

Ballan

Community
Kindergarten



Family Information Booklet 2025

Enriching children's
lives through learning

ecka.org.au  

A member of





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



Indigenous Preschool Advancement Strategy (IPAS) Artwork “Cared for”

Painting created by Albert Fagan, Wadawurrung Traditional Owner

Painting description:

The lines within the painting represent the individual journey the children and teachers have taken to get here today. In the middle of the painting is a camp fire where the teachers provide food and water for the children. The symbols on either side represent the teachers and the learning that occurs with the children

WELCOME TO BALLAN COMMUNITY KINDERGARTEN

This information booklet has been compiled so you may have a better understanding of your Kindergarten - the how's and why's of its operation. We hope your association with the kindergarten will be a happy and rewarding one. You will soon become aware that your Kindergarten is not just a centre that your child attends, but more so a unique combination of interested staff and families, all working together with the common goal of producing happy, confident and well-adjusted children.

This centre is bound by the Education and Care National Law 2010 (National Law) and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2012, (National Regulation) and the National Quality Standard (NQS) and is responsible to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. Our Kindergarten premises are leased from the Moorabool Shire Council.



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 29 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.

CHILD SAFE STATEMENT

ECKA's purpose, Enriching children's lives through learning, can only be achieved where children are in education and care environments that are safe, welcoming and inclusive for children and their families; and ensure that children's health safety and wellbeing is protected at all times. Importantly, children must not only be safe but also feel safe. The welfare of children in ECKA services is at all times our priority and ECKA has a zero tolerance to child abuse.

ECKA operates under a range of legislative, policy and procedural requirements that prioritise the safety of children as paramount at all times, and these are available on the ECKA website, ECKA office, and ECKA Services

ECKA encourages all children, families, employees and others involved with ECKA services to participate in regular evaluation and review of policies and practices, or at any time provide feedback, anonymously if desired, via the ECKA website, ECKA office or ECKA service. At all times, any complaints or concerns about child safety will be treated with the highest priority.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

ECKA:

- is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:
 - promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children
 - promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
 - promoting the safety of children with a disability
 - promoting the safety of trans and gender diverse children and their families in ECEC settings
 - Ensuring that LGBTIQ+ children and families feel included
- values, respects and cares for children
- empowers children's voices by fostering opportunities for each child to participate, express their views, and to learn and develop
- always acts in the best interests of each child and has zero tolerance of child abuse
- takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development
- actively manages the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm
- continuously improves the way our service identifies risks of and responds to child abuse and encourages reporting and improved responses to allegations of abuse.
- proactively sharing information with relevant authorities to promote the wellbeing and/or safety of a child or a group of children, consistent with their best interests

CONTACT INFORMATION

Ballan
Community
Kindergarten



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TERM DATES FOR 2025

2025	Start Date	Finish Date	Public Holidays
Term 1	3 February *	4 April	Labour day 10 th March
Term 2	22 April	4 July	ANZAC Day 25 th April Kings Birthday 9 th June
Term 3	21 July	19 September	
Term 4	6 October	18 December	Melbourne Cup 4 th November

* Children commence after the meet and greet interview in early February. Start times can vary so please check Storypark for details on your child's starting date and times.

SESSION TIMES FOR 2025

1st Year Groups (3yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Emu	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		
Kangaroo				8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00

2nd Year Groups (4yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wombat	8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00			
Koala			8:30 – 4:00	8:30 – 4:00	

OUR PHILOSOPHY

'Ordinary moments are the pages in the child's diary for the day. If we could resist our temptation to record only the grand moments, we might find the authentic child living in the in-between. If we could resist our temptation to put the child on a stage, we might find the real work being done in the wings. If we understand the great value in the ordinary moments, we might be less inclined to have a marvelous finale for a long-term project. We appeal to educators everywhere to find the marvel in the mundane, to find the power of the ordinary moment'. (Forman, Hall & Berglund, 2001, p63.)

Welcome

Here at Ballan Community Kindergarten, we value children as curious, independent and capable learners. We strive to provide a program that reflects each child's individual needs and draws on the wider community. We respect families' culture and knowledge and look for ways to include their values and input into our program. Within the services we have developed spaces that are calm, child centred and facilitated learning. We have pride in our kindergarten's aesthetics and draw on the natural environment for inspiration and resources. Within the kindergarten we hope to foster a supportive and inclusive environment for learning through family input, children's interests, critical reflection and community knowledge.

Children

Ballan Community Kindergarten strives to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for children that reflects their needs, interests and development. As Teachers and Educators, we work hard to form connection with each child and to support them in feeling a sense of belonging and connection to our Preschool. When working with children we believe it is important for them to develop a sense of autonomy, to be able to think and act for themselves. We believe when children feel respected, welcomed and valued they can learn and grow into confident and independent children.

