



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 SEBASTOPOL SOUTH KINDERGARTEN

The educational team and the Eureka Community Kindergarten Association (ECKA) would like to welcome you to Sebastopol South Kindergarten. We endeavour to create an environment that is welcoming and supports adult-child relationships.

This booklet has been compiled to answer some questions you may have about how the kindergarten operates and how you can be involved.

The kindergarten adheres to the 'Education and Care Services National Regulations' (2012) and the 'Education and Care National Law Act' (2010). The educational programme is reflective of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the national framework 'Belonging, Being and Becoming'.



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



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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

mixed group - 1st Years (3yos) & 2nd Years (4yos)

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Group A		9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	
Group B	9:00 – 2:00		9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	
Group C	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		9:00 – 2:00	
Group D	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00	9:00 – 2:00		

OUR PHILOSOPHY



PLAY

We believe that play is learning and support every child where they are at. We value play, discovery and education that is unhurried.

CHILDREN

We believe that every child has potential and the right to enjoy their childhood. We value what they say, think, know and learn.

RELATIONSHIPS

We believe that our relationships with children helps them learn and develop. We value trust, security, safety and communication with families and children.

ENVIRONMENT

We believe that our environment, indoors and outdoors supports all children, their wonderings, ideas and interests. We value to space we have to support children to play, explore and learn.

RESPECT

We respect our children, families, educators and the life experiences we all bring. We acknowledge the Wadawurrung People, Traditional Custodians of the land and community that Sebastopol South Kindergarten is a part of. We support children's learning possibilities, desires, and believe that every child can belong and achieve.

WHAT TO BRING TO KINDERGARTEN

- Bag or backpack
- Change of clothing (underwear, shorts/pants and socks)
- Packed lunch including a piece of fruit and snacks for morning tea
- Drink bottle (water only)
- Warm coat and hat (Winter months)

Please ensure all items are clearly labelled with your child's name.

IMMUNISATION



No Jab, No Play' is the government legislation that requires all children to be fully vaccinated to be enrolled in childcare or kindergarten in Victoria. Your child's immunisation certificate needs to be provided before they can commence kindergarten. It is important for our service to know enrolled children's immunisation status.

STORYPARK – ONLINE COMMUNICATION

Throughout the year, we will use Storypark as a means of communicating with families.

It is an online platform where educators can share learning stories of your children directly with you. Parents can then share these stories with others. Community notices and reminders will also be sent out through Storypark.

You will receive an invitation in your email. Please accept the invitation and download the app to ensure you remain up to date with what is happening at kindergarten.

CLOTHING AND SUNSMART GUIDELINES

Please note that children will get dirty at kindergarten. It is best to wear play clothes for comfort and practicality, to enable them to fully participate in the kindergarten program. Children need to wear solid non-slip footwear to participate in the learning environment safely and successfully. **Slip-ons, crocs and thongs are not suitable.** In winter, please provide coats and wet weather gear. We try to go outside as often as possible.

Children will learn to put their coat on and off independently, as they are worn to and from (and at) Kindergarten.

It is essential children wear hats and sunscreen in the summer months (1st September to end of April) and when the UV rating is 3 or above, as per our Sun Protection Policy. Please ensure that your child wears clothing with a sleeve. **No singlet tops or sleeveless dresses.** Tee-shirts and polo-shirts are ideal.

Please apply sunscreen to your child before dropping them off in the morning.

A spare pair of clothing is useful in your child's kindergarten bag. Children prefer to put on their own clothes if accidents occur.



BELONGINGS

Bringing toys from home is discouraged as children sometimes lose them or they can get damaged, causing undue stress for the child. Children will be given a locker for their kindergarten bag and such belongings as their lunch box, water bottles and coat.

UNIFORMS

If you wish for your child to have a kindergarten uniform with our logo, please make contact with **Rufcut**, at 202 Lyons Street Ballarat (The Building with the painting of Ballarat Bertie on the side) on 53322477. They have our kindergarten logo and you're able to purchase or provide them with the items that you wish to have the logo printed on.

HEALTHY FOODS

When preparing your child's lunch, please keep to quantities that your child can manage and consider good nutrition.

Healthy lunch and snack choices include:



Sandwiches, rolls or wraps with healthy fillings IE: meat, salads, vegetables, vegemite, cheese.



Crackers and Cheese/ Dips



Yoghurt / fruit tubs (Please send a spoon and muesli bars and ensure your child can open the container)



Low fat/ sugar muffins and muesli bars



Rice crackers/ cakes



Fruit (If your child requires their fruit cut into pieces or peeled, please do this before hand)



Vegetable sticks



Plain Popcorn

Please **DO NOT** send:

- Chips
- Lollies
- Fruit bars/ Roll Ups
- LCM Bars
- Chocolate bars
- Chocolate custards
- Cupcakes/ cakes
- Sweet drinks (juice, cordial, flavoured milk)



Your child will be educated about healthy foods and 'sometimes food' as outlined in our centre policies. We also ask that you do not send any nut or nut products with your child including peanut butter, Nutella, tree nuts or cashews.

As part of our **Anaphylaxis Policy**, if we have children attending the centre with allergies, we are required to develop a 'Risk Minimisation Plan'. This may mean that we will need to prohibit certain foods. You will be notified of this at the commencement of the kindergarten year.

