Welcome to Apollo Parkways Pre-School. We hope that the year we spend together is a very happy and rewarding one for your family. We hope that this booklet can provide you with some basic information about your kindergarten.

You and ................................… are invited to join us at the pre-school for an orientation visit on Thursday the 29th of November 1:30-3:00pm. At this visit you will have an opportunity to meet your child's teacher, Tamara McGregor and her co-educator Sharyn Basil and other parents and children in Blue Group. This informal session will be an opportunity for you and your child to become more familiar with our Kindergarten.

We are looking forward to your visit and hope that you will come and join us for a short indoor and outdoor play.

To begin the year we have scheduled a brief meeting on Thursday the 31stof January from ………………....…………………….. for you and your child to attend with a small number of other children in Blue Group. We will discuss some general information about kindergarten and you will have time to ask questions and share additional information with staff.

On this day we would like to take a photo of you and your child for display in the front foyer. Having our families photos displayed helps everyone to put names to faces and it also helps the children to feel part of our Pre-school community.

**SETTLING TIMES**

Please note that for the first few weeks of kinder we recommend shorter session times to allow the children to settle in, these times are detailed below. The children commence in half groups for the first two sessions, which allows staff to spend more time with each of them. If any children have problems leaving their parent, we are better able to comfort them with a smaller number of children present. It is easier for staff to assist children and for staff to get to know them in smaller groups.

Sometimes what we think is a short time may seem like a very long time to a child in an unfamiliar environment. It is much better in the long term for your child to want to stay longer than to be upset and concerned about when you will be coming back.

We understand the settling in times may be inconvenient for families but we have found this way of introducing the children to their new group to be most beneficial in the long term.

**We recommend the children attend their first two sessions in half groups. Your child is in group ….... for the first two sessions. After their first two sessions all the children will attend at the same times.**

**We recommend the following settling-in attendance times for your child:-**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day/Date** | **Time** | **Session** |
| **Tuesday 5th of Feb** | **8:30-11:00** | **Group A** |
| **Tuesday 5th of Feb** | **12:30-3:00** | **Group B** |
| **Thursday 7th Feb** | **12:30-2:00** | **Group A** |
| **Thursday 7th Feb** | **2:30-4:00** | **Group B** |
| **Friday 8th Feb** | **8:30-12:00** | **Full Group (No Lunch)** |
| **Tuesday 12th Feb** | **8:30- 2:30** | **Full Group (Lunches begin)** |
| **Thursday 14th Feb** | **12:30-4:15** | **Full Group Full Time** |
| **Friday 15th Feb** | **8.30-1:00** | **Full Group Full Time** |

**Note: Lunch Begins Week 2 (Tuesday and Friday)**

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**Red Group attends: Mondays 11.30am to 4.15pm**

**Wednesdays 8.30 am to 3.15pm**

**Thursdays 8.30am to 12.00pm**

**Blue Group attends: Tuesday 8.30am to 3:15pm**

**Thursday 12.30pm to 4.15pm**

**Friday 8.30am to 1:00pm**

**TERM DATES 2016**

**Term 1: 30 January (staff commence) to 31 March**

**Term 2: 18 April to 30 June**

**Term 3: 17 July to 22 September**

**Term 4: 9 October to 22 December**

**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

Our educational program will follow the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and Being, Belonging, Becoming – The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia. Our educational leader at Apollo Parkways Pre-school is Helen Stray.

**PHILOSOPHY OF APOLLO PARKWAYS PRE-SCHOOL**

We believe that children have a natural love of learning and they are seen as independent and capable learners. We aim to provide a nurturing environment, where learning is enjoyable, meaningful and related to children’s interests. Opportunities for children to explore their natural environment are provided. We endeavour to enhance and build on the children’s skills and knowledge already acquired and scaffold their learning to provide a sound foundation for future learning.

We strive to create a strong sense of community and to create a respectful environment in which the children feel safe and valued. Each child’s individuality is respected and we support the cultural and religious diversity of families.

Apollo Parkways Pre-school acknowledge the importance of parents and staff working together as partners in a learning community to promote children’s well-being, education and development.

**arriving/leaving**

Children must be brought into the kindergarten and collected from inside. This is for their safety. Children must be signed into the kindergarten at the beginning of each session and out of the kindergarten at the end of every session in the attendance book provided.

The kindergarten door remains closed until the session commences as we are attending to final preparations for the session. During the session the door remains locked for security reasons. There is a bell that may be rung when access is required.

If you need to pick up your child early anytime, just let us know and come in to get them when you need to.

Please advise staff if someone else is to collect your child. It is essential that their name is listed in the space provided on the enrolment form you are asked to complete prior to the start of the year. (This list can be added to throughout the year.) This person must sign his/her name in the space provided in the attendance book.

Please help us keep all the children safe by only allowing your own children to exit through the gate after sessions. Please use the bottom gate that opens onto the footpath. Do not use the gate that opens directly onto the driveway unless you are on fruit duty and parked in the car park as it is not safe for the children to use.

## LATE COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

If children are not collected by the authorised parents/guardians within fifteen minutes from the end of the session the teacher will ring the parent/guardian. In the case of children not being collected within thirty minutes after the end of the session, the staff will contact the emergency contact specified on the enrolment form. Our policy on late collection will then be followed. Staff will follow regulations in relation to staff/child ratios. A late collection fee may apply to assist with the covering of wages.

**WHAT TO BRING**

Children will need to bring a backpack large enough to contain a drink bottle, hat, spare clothes, lunch box and work done at kinder that needs to go home etc. Please put your child's name clearly on the bag.

Please make sure that clothing is marked with your child’s name. This is especially important for Kinder uniforms and hats.

We ask each child to bring two pieces of fruit/vegetables each week. Apples, bananas, pears, oranges, carrot, cheese, apricots, celery, sultanas, grapes etc are cut up and shared among the group. Our parent on Kinder duty prepares and serves the fruit.

**WHAT TO WEAR**

All clothing and footwear needs to be suitable for messy activities, climbing and other physical activities. Smocks are provided and worn at messy activities, but do not always prevent children getting paint, paste or clay on their clothing. (For paint stains soak first in cold water.)

Tracksuits and leggings are ideal and preferable to skirts and long dresses which can get caught when climbing.

Thongs or other slip on shoes are not safe to wear when climbing. Runners and shoes without a slippery smooth sole are the preferred footwear. Enclosed footwear is the safest.

Our Kinder is a SunSmart Kinder. Wide brimmed, legionnaire or bucket hats are compulsory for outside play between September and April. Sunscreen is necessary in these months as well. Parents will need to apply sunscreen to their own children before they commence Kinder during these months. The UV SunSmart index for each day is on our website and parents can download it from the SunSmart website. Children are encouraged to wear clothes which cover and protect their skin rather than singlets and ‘strappy’ dresses.

We have a hat pocket for each child to store their hat at Kinder. In the event that a child’s hat is misplaced, one of the Kinder’s hats can be worn. These hats will be washed after being worn. If the occasion should arise that a hat is unavailable then the child will be permitted to play in the shaded areas only. Our sun protection policy is available on our website for parents to read. Apollo Parkways Pre-school hats are available for families to purchase.

Coats are essential for outdoor play in winter and on cooler days. Children will be encouraged to put on and take off their own coats.

**windcheaters/t-shirts**

Windcheaters, T-Shirts and hats bearing the Apollo Parkways Pre-School logo are available for purchase through the Pre-school. These items can be viewed and ordered at our Annual General Meeting. They are usually available in the first week of term one. The uniform is optional.

## COMMUNICATIONS

We use various means of communicating with our families.

Our Kinder newsletter is emailed to families each month.

Staff and committee also use email and ‘Team App’ to communicate with families. For email communications directly to our group please use our Blue Group email address, apollo.parkways.blue[@kindergarten.vic.gov.au](mailto:red@kindergarten.vic.gov.au). This email address is managed by Blue Group staff.

Important notices, such as committee news, receipts, etc. will be placed in the hanging pockets which are located on the hooks outside the front door. Please ensure you check these pockets regularly.

Please check the notice boards for reminders and any items of interest.

Occasionally communication will be via text message. We will require a number we can text to in emergencies.

You will be asked to fill in our communications form and include details of the various ways we can communicate with you.

## WEBSITE

Our web address is apolloparkwayspreschool.com.au.

Our website contains information about our Kinder including information for current families.

Parents are encouraged to check our website regularly for current newsletters and information, to become familiar with our policies and for links to useful websites.

**illnesses**

Our regulations require that your child must be excluded from kindergarten in order to prevent contact with other children, if he/she has any infectious disease. Please notify staff as soon as you are aware that your child has or may have contracted any type of infectious illness. A schedule of illnesses and exclusion times is displayed in the foyer and can be accessed on the web <http://ideas.health.vic.gov.au/guidelines/school-exclusion-table.asp> and on the Kinder website.

If your child has been ill, has a runny nose, has diarrhoea etc., please do not send him/her to kindergarten. A child who is not well is unable to manage a busy session and risks passing his/her illness onto others.

## ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS AT KINDERGARTEN

If a child becomes ill while attending Kindergarten, staff will contact the parent/guardian or if unable to contact parents get in touch with the medical emergency contact person to make arrangements for the child to be collected as soon as possible. An accident/injury/illness book is kept on the premises, listing accidents, injuries and illness received by a child whilst attending the kindergarten. Following any one entry, parents will be required to sign the accident/injury/illness book to verify that they were informed of the accident/injury/illness that occurred.

## MEDICATION

On the occasions where parents require staff at the pre-school to administer medication to their child the following requirements must be met:

* The parent must give written authorisation which will be incorporated into the Medication Book at the kindergarten. Parents will need to come in and sign this book when the medication is required for their child both at the beginning and end of the session.
* All medication must be kept in its original container bearing its original label.
* Medication cannot be kept in children’s bags and must be handed to staff.

**IMMUNIZATION**

Please note: From 1 January 2016 under the **‘No Jab No Play Law’**, all parents/guardians seeking to enrol their child at an early childhood service in Victoria must provide evidence that their child is:

* Fully immunised for their age OR
* On a vaccination catch-up program OR
* Unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons.

Please advise us of this information by providing your child’s Immunisation History Statement, or any other relevant documentation.

You can get copy of your child’s most recent Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) as evidence of your child's immunisation. To request an Immunisation History Statement contact the ACIR:

• phone 1800 653 809

• email acir@medicareaustralia.gov.au

• visit Medicare Australia online

• visit a Medicare or Centrelink office.

If your child is not fully immunised (or if you are not sure if your child is fully immunised, or you’re interested to find out more) you may wish to:

• locate and consult your nearest immunisation provider or

• talk to your regular family doctor

**Parking**

It is requested that for safety reasons, only the parents on duty for the day and the staff use the car park. By minimising the traffic flow in the car park, we will create a safer environment for the children.

Please note that the Fire Brigade and local council require access to the surrounding areas of the kindergarten via the access gate at the rear of the car park. Please don’t park in front of the access gate.

Some of the side streets near the Kinder are quieter than Plenty River Drive. The Kinder can be accessed along the walking track, through the parkland and under Plenty River Drive.

If you need to cross Plenty River Drive to get to the kindergarten, we suggest you to use the walkway under the road near the Milk Bar.

**VOLUNTEER TASKS**

Due to our regulations and policies family members are requested to read and sign our code of conduct.

Those wishing to work within our groups also need to have a Working with Children Check. The Working with Children Check helps protect children from physical and sexual harm. The scheme aims to prevent those who pose a risk to children from working or volunteering with them

Obtaining a Working with Children Check takes about three weeks and is free of charge for volunteers. The process of obtaining a check is described at the working with children website, <http://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/home/applications/apply+for+a+check/apply+in+victoria>

We recommend that all parents obtain a Working with Children Check before the commencement of the year so they are available to assist with ‘fruit duty’ and can also volunteer to assist on excursions.

Voluntary help at the kindergarten is required for many tasks some of which are:-

**Kinder Duty**

Helping with Kinder duty provides a good opportunity to enjoy a session of kindergarten with your child. Toddlers are most welcome to accompany you when on duty, but please remember to supervise them carefully, tidy up after them and ensure they don't interrupt group times. The duty person may attend for the whole session or come for part of it to prepare the fruit and help with cleaning and tidying up at the end.

We ask our Kinder duty helpers to prepare the fruit for the children and clean up afterwards. Other tasks such as filing the children’s work so it is ready to be collected, helping at activities and helping prepare for activities may be requested.

An empty roster will be available each term for parents to fill in days that suit them to help. If everyone helps, coming in twice a term would ensure that we had assistance each day. If we have assistance we can provide extra experiences for the children.

**Laundry**

Each family is asked to volunteer approximately twice a year to wash the children's hand towels, smocks, tea-towels etc. These can be picked up at the end of your child's last session of the week and returned at the start of the following week.

**Working Bees**

Working-bees are vital to keep the building and playground safe, attractive and in compliance with the regulations. Each family is asked to pay a maintenance levy. This levy is reimbursed after families attend a working bee and a ‘mini-bee’ during the year to assist with basic maintenance, repairs, sweeping etc.

The committee will attend a general clean-up working bee at the beginning of the year to prepare the kindergarten for the coming year.

Please remember many hands make light work and working bees can be a great way of getting to know people within your child's kindergarten and they can be great fun for the entire family.

**BIRTHDAYS**

We like to celebrate the children's birthdays at Kinder. We chat with the child about their special day. The children are able to decorate a pretend cake and the group sing happy birthday to them. We give them our best wishes for a happy day.

It is not necessary for families to bring in anything on their child’s birthday but some families may like to bring in a **small** cake to be shared with fruit. Bringing lollies does not fit in with our healthy eating policy.

# TOYS

Children are encouraged to use the toys and equipment provided at Kinder. We understand that at times children may bring in toys from home. Children will need to be responsible for their own toys from home. It can be distressing if toys get lost or broken.

**COMMITTEE**

Our Kinder is managed by a parent committee. Each year at our AGM in November a new committee for the coming year is elected. This committee is responsible for the management of the kindergarten. Parents are all encouraged to consider nominating for committee as they play a vital role in providing a valuable experience for the children. Our committee currently consists of 14 members and includes President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, Enrolment Officer, Policy Officer, Maintenance Officer, Assistant Maintenance Officer, Fundraising Officer, Assistant Fundraising Officer, Grants Officer, Assistant Grants Officer, Newsletter Officer and IT/Publicity Officer.

Committee has appointed paid administrators who assist with the administration of our Kinder.

**COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The City of Banyule owns the kindergarten building, and is responsible for some maintenance.

The Kinder Committee is responsible for other things, including the following:-

* Employment of staff
* Daily operations of the Kinder
* Maintenance of the playground area and minor indoor maintenance
* Payment of bills (taken from fees) eg. Wages, electricity, gas, cleaning, equipment and supplies etc.
* Cleaning of the kindergarten.
* Purchase, upkeep and replacement of all equipment used by the children

**Payment of money**

Any payment eg for fees, windcheaters, fundraising that is brought to kindergarten must be in an envelope marked with your child’s name, group, details and amount. Fees need to be placed in the slot on the office door. Other monies should be put in the ‘mail box’ in the foyer (below the first aid cabinet). This is most important to avoid any money being misplaced.  
**Please note that fees cannot be paid by cash. Fees can be paid by cheque, money order or by internet banking. If you use internet banking the Administrator needs to have notification and details of your fees transactions. These details can be placed in the slot in the office door.**

**FUNDRAISING**

Our fundraising committee raise funds to purchase equipment for the children and is an important aspect of our Kindergarten. The committee will attempt to keep fundraising to those items they feel are beneficial and of good value. Should you have any ideas in this regard do not hesitate to share them with the committee, or become one of the fundraising team!! When fundraising notices come around please support your kinder if you can as it is the children who will benefit from the money raised.

**INCURSIONS/excursions/special events**

The committee, in conjunction with the staff, will decide what incursions, excursions and events the kindergarten will take part in for the year and these will be within the regulations for pre-schools. A risk assessment will be done prior to any excursion/incursion. The cost of planned incursions/excursions is included in the fees. You will be notified of and your permission will be sought when we are planning an excursion.

We expect that we will have excursions to the Diamond Valley Library and to Partingtons Flat to fly kites. We are also planning to have a dance program over a number of weeks in term two or three. We plan to have the Responsible Pet Program visit in term one. We plan to have at least one other incursion/excursion during the year.

Other special events usually include a picnic tea with families early in the year, Mother’s Day morning tea, Fathers Evening, Grandparents Day and Pyjama Day.

**library**

Library borrowing will commence in Term 2. We propose that ‘Library Day’ will be Wednesday (Red group)/Thursday (Blue Group). Children will be able to borrow a book from the Kindergarten's library and keep it at home until the next week. A new one will be given out once a week if the previous book has been returned. We hope that families will enjoy sharing these books together. **Children will need to have a material library bag to protect their book as they carry them to and from kinder.** Please help your child look after the books whilst they are in your care.

We also have a parent library located in the kindergarten kitchen. It has books, journals, and pamphlets on a wide range of topics, plus some children's books especially written to help parents explain various situations. There are also a few DVD’s. Please feel free to browse through these when you are on duty, or at the end of the session. All are available for loan. Simply write your name, the date, the title of the book/DVD and its number in the book provided.

**POLICIES**

Our Kinder has numerous policies. It is important that families know where they are and how they can be accessed. The policy folder is in the foyer and contains a copy of all policies. The policies are also available on our website at www.apolloparkwayspreschool.com.au under information for current families.

Parents need to be familiar with our emergency evacuation plan and to have read and follow our code of conduct policy.

Our policies are continually updated by our committee, usually in a three year cycle, to ensure they contain current information. When policies are updated parents are notified in the newsletter and given the opportunity to read them and comment on them. As our policies are updated and passed by committee they will be updated in our policy folder and on our website for families to read and view.

**CHILD PROTECTION – MANDATORY REPORTING**

Under the National Framework for Protecting Australia’s Children (2009), protecting children is everyone’s responsibility: parents, communities, governments and business all have a role to play. The National Framework represents an unprecedented level of collaboration between Australian State and Territory governments and non-government organisations to protect children. The National Framework provides the foundation for improving the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children.

Child Protection policy is based on the principle of partnership and shared responsibility across a broad range of human service professionals, including schools and licensed children’s services. Most children are best protected and cared for within their own family; however, when parents, carers or guardians are unwilling or unable to protect their children from significant harm, the protection of the child becomes the responsibility of the wider community and, at times, requires statutory Child Protection intervention.

Licensed children’s services and Victorian schools play an important role in the prevention of child abuse and neglect through their access to information about family functioning and the needs of children. When a school or licensed children’s service staff member forms a belief that a child has been harmed or is at risk of being harmed, they must take action that is timely, respectful and co-ordinated.

# CONCERNS/COMPLAINTS

We have a concerns/complaints policy which is available for parents to read in the policy folder in the foyer and on the website. Also displayed in the foyer are the phone numbers of our President and of DEECD.

Parents with a concern/complaint need to follow the procedures in the policy and the Kinder will work with them to endeavour to resolve them.

If you have concerns relating to children’s development, the program, discipline or any other problem relating to the children, please discuss them with your child’s teacher.

**BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE**

Behaviour guidance procedures will at all times be carried out within the Regulations and policies of this Centre. Staff will not allow any child to use behaviour that will endanger themselves or others, cause bodily harm to children or staff or use inappropriate social behaviour. In circumstances where a child’s behaviour is not within these limits, parents will be asked to come and discuss this problem. Our behaviour management policy will be followed.

**EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES**

The procedures for an emergency evacuation are included below, displayed on the notice board in the foyer and in the kitchen and on our website. We ask all parents on duty to familiarise themselves with these plans. These procedures are practiced four times a year with the children. Our practices will be authentic with relocation off site being practiced with the children.

Below are some examples of Emergencies that could necessitate an evacuation.

Bushfire Fire Bomb Threat Custody Case

Hold Up Toxic Fumes Hostage Taking Gas Leak

Siege Flood Medical

Our two relocation areas are the parkland area accessed by going under Plenty River Drive with collection from Kundy Close/Lebunya Court and Greensborough Park collecting off Kalparrin Avenue.

When it is unsafe for children, educators, staff and visitors to remain inside the facility, the Chief Warden/Early Childhood Commander on-site will take charge and activate the IMT if necessary.

* **Call** **000** and inform emergency services of the nature of the emergency.
* Determine which of your facility’s pre-identified on-site evacuation points is most appropriate to use.
* Assemble children, educators, staff and visitors at your nominated on-site evacuation assembly points: double gates near climbing frame, double gates near bike track, gate near children’s bathroom.
* Take the child attendance list, educator and staff attendance list, your Emergency Kit/First Aid Kit, individual children’s medical kits, and a copy of this EMP.
* Once at the assembly point, check all children, educators, staff and visitors are accounted for.
* Ensure communications with emergency services is maintained.
* Wait for emergency services to arrive or provide further information.
* Confirm with emergency service personnel that it is safe to return to normal operations.
* Seek advice from your Approved Provider/Licensee or Person with Management or Control/Licensee Representative if required.
* Maintain a record of actions/decisions undertaken and times.
* Contact parents as required or as per service policy.

**Actions after on-site evacuation/relocation procedure**

* Ensure any children, educators, staff or visitors with medical or other needs are supported.
* Determine whether to activate your parent reunification process.
* Determine if there is any specific information educators, staff, children and visitors need to know (e.g. parent reunification process or areas of the facility to avoid).
* Print and issue pre-prepared parent letters as appropriate.
* Undertake operational debrief with educators, staff and Incident Management Team to identify any on-site evacuation and procedural changes that may be required.
* Complete your Post Emergency Record form (refer to Appendix 4 of the *Guide to Developing Your Emergency Management Plan*).
* Education and care services and children’s services are reminded that they must report serious incidents to the relevant DET QARD Area Team in accordance with relevant regulatory requirements. This can be submitted on-line via the NQA IT portal. Service agreements also require approved providers or licensees to notify DET in the event of a serious incident.
  + Education and care services operating under the NQF refer to the fact sheet *Serious incidents and complaints* available at:[www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/nqffactsheets.aspx)
  + Children’s services operating under the Children’s Services Act refer to thepractice note *Serious incidents* available at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcspracnotes.aspx](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/vcspracnotes.aspx)

**We all look forward to a great year in 2019**

Please do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions. staff and the committee are more than happy to chat about any queries you have.