children
- Dealing with illness and emergency care
- Dealing with infectious disease
- Dealing with complaints
- Anaphylaxis management

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These policies and procedures are available at each centre for families to review and comment. In accordance with regulation 42 where a change to a policy or procedure may have a significant impact on the service provision or family's ability to use the service, a minimum of 28 days' notice will be given before making any changes. Notice may be displayed at a visible place at the centre.

Parent Handbook

The service handbook will now be available for you to access via Mallee Track Health & Community Services web site found at <http://www.mthcs.com.au> ; email; or hard copy.

If you are an existing parent who does not require the full handbook, we are now able to offer an abridged version of the handbook accessed via the web site; email or hard copy detailing specific changes.

All new members of the service will be given the full version, but please notify staff whether you want this as a hard copy; email attachment; or by access through the web site.

Parenting Resources and Information

Mallee Track Health and Community Service children's services staff and management are committed to supporting families with parenting and children's development. Staff are available to provide support or arrange referral to specialist services, please speak to centre staff or contact 50921111.

The following services are also available at Mallee Track Children's Services;

Learning Library

This service is available to families at each centre, for the payment of a small annual fee; parents are able to access a range of toys for up to 2 weeks to support their children's learning and development. In addition to toys, books, floor puzzles and CDs are also available.

Parenting Resource Library

A range of books, DVDs and other information is available for parents to borrow on a wide variety of parenting issues including;

- Behaviour management
- Healthy Eating
- Toileting
- Early learning and development
- And much more

Please ask staff at your local centre for more information about these services or contact the Ouyen centre on 5091 0292.

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Supporting and Governing Agencies

Department of Education and Training

This Children's Services Advisers make regular inspection visits to all licensed children's services to assess compliance with the children's services regulations and to assess the quality of the program. The department can also assist parents with any complaints or issues they may have with the service.

Loddon Mallee Region

P.O. Box 442

Bendigo Vic 3552. Telephone – 1300 338 691

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority

ACECQA is responsible for promoting quality and continuous improvement in early childhood education and care services. ACECQA will guide implementation of the National Quality Framework and support state regulatory authorities such as DET.

Mallee Family Care

This service offers advice and support for families with a broad range of issues including; family services and disabilities

112 Ninth Street

Mildura Vic 3490. Telephone – (03) 50 235 966

List of Web Based Resources

The following are a list of web based resources that may be of interest to parents and families;

www.acecqa.gov.au

www.education.vic.gov.au

www.raisingchildren.net.au

www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

www.cybersmart.gov.au

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RECOMMENDED MINIMUM PERIODS OF EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOL, PRE-SCHOOL AND CHILDCARE CENTRES FOR CASES OF AND CONTACT WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Condition	Exclusion of case	Exclusion of Contacts
* <i>Campylobacter</i> infection	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Candidiasis (thrush)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	Not excluded	Not excluded
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from the eyes has stopped, unless a doctor has diagnosed non-infectious conjunctivitis	Not excluded
* <i>Cryptosporidium</i>	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
*Diarrhoea (no organism identified)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Fungal infections of the skin or nails (e.g. ringworm, tinea)	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate antifungal treatment	Not excluded
*Giardiasis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Glandular fever	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hand, foot and mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
<i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib)	Exclude until the person has received appropriate antibiotic treatment for at least 4 days	Not Excluded Contact a public health unit for specialist advice
Head lice (pediculosis)	Not excluded if effective treatment begins before the next day at the education and care service	Not excluded
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received and until at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice	Not excluded Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about vaccinating or treating children in the same room or group
Hepatitis B	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hepatitis C	Not excluded	Not excluded
Herpes simplex (cold sores, fever blisters)	Not excluded if the person can maintain hygiene practices to minimise the risk of transmission If the person cannot comply with these practices (e.g. because they are too young), they should be excluded until the sores are dry. Sores should be covered with a dressing, where possible	Not excluded
Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)	Not excluded If the person is severely immune compromised, they will be vulnerable to other people's illnesses	Not excluded
Human parvovirus B19 (fifth disease, slapped cheek syndrome)	Not excluded	Not excluded
Hydatid disease	Not excluded	Not excluded
Impetigo (school sores)	Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has started. Any sores on exposed skin should be covered with a watertight dressing	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Listeriosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Measles	Exclude for 4 days after the onset of the rash.	Immunised and immune contacts are not excluded For non-immunised contacts, contact a public health unit for specialist advice All immunocompromised children should be excluded until 14 days after the

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		appearance of the rash in the last case
Meningitis (viral)	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Meningococcal infection	Exclude until appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed	Not excluded Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about antibiotics and/or vaccination for people who were in the same room as the case
Molluscum contagiosum	Not excluded	Not excluded
Mumps	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
*Norovirus	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours	Not excluded
Pertussis (whooping cough)	Exclude until 5 days after starting appropriate antibiotic treatment, or for 21 days from the onset of coughing	Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about excluding non-vaccinated contacts, or antibiotics
Pneumococcal disease	Exclude until person is well	Not excluded
Roseola	Not excluded	Not excluded
Ross River virus	Not excluded	Not excluded
*Rotavirus infection	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 24 hours	Not excluded
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until the person has fully recovered or for at least 4 days after the onset of the rash	Not excluded
*Salmonellosis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Scabies	Exclude until the day after starting appropriate treatment	Not excluded
*Shigellosis	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Streptococcal sore throat (including scarlet fever and Tonsillitis)	Exclude until the person has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and feels well	Not excluded
Toxoplasmosis	Not excluded	Not excluded
Tuberculosis (TB)	Exclude until medical certificate is produced from the appropriate health authority	Not excluded Contact a public health unit for specialist advice about screening, antibiotics or specialist TB clinics
Varicella (chickenpox)	Exclude until all blisters have dried—this is usually at least 5 days after the rash first appeared in non-immunised children, and less in immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (eg, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection, they are at high risk of developing severe disease Otherwise, not excluded
*Viral gastroenteritis (viral diarrhoea)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
Worms	Exclude if loose bowel motions are occurring Exclusion is not necessary if treatment has occurred	Not excluded
*It is Mallee Minors Child Care Centre Policy that any Staff member or Child presenting with a symptom of Vomiting or Diarrhoea, will be excluded from the Centre until there has not been a loose bowel motion or vomiting for 48 hours.		
In this Schedule, medical certificate means a certificate of a registered medical practitioner.		
This table is based on Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 - Schedule 7 Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts, and National Health and Medical Research Council publications: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services (5 th Edition)		