FEEES

As part of the Victorian Government's Best Start, Best Life reform 3yo & 4yo Kindergarten programs will be free in 2024. 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>

HEALTH

Please note that children with colds, sore throats, sore eyes, coughs or anything of a contagious nature should be kept at home until completely recovered. They come to kindergarten to be busy and active and they cannot do this if they are unwell.

We also need to be notified of any infectious disease, as we are required to inform other families of any contactable illness. This includes head lice.

MEDICATION, ACCIDENT & ILLNESS

If your child needs to receive medication during session time, you will need to provide staff with the details, including instructions from your family doctor. A medication authorisation sheet will need to be filled out stating the name of the medication, the dosage, the time it is to be administered and your signature. Please note that we can only give medication to a child which is presented in its original container and prescribed specifically for your child.

All medication must be given to staff and will be kept in the office during the session.

Children with allergies, asthma and/or anaphylaxis are required to have an action plan signed by their doctor. A 'Risk Minimisation' and 'Communication' plan will be required for each child who has an allergy or illness and these will be completed at a scheduled meeting. Please alert staff if your child has a diagnosed illness or allergy or is diagnosed at any time throughout the kindergarten year.

Any accidents or injuries are treated by staff, qualified in the delivery of first aid, and are recorded on an 'Accident and Illness' form for you to read and sign at the end of the session.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

It is a Children's Services Centre's regulation that each child is signed in with the time of arrival and signed out again with the time of departure.

- On arrival please ensure that you sign the attendance book and again when you collect your child. Please record the actual time you arrive and depart.
- Please note you MUST notify the educators if a person who is not on the sign in sheet is going to collect the child. People who are not authorised on the enrolment form to collect a child will not be allowed to take them.
- In an emergency parent's may phone the kindergarten and give verbal permission for an unlisted person to collect their child. Teaching staff will need to see photo ID when the person arrives so please alert them to this.
- It is important that children are collected promptly at the end of each session. If you are running late, please call us so that we can reassure your child. There are fees associated with regular late pick-ups (please refer to late collections policy).
- To ensure compliance with the Children's Services Regulations, we are unable to accept children prior to start of session times or after session times. Please wait in the foyer area for educators to open the door to ensure that the correct child/staff ratios are provided.

CUSTODY

Where custody or court orders are in place, families/ guardians are requested to fully inform educators of the conditions of the order. Kindergartens require a photocopy of any current court orders at the time of enrolment (which will be kept with your child's enrolment information) and staff need to be updated of any changes with information/ permissions regarding custody and the collection of your child. If your family circumstances change the educators need to know immediately to ensure that your child is safe and in the care of the appropriate person

CAR PARK

This is a one-way system. Please enter on the left and exit on the right. You are asked to park in the designated car parking spaces only. Please ensure that all children are kept to the pathways only, do not allow your children to walk across the car park.

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 or coming in to read a story, or out of session 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.

KINDERGARTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Announcements, newsletters and notices will be shared via Storypark. Please notify staff if you require a printed copy of this information throughout the year. Permission forms for up-coming excursions will be placed in children's lockers and your child cannot attend outings unless we have these forms signed and returned promptly.

The kindergarten programme is displayed in the classrooms and notices and other relevant information are displayed in the foyer. Please check this regularly.

CELEBRATIONS

We value the diversity presented in our community. If you have special celebrations or customs that you practice in your family, you are welcome to share them with the kindergarten children. Please speak to educators to arrange a time.

EXCURSIONS

Excursions form an integral aspect of our kindergarten curriculum and are guided by the emerging curriculum and children's interests. Educators will always notify parents if children are to be taken on an excursion. Parents will be asked to sign an authorisation form for your child to attend. Parent helpers are very welcome on our excursions. Please note; as the kindergarten is a non-smoking environment, smoking is not permitted on excursions. Unfortunately, due to ratios and policies, we are unable to accommodate siblings on excursions.

POLICIES

The kindergarten is governed by a number of policies that cover issues such as collection and delivery of children, enrolment, nutrition, non-smoking policy, privacy of information, sun protection, inclusion of children with additional needs, behaviour guidance, and parental involvement. Copies of these policies are readily available at all times from the kindergarten staff or for download from the ecka website ecka.org.au. A copy of the regulations and the act are also available, please see educational staff.

CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

Our service is legislated to be respondent to the child safety standards. This is reflected in our policies and practices.

KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMME

Within the kindergarten environment children are supported to engage in a range of activities, not just those they prefer. Every activity offered in the programme has a carefully planned objective and activities are designed to develop skills and abilities in each domain. Children's individual learning styles and interest areas are also considered when planning for their learning. The learning environment consists of extended periods of uninterrupted time for the children to play and learn, as they practise and master new skills, concepts and techniques. Within our enquiry-based, open-ended learning environment, we plan for continuity, predictability and repetition. The curriculum is underpinned by VEYLDF and Developmental Milestones.

The Framework uses five outcomes to describe the key elements of children's learning and development. These are:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

Developmental milestone domain areas are:

Physical
Social
Emotional
Cognitive
Language

SMOKE FREE ENVIRONMENT

The kindergarten building, foyer, entire fenced area and car park is smoke free at all times.



NO SMOKING

PLEASE KEEP THIS BOOKLET AS A POINT OF REFERENCE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR