

THORNBURY KINDERGARTEN



HANDBOOK



Play and create



Welcome

The staff and Committee of Management at Thornbury Kindergarten would like to warmly welcome you and your child to our kindergarten.

We hope that you thoroughly enjoy your time here.

Thornbury Kindergarten is located and conducts activities on land traditionally owned by the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nations. We acknowledge and pay our respects to all Elders, past and present.

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with an overview of how Thornbury Kindergarten works. It's also a guide to help you prepare for the year at kinder, and outlines some of the procedures at the kindergarten. It's intended to be used as a reference throughout the year.

You're always welcome to ask questions or raise any concerns you may have; you can do that online via the website or the Skoolbag app, and there's a feedback box located in the foyer. We encourage you to speak with the kinder's teaching staff, our Director or a member of the Committee of Management.

Thornbury Kindergarten is a child safe organisation. We apply the Child Safe Standards (as set out by the Commission for Children and Young People Victoria) to make sure children remain safe while at Thornbury Kindergarten. We are committed to the cultural safety of all children. That includes Aboriginal children, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and children from diverse family structures. We're also committed to providing a safe environment for children with a disability. All of our policies, including our Child Safe Policy, are available in hard copy in the foyers.

We also invite you to be involved in the activities and operations of the kindergarten and experience the rewards that this brings. This is a community-run kindergarten, and your input and support is crucial to its success. Your contribution, and the contribution of your child, will be greatly valued.

The Staff and Committee of Management
Thornbury Kindergarten

October 2018

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1 About Thornbury Kindergarten

For many children kindergarten is their first independent step into society; it prepares them for formal learning in the future. At Thornbury Kindergarten children are nurtured and encouraged to grow and develop to their full potential.

Our aims are to:

- Develop and extend every child's knowledge and skills through creative and constructive play
- Empower children and build their social awareness of their broader community and the environment
- Encourage children to be positive and happy individuals

Our Philosophy

In relation to children, families and community we believe

- That all children are unique and should be given opportunity to reach their potential
- That every child has the right to be valued, respected and feel safe
- That children thrive when the family is central to the child's learning and development
- Connected communities create a sense of wellbeing for children and families

Therefore we will

- Ensure our first nation is acknowledged, respected and reflected along with all cultures, families and abilities
- Develop respectful and nurturing relationships with all children
- Welcome and partner with families to make decisions about their child's learning and development
- We will liaise with our immediate and wider community to improve outcomes for children

In relation to environments we believe

- The environment should feel welcoming and be inclusive of all the families in the service
- The environment should provide a range of activities and experiences and foster learning by allowing children to explore, wonder and learn through using natural materials in an open ended manner

Therefore we will

- Provide stimulating and safe indoor and outdoor environments to capture the interests of all children and promote learning, using as many natural and recycled materials as possible
- Acknowledge the diversity of all families by provision of inclusive environments and practices
- Teach children to respect their environments and develop an understanding of sustainable practices

In relation to curriculum we believe

- Learning should combine the children's interests and skills in addition to intentional teaching
- Children learn to want to learn when they are invited to explore, experiment and be adventurous
- Learning is an individual process that should involve the whole family

Therefore we will

- Encourage learning dispositions such as creativity, confidence and autonomy and considered risk taking
- Use a combination of intentional and spontaneous teaching strategies based on the VEYLDF
- Consult with families and children

In relation to our commitment to children's safety we believe

- The safety and wellbeing of all children including Indigenous, those with a disability and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) background is our number one priority

Therefore we will

- Have zero tolerance to child abuse
- Provide a safe, secure environment where all children feel empowered, happy and supported
- Ensure that all children are safe and free from harm

2 How does the Kindergarten operate?

Thornbury Kindergarten is a not-for-profit, parent-run, community-managed kindergarten.

Funding and fees

Four-year-old program

In Victoria, the Department of Education and Training (DET) provides per-capita funding as a contribution towards the costs of four-year-old kindergarten. To deliver *all* the costs associated with the program, however, we need to generate income from other sources – primarily fees.

These fees are fully covered for eligible concession card holders by the Victorian state government's Kindergarten Fee Subsidy scheme. To obtain this subsidy, families must provide a photocopy of a current Concession Card or Visa to the Thornbury Kindergarten Director or Fees Officer.