Curriculum

Ballan Community Kindergarten provides an Emergent curriculum which is play based and that builds upon the strengths and interests of the children and also works in alignment with the Early Years Learning Framework. Through an emergent curriculum, children's ideas and thoughts are valued and respected as important and meaningful, this also supports engagement and in depth learning, Teacher and educators use their observation, conversations with children and family input to inform their planning. Using a cycle of observation, planning and reflection, Teachers are able to continually develop a program that is responsive to the children needs, engaging and meaningful. Teachers also strive to make their documentation family friendly by using minimal educational jargon, making it accessible and sharing their plan and ideas via Story Park.



Environment

At Ballan Community Kindergarten we pride ourselves on providing a calm, natural and responsive learning environment, We endeavor to provide an environment which is warm, safe, creative and culturally rich with diverse experiences, Teachers take pride in the experiences which are offered and take the time to ensure the room is an inviting place for children to spend their days. We believe that in order for our learning environments to facilitate learning they must reflect the children's interests, development and needs. When planning experience and the layout of the environment teachers are mindful of the aesthetics, the use of natural resources and the amount of space required to achieve a successful learning environment.

Ballan Preschool is also committed to a sustainable environment and regularly reflect on their practice to ensure provisions are made for sustainability within the Preschool Community.

Families

At Ballan Community Kindergarten we respect that families are a child's first and most influential teacher. This means we value their ideas and parenting technique; we endeavor to draw on their experience and knowledge and we regularly seek their input and thoughts. Every family comes to our service with their own cultural identity and we wish to find ways to introduce family's cultural backgrounds and pay respect to their customs. Along with the we regularly seek family's feedback and reach out to them for input into the educational program.



CHILDREN WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS

The enrolment of a child with additional needs is done in consultation with the staff, the child's parent(s) and appropriate support services. Any specific information required to assist the staff and committee to plan for children with additional needs should be included in their initial enrolment information. A student 'snapshot' will be developed to inform an individualised learning program.

The Educator, in consultation with the parents and specialist support services, will implement the program in accordance with the child's developmental needs. The Educator will also apply for any relevant support resources available for the child. The Teacher will apply for additional funding to support students with special needs when transitioning to primary school. A student Snapshot will be completed during a Student Support Group (SSG) meeting to inform the development of an individualised learning program.

BIRTHDAYS

If your child is having a birthday, you are most welcome to bring cupcakes for the children to share. Families of children who have allergies to certain foods are encouraged to talk to the Educator and provide food items that can be stored in the freezer section of the kindergartens' fridge. Birthday cake is given to children to take home at the end of the session. If for some reason you would prefer us not to mention birthdays (e.g. for religious beliefs) please talk to the Educator.



VISITORS AND VISITOR'S BOOK

Families are welcome to the Centre to participate with the children and their various activities and experiences (Pandemic permitting). Should you have any skills which can be displayed or shared, we'd love to see you. All visitors must be signed into the Visitor's Book on arrival. There is a visitor's book located in each foyer, near attendance book. If you have any questions, please see staff.

CLOTHING

Ballan Community Kindergarten is an accredited 'Sun Smart' kindergarten; therefore, children are required to wear either a broad-brimmed or legionnaire-style hat from September to April or when the UV level is 3 or above, with a winter hat during the cooler months. The hat must be named and left in the child's kindergarten bag. The UV rating will be checked daily by educators to ensure sun protection is used when required.

Summer

For the safety of the children we ask that thongs, crocs and slip on shoes not to be worn at the kindergarten, as they can be dangerous when the children are running or climbing. Sunscreen should be applied prior to attending the kindergarten. The Kindergarten do have a bottle of shared Sunscreen, *however if your child is allergic, please supply your own.*



Winter

Solid shoes or gumboots are recommended. For comfort, safety and cleanliness, it is advisable for children to wear slippers inside the kindergarten. Please ensure that named slippers are in children's bags each day. Coats and hats are advisable for cold weather, as the children will go outside even when raining as we can play in the undercover areas of the kindergarten.

Remember to dress children in clothes that they can manage themselves and it is best to use clothes that wash easily. Children are to bring a bag each session, large enough for paintings, etc. Small towels, smocks etc. will be supplied by the kindergarten.

HEALTHY EATING



The kindergarten has a 'healthy eating policy' that encourages the children to eat healthy "everyday food" at kindergarten and promotes dental hygiene. We encourage parents to send fruit, vegetables, cheese, yoghurts etc. for snack time. As lunch is such an important meal of the day, please ensure it is nutritious and satisfying thus enabling your child to be able to get through the rest of what will be a very busy day.

We ask that you do not send food that requires heating for children's lunches. If you would like to send them with a hot lunch please ensure you use a thermos. We suggest you place the different meals (snack and lunch) in separate bags/containers, so your child can place their afternoon tea in the afternoon tea basket.

We also ask you to send water only, for the children to drink at kindergarten.

COMMUNICATION

We will send you information by Storypark, SMS and general notices placed in the foyer or sign-in book. Please let us know if you change any of your contact numbers or address or email address.

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.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

A full copy of the Kindergarten's Emergency Evacuation Plan is available for your visiting at the kindergarten entrance.

EXCURSIONS

Parents will be notified of excursion destination, mode of transport, the legally required adult-child ratio and other relevant details. Parents will be asked to sign a permission form for each excursion.

All excursions are strictly supervised by the Kindergarten Educators at all times, in accordance with Early Education and Care regulations.

Parent assistance is often required on excursions, but depending on the nature of the excursion it is not always possible to allow siblings to accompany parents.

Parents will be notified on these occasions.

TOYS

Children often have difficulty sharing their own toys with other children and conflict can occur, so we ask that children's toys are not brought to kinder, except on special occasions when arrangements are made with staff.

SPECIAL TOPICS

During the year we may ask you to help your child collect special items related to particular topics. This is where parents help is greatly appreciated to support the educational program.

ACCIDENTS AND ILLNESS AT KINDERGARTEN

Please inform the Educator if your child is to be absent for any length of time. If a child suffers injury or bodily harm at kinder the educators will ascertain the extent of the injury and take all necessary steps to provide first aid and notify the parent/ guardian if required.

Medication

Any child requiring medication during session times must have details entered on a Medication Record. All medication must be handed to an Educator on arrival at the kindergarten.



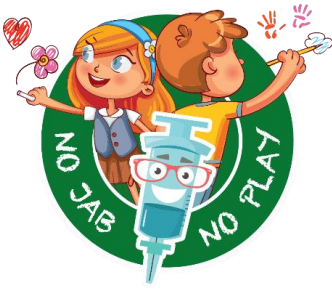
The staff member will then place the medication into the First Aid Kit situated in the office or the fridge in the kitchen. If medication is to be taken at kindergarten children must not have medication left in their bag.

Illness and Infectious Diseases

Infectious and communicable diseases will be dealt with according to the requirements of the Victorian Health Department's 'Minimum Period of Exclusion from Schools and Children's Services of Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts' table.

This table will be displayed at the kindergarten or found at <https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table>

Immunisations



By law to finalise your kindergarten enrolment you must provide the kindergarten with a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) that shows your child is up to date with all immunisations that are due or able to receive for their age. In some circumstances a 16 week 'grace period' can be applied so you child can start at the service while you arrange to get a statement. The kinder can advise you if that applies to you.

The quickest way to get your child's statement is by using your Medicare online account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Alternatively you can call the AIR on 1800 653 809 to request your child's statement to be sent to you.

More information can be found at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Allergies

During individual enrolment interviews, the child's parent/guardian must provide details of any allergies and a detailed management plan to the Educator.

Staff will follow the management plan according to need.

Any medications and/or treatment devices must be provided by the parents and shall be located at a site designated by the Educator.

In consultation with the child's parent(s) and staff any necessary professional development associated with the management of the allergy will be considered.

The child's parent(s) is responsible for ensuring that the management plan and medication(s) are kept up to date, and that staff are informed of any changes. As part of their duty of care, staff will also be responsible for checking that the management plan and medication(s) are up to date at the beginning of each term.

While particular products will not be banned, all caregivers will be informed via the newsletter and/or a separate letter regarding the presence of a child with an allergy in the kinder, the nature of this allergy and will be encouraged to avoid sending products which may be put a child's health and wellbeing at risk.

Throughout the kinder year opportunities will be taken to educate all children regarding the inappropriateness of sharing food.

The Educator will discuss with the parent(s) on an individual basis their wishes regarding their child's participation in celebrations where food is brought into the kinder (e.g. peer birthdays). These wishes will be included on the management plan.

Anaphylaxis Management

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction and can be fatal. We will ensure that every reasonable precaution will be taken to provide a safe environment for children diagnosed at risk of anaphylaxis.

We will ensure this occurs by:

- An anaphylaxis action plan, with a photo of the child, will be placed on the wall near the kindergarten kitchen.
- Anaphylaxis action plan is signed by the child's doctor and shown to staff. This occurs during the parent Educator interview at the beginning of the year or when diagnosed.

- EpiPen will be supplied by the parents (within expiry date) and will be kept in the First Aid container found in the kindergarten office. The child's name will be clearly named on the container.
- The emergency action plan for the management of anaphylaxis is placed on the wall of the kindergarten office.
- A treat box is available for special occasions. The treat can be a cake made by the parent and this will be kept in a labelled container found in the kitchen freezer.
- Staff undertake anaphylaxis management training and practice epi-pen use annually.
- EpiPen will be taken on all excursions and/or when leaving the kindergarten.

Asthma

Asthma is an increasingly common condition with life threatening potential.

Every child with asthma attending the kindergarten must have a written Asthma Action Plan, completed by their treating doctor or paediatrician, in consultation with the child's parent/guardian. This should be attached to the child's records and updated if the child's asthma changes.

Refer to the Asthma Policy on our Website.

If you have any questions about any of this information, please email ballan.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au