



ECKA acknowledges Wadawurrung and Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands, water and resources of the countries that ECKA reside upon. We say thank you for sharing your connections and pay respects to their elders of the past, present and emerging. ECKA pays respect to the central place in education that Aboriginal cultural holds and says thank you.



Black Hill
Kindergarten

2023 Information Booklet

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Enriching children's lives through learning



WELCOME TO BLACK HILL KINDERGARTEN

2023 SESSION TIMES

Group Name	Days of Attendance
Group 1: Wombats (8:30-4:00)	Monday & Wednesday
Group 2: Koalas (8:30-4:00)	Monday & Tuesday
Group 3: Kangaroos (8:30 -4:00)	Tuesday & Wednesday
Group 4: Bilbies (3yr old) (8:45-1:45)	Thursday & Friday

2023 TERM DATES

- Term 1: Week 1: 27th, 30th and 31st January (Set up day & staff professional development day, and planning day- Staff only. No children on these days).
Week 1 continued: 1st to 3rd February, family interviews
Week 2: Kinder Sessions begins from the 6th February
Term 1 concludes: 6th April
- Term 2: 24th April – 23rd June
- Term 3: 10th July – 15th September
- Term 4: 2nd October – 20th December (the 20th is a Clean-up Day, staff only)

Unless otherwise notified, the kindergarten will be closed on public holidays throughout the year.

WELCOME TO THE BLACK HILL KINDERGARTEN

Welcome to the Black Hill Kindergarten community. This information booklet has been assembled to answer questions you may have about the kindergarten, how we operate, and how you can be involved in your child's early education. Throughout the coming year, if you have any questions, please feel free to discuss these with Staff. You are always welcome to be involved in the kindergarten and to spend time visiting and observing your child in their learning environment (pending updates from DET re: Covid).



Enriching children's lives through learning

Our Kindergarten is proudly managed by ECKA Inc. ECKA is called the Approved Provider and is responsible for all aspects of the management of the preschool including employment of staff. Information about ECKA can be found at www.ecka.org.au and you will receive an ECKA policy and procedure booklet when you commence.

ECKA is a not-for-profit community based Early Years Management Service for kindergartens and early childhood care services in Ballarat and surrounding areas, proudly managing 28 services. While all kindergartens operate within Legislative guidelines, each kindergarten operate an individual program to meet the needs of the children and families attending their service. ECKA values the role the kindergarten in building local support networks with families, often contributing to lifelong friendships between the families and children who have shared their kinder years together.

Our Purpose

Enriching children's lives through learning.

Our Values

Respect • Courage • Collaboration • Compassion

Our Guiding Principle

In order to deliver on 'Our Purpose', ECKA is committed to being a sustainable organisation that maximises its impact on the lives of children.

We commit to:

- Provision of high-quality education and care services that enhance the learning and development of all children
- Advocating for children and the early education and care sector – being an influential voice for high quality early years services
- Planning and partnering for effective, sustainable and supported early years services both now and in the future.

Contact ECKA

ECKA Office

11 Grandview Grove, Wendouree VIC 3355

P: 5339 5055

E: admin@ecka.org.au

Black Hill Kindergarten Philosophy

We aim to provide a warm, safe, secure, and nurturing environment. We strive to build trusting relationships with all children, to enhance each child's sense of belonging and wellbeing, which in turn supports each child's holistic development. We will ensure each child feels love, security, and a sense of belonging, and will scaffold the development of each child as an individual who can grow their separate identity and qualities while still contributing within a large group of peers.

We believe each child is a unique individual with their own needs, interests, abilities, and backgrounds. The kindergarten will work alongside families to provide a stimulating and educational curriculum and quality care. We value partnerships with families and strive to create a welcoming environment for children, parents, and the wider community. We also believe that when there is a collaborative, respectful partnership between all parties then everyone benefits. We value parent feedback and suggestions with sharing of ideas, skills, and family input forms.

A homelike environment is a base for the children's experiences, and we believe at Black Hill Kindergarten our environment should reflect a sense of consistency between home, the wider community, and the Centre. We believe it is important to provide a self-directed play-based curriculum, which intrinsically motivates children to explore and discover their environment. We strive to achieve an appropriate balance between children's choice and teacher directed learning whilst keeping a flexible attitude to cater to children's individual and daily needs. We believe all children are active learners, creating and building knowledge, learning, self-image, confidence, and independence through their daily experiences and by nurturing in each child a positive understanding of themselves, sense of responsibility, self-discipline and self-esteem. We believe the curriculum should be co-constructed and supported by educators from children's emerging ideas, family input and community issues.

Children will have the opportunity to grow and learn at their own pace and develop a respect for others in a tolerant, anti-bias and non-sexist environment. We recognise children as "active citizens" from diverse backgrounds and beliefs. We value the wider community such as Black Hill Primary School, family support agencies, Pineview Residential Care, Pinarc, the Wathaurong People and other early childhood organisations. These values drive us to holistically embed a respectful and culturally sensitive perspective that is reflected both in our practices and in the curriculum. An emphasis on incorporating materials from other cultures into the daily lives of the children will be done in a natural and authentic manner. We recognise that when diversity and multiculturalism is only experienced only on special occasions it defeats the holistic perspective by making them novel or a bit odd because they are unusual. Using the objects, stories, and resources we have in such an improvised way, we hope will greatly expand opportunities for children to absorb and accept diversity as a part of day-to-day living.

Our Kindergarten uses the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework to guide our programming and planning for children's learning. We incorporate the documents' values and outcomes into our service programs to ensure all children are working towards the same overall outcomes to learning during their time at our service. Moreover, the document encourages staff and families to work in partnership in order to achieve learning outcomes for children, with this reflected our beliefs, as we value home learning and experiences as important and strive to extend home learning in our kindergarten environment. On par with the framework, is our belief in teaching and advocating for sustainability.

At Black Hill Kindergarten we are committed to sustainability, working collaboratively with children, their families, and the wider community to support our goals. We are dedicated to improving the local

environment in our community by fostering partnerships within the area, and to create a cleaner neighbourhood by participating in local and state programs such as 'Clean up Australia Day'. We believe that 4 by actively engaging children early on in discussions and hands-on experiences, they develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of sustainable living. Therefore, we will consistently develop a thriving vegetable garden, with the overflow of herbs and vegetables being donated to families, implement 'kinder helping hands' where children are selected to be responsible for recycling, composting, worm farming, garden maintenance and energy saving (turning off unnecessary lights and power, opening blinds), and use the by-products of our working compost bin and worm farm to support the continued growth of our gardens and natural place spaces.

We at Black Hill Kindergarten are committed to continual learning and improvement. We are constantly reflecting and evolving as we consider current practice such as the Early Years Learning Framework, current theoretical works, and the concept of an Emergent Curriculum. We strive to maintain better working conditions and incentives which reflect the real value of our professional team. We are also committed to ongoing staff development and interpersonal development training. We believe all early childhood professionals need to be respected as individuals and as valuable members of our team and the whole profession.

KINDER STAFF

Sally Hron: Teacher, Service Leader and Nominated supervisor

Maddi Lawson: Educator

Mandy Dagleish: Educator

3-year-old Teacher: Rachael Donaghy

WHAT TO BRING- 4-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

Each session your child will need to bring with them:

- A named bag
- A **named** sunhat (from September 1st through to 30th April)
- A lunchbox with piece of fruit or similar healthy snack, lunch with an additional snack and an afternoon snack (please provide additional snacks if your child is a big eater)
- A **named** drink bottle (filled with water only)
- A warm **named** coat and hat, in winter we will venture outside every session for some fresh air and exercise (unless it is heavily raining).
- A change of clothes, underwear, and socks

Finally, please remember you are always welcome to observe your child at play. Your child's development and happiness are of the utmost importance to us.

WHAT TO BRING- 3-YEAR-OLD KINDERGARTEN

Each session your child will need to bring with them:

- A named bag
- A **named** sunhat (from September 1st through to 30th April)
- A lunchbox with a piece of fruit or similar healthy snack, lunch with an additional snack
- A **named** drink bottle (filled with water only)
- A warm **named** coat and hat, in winter we will venture outside every session for some fresh air and exercise (unless it is heavily raining).
- A change of clothes, underwear, and socks with extras for children who are toilet training
- Nappies, as we do not provide them. We have a supply of wipes so these are not required.

DAILY ROUTINES

Your child will have a couple of things to do before they begin work at kindergarten. Please support your child to placing their bag in their locker and select their name tag. Encourage them to do these tasks themselves.

We begin our kinder day by having a play indoors. After a play we pack away and have a short group session, then we either sit down together to eat our morning tea fruit snack or children can choose to play instead, eating when they are ready. Afterwards we then begin working at various experiences inside. We then pack away where we have been working and go outside. Depending on the weather we may enjoy lunch outside.

3 yr old's: Our afternoon routine is flexible. Sometimes we may end the session outdoors and sometimes we finish indoors. In this instance, the children must wait on the mat until staff say their names, this ensures that every child is released into the care of the person authorised to collect them. This routine may vary at times and is flexible to meet children's needs.

4 yr old's: After lunch we will have a class relaxation time (resting, meditation, yoga, reflective drawing). In the afternoon we enjoy an afternoon snack then pack our bags. We end our day with a child choice group activity or a play outside.

HELPING YOUR CHILD SETTLE

- In the week before kindergarten begins, discuss our routine, and use the Educators names.
- Always say goodbye to your child. Leaving when they are not looking can be distressing. If your child is experiencing separation difficulties please be guided by staff, often it is best to say goodbye and leave quickly. You are more than welcome to telephone us to see how your child has settled. Be assured your child's emotional wellbeing is of the utmost importance to us and we will contact you if we believe they will not settle.
- Ask about their day, what story did you read, what songs did you sing, did you do a puzzle, did you make a friend, did anything funny happen..... etc.
- Arrive on time to collect your child, children can become distressed quickly if they are left waiting, especially if they are the last one.

FEES AND FUNDING

As part of the Victorian Government's *Best Start, Best Life* reform 3yo & 4yo Kindergarten programs will be free in 2023. This means there will be no fees payable by parents. For more information on the Best Start, Best Life reform please visit <https://www.vic.gov.au/kinder>

RECORD KEEPING

On enrolment you will fill out a confidential enrolment form. We ask that you ensure that the information on this form is continually kept up to date, throughout the year. Please let staff know if any of the following information changes.

- Change of address, home, mobile, work telephone numbers
- Change to emergency contacts
- Altering, adding authorised persons contact details
- Update immunisation details
- Medical information, allergies, asthma, diet.

ENROLMENT

Three- year- old kindergarten

Enrolment applications will be accepted at the City of Ballarat from the 1st of January the year your child turns two. To be eligible to attend Kindergarten, children must have turned 3 years of age on or before the 30th April in the year they attend (your child needs to have already turned 3 years old prior to their commencement at the Centre). Offers of places are given through the City of Ballarat in August of the year prior to your child beginning at kindergarten. You must make an application for four-year-old kinder. Three-year old's do not automatically roll across into the 4's.

Four-year-old kindergarten

Enrolment applications will be accepted at the City of Ballarat from the 1st of January the year your child turns two. To be eligible to attend Kindergarten, children must have turned 4 years of age on or before the 30th April in the year they attend. Offers of places are given through the City of Ballarat in August of the year prior to your child beginning at kindergarten.

WHAT KINDERGARTEN OFFERS YOUR CHILD

At Black hill kindergarten our programme reflects the importance of play-based learning offering a wide range of play experiences to all children. We encourage children to make choices about their play and extend on abilities, experiences, interests, and all areas of development.

It provides an atmosphere where they are free to explore. In this setting your child is able to become independent while the staff are there to offer assistance, guidance, support and encouragement.

Each child is given the opportunity to creatively express their feelings and ideas, is learning to play with others, is encouraged to be a confident and involved learner and an effective communicator.

Our curriculum is based on the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. Our Philosophy and curriculum are displayed in our room.



CLOTHING

We will do our best to protect children's clothing – they will wear smocks when they paint and engage in other 'messy' activities. However, it is preferable children do not have to worry about keeping clean – this allows them the freedom to fully enjoy the learning experience. So please send your child in clothes that are easily laundered and can be managed on their own. Tracksuit pants are ideal for children to wear to kindergarten. Please send your child to kindergarten in sensible shoes that allow them to run, jump and climb. Thongs and 'Crocs' are not suitable footwear for kindergarten. When the UV rating is 3 or above a sunhat is essential for outside play (we are a sun smart centre). Please send a named hat with your child each day. In winter we venture outside every day, unless it is raining, your child will need a suitable coat and hat in the colder months.

KINDERGARTEN POLICIES

Policies ensure the efficient and effective operation of our Kindergarten and ensure quality care and conditions for staff, parents and most importantly our children. Our policy handbook is accessible to all parents. The policies are frequently revised and new ones adopted by ECKA as the need arises. A copy can be viewed on the ECKA website, we also have the policies available for you to view, and any interested persons are encouraged to read them. All the policies are in line with the National Quality Standard.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To comply with the National Quality Standard, all parents/authorised persons leaving children at kindergarten **must** sign the daily attendance book. Again, when departing, the attendance book **must** be signed by the person collecting your child.

Staff must be notified if someone else is to pick up your child. That person's name must be included on your enrolment form as a person authorised to collect your child from kindergarten.

We like to greet you both on arrival, so please come in, settle your child, and say 'goodbye' to them before leaving.

When the session is over, parents are required to come in to the kindergarten to pick up children.

If you are going to be late, please call us so that we may reassure your child. Please keep in mind that staff are not responsible for children before or after the session.

The gates are to always remain closed. **Only let your child out the gate.** Please do not allow children to climb or swing on the gates

A late pick-up fee of \$5.00 for every 15 minutes late will apply if staff have not been notified.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Each year we are asked by families how they can help support the kindergarten and contribute to both our community and the educational programs we provide to the children.

There are many different ways that families may contribute in and out of kindergarten sessions. Some of the activities in the kindergarten session may include; attending an excursion, helping the children plant in our vegetable garden, cutting up the shared fruit platter or coming in to read a story, or out of session by supporting social events and providing your feedback and ideas.

If you are interested in volunteering some time to help, please speak directly with the educators or message us via the Storypark app. We understand that people have busy lives and lots of commitments and if you are not able to indicate support right now, we completely understand, however if your circumstances change, please feel free to speak with educators as we will be happy for your help.

Please note that our parent volunteers do not need a working with children's check provided that the volunteering is in the group with your own child. Staff will fully supervise all volunteers in accordance with our volunteer and visitor policies.

SPECIAL DAYS/EXCURSIONS

In order to enrich the children's experiences, we may have special days through the year. These may include a 'Teddy Bear's Picnic', Footy Day, Dress Up Day, visits to the Black Hill Primary School etc.

Parents will sign a Routine Excursion Permission form as part of our enrolment process which will allow us to take your child outside the kindergarten when necessary. Details of these special days will be sent home prior to the event.

BIRTHDAYS

We love birthdays at kindergarten and celebrate by lighting candles and singing birthday songs. Parents are welcome to supply a cake (small cupcakes are ideal) to celebrate their child's birthday with their Kindergarten group. We sing Happy Birthday at the end of our session and the children can take a cake as they leave, if their parents wish. Please see staff if you have any queries.



NEWSLETTERS AND NOTICES

Each family has a file where your child's art work, newsletters, and notices will be placed. Keep an eye on your file and our white board for all the happenings at the kindergarten. All families also have a family pocket and staff will also make regular posts on story park. So, keep your eyes open.

HEALTH AND ABSENCE

Please do not bring your child to kindergarten if unwell, particularly if your child is experiencing covid symptoms. Kindergarten is a fabulous and fun place to be, but if your child is unwell or overtired the stimulation and challenges of the kindergarten environment can be very difficult to cope with.

In fairness to other children, their families and staff please keep your child at home for 48 hours after diarrhoea/vomiting ceases.

Please phone the kindergarten and let staff know if your child or a member of your family has an infectious disease, so that they may tell you how long the regulations state he/she must be excluded from kindergarten. If your child is going to be away for more than a few days (i.e., if you are going on holidays etc.) please notify the teacher.

IMMUNISATION

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation introduced in 2016, before enrolling your child, Black Hill Kindergarten must first obtain evidence that your child is:

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

'Conscientious objection' is not an exemption under the 'No Jab No Play' legislation.

Before we can confirm the enrolment of your child, you must provide an **immunisation status certificate** that confirms the above information with your other confidential enrolment details.

MEDICATION

Medication Book – All medications to be administered at the kindergarten must be recorded in the medication book. These medications must be in their original container, complete with original label, instructions, and expiry date.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

These procedures are displayed throughout the Centre. During the year we will practice emergency evacuation and containment procedures with the children in each group, at least once each term.

FIRST AID KIT

The First aid kits are located in the Evacuation Pack, hanging next to the front door and a primary on top of the piano. Each staff member is trained in First Aid, Asthma Management and Anaphylaxis.

OUR ENVIRONMENT AND THE WIDER COMMUNITY

Children learn in the context of their families and families are the primary influence on children's learning and development. Professionals too, play a role in advancing children's learning and development. Professionals engage in family-centred practice by respecting the pivotal role of families in children's lives. Early childhood professionals:

- Use families' understandings of their children to support shared decision-making about each child's learning and development
 - Create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development experiences
 - Actively engage families and children in planning children's learning and development
 - Provide feedback to families on their children's learning and information about how families can further advance children's learning and development at home and in the community."
- (Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework)

We hope to increase our involvement in our wider community, through experiences such as the clean-up Australia day, visiting Pineview nursing facility and using the variety of skills our families possess to enhance our programme.

FINALLY

Communication between the staff and families is of the utmost importance in achieving the best learning outcomes for each child. If you would like information on your child's progress do not hesitate to speak with your teacher, informally, or make an appointment at a convenient time, for updates on your child's progress or if a problem should arise.

We hope your association with Black Hill Kindergarten will be a happy and positive experience. We look forward to meeting and working with you and your child and thank you for allowing us the opportunity to be part of your child's early education.