Three-year-old program

There are no government concessions for three-year-old kindergarten (also known as pre-kindergarten). It's entirely self-funded, which means the program is paid for by fees and fundraising.

We calculate fees for three-year-old kinder based on the funds needed to operate the centre, taking into account staff wages, equipment, cleaning, utilities and minor maintenance.

Our fees cover all excursions or incursions run during the year.

To view our Fees Policy, please visit our kinder website

www.thornburykindergarten.com.au

The Committee of Management

Thornbury Kindergarten is managed by a parent-run, incorporated Committee of Management. This committee functions as the licenced provider and employer at the kindergarten.

The committee consists of parents or guardians of children attending the centre or on the centre waiting list. These parents volunteer many hours of their time to ensure that the kindergarten remains operational and delivers a high-quality service to the community.

In 2015, an external audit of our operations gave Thornbury Kinder the highest achievable rating - 'Exceeding' and we are committed to maintaining, and enhancing, this level of quality.

Being involved in the committee is one way parents can participate in their

child's preschool education. You benefit by:

- Having direct input into decision-making at the kindergarten
- Developing new skills in areas such as financial management, policy development and employee relations
- Making a valuable contribution to the future of your own child, as well as all children attending the kindergarten
- Develop friendships and social networks

Each year at the Annual General Meeting a new committee is elected. We encourage all parents to attend this meeting and consider nominating for the committee or to have a say through voting.

Without the involvement of parents on the committee, at fundraising events, or at our working bees, the kindergarten cannot operate!

Parent involvement

Families are welcome and encouraged to be a part of our program. You can be involved in a number of ways, including:

- Sharing a skill
- Reading or telling a story
- Cooking experiences
- Gardening with the children
- Playing with the children
- Taking an active role in your child's education by becoming a member of the Committee of Management (see section "How does the kindergarten operate?")
- Volunteering at working bees, fundraising and social events

If you'd like to spend some time in the kindergarten with your child, please put your name on our roster. You don't need to have a special skill or an activity in mind – you're welcome to just come along and play, or to assist us with the children.

Working With Children Checks

Working with Children Checks are required for some volunteers at the kinder, including the Committee of Management, but they are not required of parents whose children attend our kinder

As well as parents, we value and enjoy visits from grandparents, aunts, uncles and special friends. There are many opportunities throughout the year to volunteer your time to assist the kindergarten. Activities and events include working bees, trivia nights, sausage sizzles, picnics and discos.

3 The Kindergarten program

Thornbury Kindergarten's programs are play-based, drawing on the interests and developmental level of each child. We allow children the time and space to explore the world in their own way. The teachers facilitate this by providing tools, materials and challenging questions; they use intentional teaching, where specific group and individual learning goals are set for the children. These goals are based on the VEYLDF and the National Quality Framework. Teachers also extend children's learning by scaffolding (building on) teachable moments that arise spontaneously during a session.

The programs are designed to cater for each individual child depending on their needs, abilities and interests. You might notice that the activities conducted in each group are different. This reflects the teaching staff's responsiveness to individuals within the group and group dynamics.

What happens in a typical session

After drop-off, the children gather for mat time. The purpose of this is to help children develop a sense of security and belonging within the group. We encourage the children to put their bags away as a means of developing the independence needed for school. After this the children engage in a range of spontaneous activities set out by staff prior to the beginning of the session.

Children are encouraged to develop their own independence by choosing what activity to do, whether to play inside or outside, and when to eat.

Towards the end of the session, children help to pack away the toys and equipment before an activity at the end of the session. This may include stories and other literacy activities, or learning experiences based on the children's interests and needs.

Throughout the year we also participate in excursions and incursions.

How you're involved in planning your child's program

You're always welcome to make a time to talk with your child's teacher about your child. Additionally, there are two set opportunities during the year that allow you to be involved in planning your child's program.

The first of these is the orientation session that all parents attend as part of a group. If you'd like to have a one-on-one interview with a teacher during this time, please request one. This interview offers parents and guardians a chance to provide information about their child and family to the teacher to assist in program development. The information may include relevant educational, medical and cultural issues.

The second meeting is offered mid-year. The mid-year interview provides an

opportunity for the teacher and parent or guardian to discuss the child's progress and, for children in the four-year-old programs, begin making plans that prepare the child for school.

Throughout the year, staff welcome any updates you may have about your child's new interests or events at home, so that these can be built into the program.

Monitoring your child's progress

While your child is at kinder we monitor their progress in a number of ways, including: photographs, recording children's stories and displaying their work. You can see how your child is progressing yourself, too, from the work they bring home from kinder. All children have individual records documenting their learning, strengths and interests; these are available for parents to view at any time.

Information about the program is also available to parents informally on a daily basis and formally through a regular newsletter from the kindergarten teachers, outlining their goals for the group.

The family of each child in our four-year-old program will receive a Transition Learning and Development Statement at the end of the year. This document is prepared by the child's teacher, but comes about as part of a collaborative process that includes the child and their family. The statement is sent to the child's primary school by the kinder.

School readiness – how to decide, what children need

Increasingly there has been pressure to “hothouse” children by teaching them to read, write and engage in formal mathematics early to give them a head start. Our teachers are sometimes asked what they're doing “to get the children ready for school”.

The purpose of kindergarten is to:

1. Support children to develop skills required for lifelong learning

Given the rate at which technology is moving, it's likely that the workplace environment that a child will be exposed to in the future will not have been invented yet and, as such, preparation for it cannot be taught at kinder or primary school.

Taking this into account, the VEYLDF suggests that children need to go to school with the following dispositions (personalities) for learning:

- Persistence
- Reflexivity
- Imagination

- Confidence
- Creativity
- Confidence
- Cooperation
- Commitment
- Enthusiasm

Teaching children these skills through play-based activities will assist them to actively and confidently resource their own learning in the future. When we sit children down in groups and engage in “instructional” teaching too early, where the adult tells the children very specifically what they will do, we run the risk of creating learners that cannot think for themselves.

2. Help children develop the social and emotional skills required to negotiate larger groups of children independently and confidently

One of the key indicators in determining readiness for school is the way in which children are able to enter peer groups using verbal and non-verbal strategies and negotiate conflict independently and confidently. Throughout the year, one of our main goals will be to develop children's confidence, play skills and healthy self-esteem.

3. Identify any areas of development that may require extra attention or support prior to school

Our service is able to help families identify and access services – speech pathology is one example – that may assist a child in developing skills at an age-appropriate level. Additionally, we can support families already using such services by implementing programs that will assist the child's development.

We often get asked about the best time to start children at school. There's an increasing trend to start children at school so that they turn six during their first year. However, each child develops differently and has different strengths and weaknesses. We encourage parents to discuss these specific issues in the early stages of the year.

In addition to our own assessments, we can engage other support staff such as the Preschool Field Officer to help you with your decision about when to start school. The kindergarten also has an extensive file of information on school readiness and transition to school.

We welcome any queries you may have regarding the big step from kinder to school.

Exemption from starting school

If after discussing your child's progress and development with their educators you decide that they're not quite ready for school, a second year of funded kinder

may be an option.

It's important to know that children who turn six at any time during the kindergarten year must be exempted from school. This includes children who are attending a second year of funded kindergarten.

If this applies to your child, the Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) asks parents to apply for an exemption from school on behalf of their children **before the child starts their funded kindergarten year.**

We'll support you through this process and, after consulting with you, as a parent or guardian, will submit an 'Exemption from school due to attendance in kindergarten program' form to the appropriate Departmental regional office **before 1 November in the year prior to the child turning six.** You can download the form from the DET website: www.education.vic.gov.au

A Thornbury Kindergarten representative will need to:

- sight the approved exemption form
- note that it has been sighted on the child's enrolment record for later reporting through the annual confirmation process.

Funding for additional years of kinder

In some circumstances, it's also possible to secure a second year of funding. The application for this funding is completed by your child's teacher, after consultation with you throughout the year.

For children in the three-year-old program, there is no government-funded kindergarten. However, for some children, parents may choose to do a second year of the three-year-old program.

If you choose to do that, Darebin Council will need you to provide details (your child's name and enrolment information) when you submit your confirmation letter. The confirmation letter will need to be signed by you (the child's parent or guardian) and a kinder teacher. It enables you to hold a place for your child in the following year.

Guiding behaviour at kindergarten

When it's necessary to guide the behaviour of children, we will maintain the dignity and rights of the child at all times. Some of the ways that we do this are by:

- Beginning the year by providing an environment which is both stimulating and nurturing, while we develop a rapport with each child
- Giving positive guidance to each child as we (as educators) get to know them. Knowing the children enables the educators to respond

appropriately to a child's needs.

- Establishing a routine which is consistent and predictable
- Teaching children language that will assist them in both naming emotions and negotiating conflict verbally with their peers
- Using our knowledge of each child's individual circumstances to inform intervention, such as redirection of the child, removal of inappropriately used objects

The children are involved in setting limits that are reasonable and have logical, age-appropriate consequences. We adhere to the recommendations of the National Quality Standard (Quality Area 5) and the National Care and Education Regulations 2012 at all times.

4 Orientation and transition into kindergarten

Starting kindergarten is a very big step in the lives of little people (and their families).

Many children may have never been left by their parents or guardians before. Even for those returning for another year it will be different: some will have a different teacher, most will have longer session times and all will have many new children to meet and get to know. For all of these reasons, it's important to begin the year gradually with a transition period before we get fully into the swing of things.

Some children, however, may benefit from full sessions straight away. For that reason, there is the option for children in the four-year-old groups to begin their full sessions at the start of Term 1. Families and staff work together to determine the best start possible for each child.

This initial settling time or transition period helps:

- Staff to begin to develop an individual rapport with each child
- Children new to the centre begin to feel comfortable in the kinder environment
- Those coming back to ease into the longer session time and begin to get to know new children.

For the three-year-old groups the transition period normally lasts about two weeks and is very flexible. We may find the children settle quickly and can shorten transition period. Some children may need a longer transition that we will happily accommodate.

5 Separation anxiety

As parents you may feel a range of different emotions as your child settles in to kinder, some positive, some not so much, especially if your child is showing signs of separation anxiety. Please be reassured, separation anxiety is a normal phase of childhood development.

There are important things to keep in mind about separation anxiety:

- It *is* normal
- It *will* pass
- It is *not* your fault (or anyone else's).

There are a number of helpful pointers for you that may help your child pass through this phase more quickly:

- Don't sneak away – say goodbye
- Be consistent
- Give opportunities for practice and preparation
- Project calm and confidence as honestly as possible
- Develop goodbye rituals – think about who will drop the child off
- Provide understanding and acceptance but not excessive sympathy
- Don't make fun of or scold your child
- Always leave. While it may sometimes feel right to stay with your child for a full session, it's best to let them experience a separation and a reunion. You can always come back early if you need to!

Something to remember

Sometimes your return can be as upsetting for your child as the separation. This happens because your child remembers that they had been left. It's not an indication that your child never settled during the day.

Please remember that the teaching staff are always willing to arrange a time with you should you wish to discuss any issues. We understand that while it is perfectly normal, separation anxiety can be very upsetting for parents, too.

6 Dressing appropriately for kindergarten

The two main considerations for deciding what your child should wear to kinder are the weather, and the type of activities that your child will be involved in at kindergarten – either onsite or at Bush Kinder.

Weather

We run an indoor-outdoor program and aim to go outside every day when possible, even when very cold.

- In winter your child will need a coat and a warm winter hat.
- In summer, children need to be well covered to minimise exposure to UV radiation that causes sunburn and skin cancers. Children need to wear a sun hat (see “Sunsmart hats” in this section), and tops, shirts, dresses, etc. that provide good cover. Shoestring, halter neck and singlet tops are not acceptable.
- In summer, autumn and spring, it's also important that you apply sunscreen to your child before coming to kinder. There will be a sunscreen checklist in your child's class that we'll ask you to tick to show your child is protected.

Note: Melbourne weather is prone to change! Always assume we will be going out and provide the appropriate clothing for rain or shine.

Play

While at Kindergarten your child will be running, climbing, jumping, swinging, rolling, dancing, digging, building and more. Please consider this when helping your child choose what to wear for the day.

Your child will be playing with sand, water, dirt, mud, slime, goop, paint, glue, and so on. This also needs to be considered. A good rule to go by is “If it's too good to get dirty, it's too good to wear at kindergarten!”

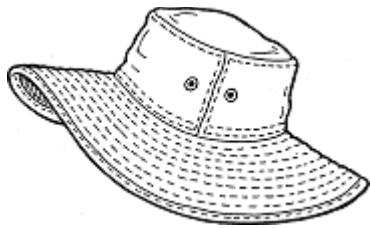
We also recommend that you pack at least one complete change of clothing (including underwear and socks) each kinder day. We do provide spare clothing for emergencies, which you can find in the bathrooms.

Please make sure everything is clearly labelled with your child's name as we cannot always identify wayward bits and pieces.

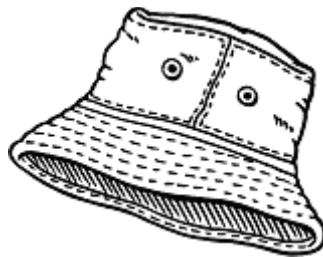
Sunsmart hats

All children need to bring and wear a sun hat whenever UV levels are 3 or higher, from the start of September to the end of April.

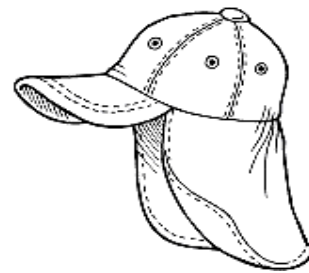
A hat helps protect those areas that are common sites of skin damage and skin cancer: the neck, ears, temples, face and nose. The Cancer Council Victoria recommends wearing a broad-brimmed, bucket or legionnaire hat. For children, the width of the brim for broad-brimmed or bucket hats should be proportional to the size of their head, and shade their face well. The legionnaire-style hat should have a flap that covers the neck and meets the sides of the front peak.



Broad-brimmed Hat



Bucket Hat



Legionnaire Hat

A “no hat, no outside play” policy applies at the kinder.

More information on hats and being sunsmart can be found at www.sunsmart.com.au

7 The healthy lunch box

Children need to come to kinder with enough food to sustain them over the duration of their session. Children will require a snack and lunch.

One of our aims at Thornbury Kindergarten is to promote healthy foods. There are several resources available with lots of great ideas for healthy lunches. Some are displayed in the foyer. You can also find information on healthy eating at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

In addition to being healthy, we recommend that the items you put in your child's lunchbox are nude foods – in other words, they involve as little packaging as possible. The fewer wrappers that goes into the bin the better.

Some suggestions include:

- A mixed sandwich with a healthy filling, fresh fruit and a tub of yoghurt
- Fruit bread or muffins
- Rice cakes
- Cheese cut into small cubes
- Vegetable pieces and dip

We recommend water only to drink. Water is always available and we encourage children to help themselves to a drink. They can also bring their own water bottle from home.

Please note that foods such as chips, lollies, chocolate and sweet drinks will be returned to your child's bag.

8 Arrival and departure

Signing in and out

Signing your child in and out of the centre is a very important part of your kindergarten routine because:

- It gives us an accurate list of who's present, which is vital for the safety of the children, and allows us to keep track of enrolments and attendance patterns
- In case of emergency evacuation, it enables us to make sure we have all children with us
- It's a legal requirement.

The sign-in book will be in the foyer when you enter. In this book we need you to enter the time you arrived (if you arrive late, please enter the time you entered, not the time the session began), your signature, and the name of the person picking your child up. Only a parent or guardian is able to authorise another person (not listed on the enrolment form) to collect their child. On pick up, we need the time you collected your child and your signature.

If your circumstances change during the day and someone other than the person you've named in the sign-in book is picking up your child, please call the kindergarten and let the staff know. Any person picking up a child from kindergarten must be on the list of authorised people on the enrolment form – you can add this name at any time, but please first notify your child's teacher that you're making the addition to the form. Parents and guardians are able to provide a one-off verbal authorisation (over the phone or at the start of the session) for another person to collect their child. However, if it is likely that person will pick up on a regular basis, they should be added to the enrolment form as an authorised person.

The front door code

Please don't give the code to the front door keypad to anyone who doesn't pick up your child on a regular basis.

Arrival

The front door at the kindergarten is unlocked 15 minutes before the start of the session and for 15 minutes after the start of the session. It is a legal requirement that parents arriving before the session starts wait with their children in the foyer until a member of the teaching staff opens the door into the kindergarten.

If you need to leave prior to a session starting, you are welcome to leave your child in the care of another kinder family. They will be responsible for signing your child in.

Parents or guardians are responsible for supervising their children until the child is signed into the centre and enters the kindergarten room to commence the program. From this point, teaching staff are responsible for supervising the children.

We encourage children to put their bags in their lockers themselves and join the group activities. At the end of the session it's important for children to collect their own bags as this helps build independence and responsibility for their possessions.

Departure

The front door of the kindergarten is unlocked 15 minutes before the end of the kindergarten session and for 15 minutes after the end of the session.

When children see their parents and siblings they can become very excited and the kinder room becomes quite busy. In order to ensure the safe departure of the children, staff will dismiss children individually once the staff member has seen the person who is collecting the child. It's important that families do not call children away from the group until acknowledged by the staff. Once staff have let children go (and they have been signed out), active supervision is essential because of the door constantly opening and closing, the excitement of children and general busyness. If you stop to chat to other parents or staff (which we hope you do) please make sure that you know the whereabouts of your child at all times; don't let them leave the building without you.

Late collection

If you're more than 15 minutes late collecting your child, and you have not advised staff that you will be late, staff will attempt to contact you and/or others authorised to collect your child. Staff will remain with your child until they're collected.

It's only fair that we pay staff who work beyond their normal hours additional wages, and we charge a fee for late collections to cover these wages.

The fees applied are:

- \$20 for between 15 and 20 minutes late
- \$25 for between 20 and 25 minutes late
- \$30 for between 25 and 30 minutes late
- \$1 per minute rounded to the closest \$5 for all times after 30 minutes late

Communicating information to parents

Each child attending Thornbury Kindergarten has a pocket on the wall in the foyer. Parents and guardians should remember to check this regularly as important information (including invoices and receipts) is distributed via these pockets.

We may also display important notices on the table next to the sign-in book and the window of the external door. Please look out for these notices and information when you drop off and collect your child.

We email newsletters to each family once per term and copies are available in the foyer.

We have an active Facebook group and encourage new families to join - www.facebook.com/groups/thornburykindergarten

We also communicate to parents via the app called Skoolbag. On it, you can get regular notifications about the latest kinder news, events and service information. It's also a good place to read our policies, catch up with a newsletter or check the latest fee information. Skoolbag is available for Apple and Android devices.

9 Safety

At Thornbury Kindergarten we are committed to providing a secure environment where the children are safe, both emotionally and physically. Part of this involves the physical security of the building.

The front door

The front door of the kinder is always locked so that only those who have the security code are able to enter.

Please don't give the code to anyone who doesn't pick up your child on a regular basis.

We ask that parents waiting in the foyer be vigilant and cautious. Please don't open or hold open the door for other people. If they have the code, they will easily be able to enter themselves. If they don't, they can ring the doorbell and a staff member will answer the door. There are a number of reasons for this:

- **There is always a possibility that while you are holding open the door, a child could quickly run out.** With other people in the foyer it can be difficult to prevent their escape before it's too late.
- **Staff need to know who's coming and going to keep children safe.** Sometimes court orders are in place, and when you open the door for another person you may be unwittingly putting the children and the centre at risk.

It is vitally important that you always ensure you have closed the door firmly on entering and leaving.

Please don't allow kinder children or older siblings to open the door. Children (even older children) aren't always able to prevent other children from escaping and will not be able to assess the suitability of people entering the premises. Only adults should open the front door.

Emergency procedures

Thornbury Kindergarten has procedures in place in the event of an emergency. These are displayed in the foyer. In addition, fire drills and evacuation procedures are practised on a regular basis with the children.

Toddlers and babies

We encourage parent participation in our program, and of course your toddlers are welcome to join you when you're spending time with us. The children love sharing their younger siblings with their friends, and the toddlers love it too.

Be aware, however, that the kindergarten is set up to cater for the kindergarten children's age group and some of the equipment and materials will not be

appropriate for the younger child. Many activities have small parts, and the climbing equipment is set up to challenge larger and more agile children. Also, many of our materials and pieces of equipment are quite fragile and a toddler may have difficulty handling these safely.

It's important to be aware that you are responsible for supervising any other children you bring with you into the kindergarten. We ask you to make sure they stay safe and that your visit is a pleasant one for all.

Our Amethyst room foyer has a comfortable couch if you need to breastfeed.

10 Child Safety at Thornbury Kindergarten

In line with the legislated Child Safe Standards, Thornbury Kinder (the Kinder) is reviewing all organisational policies and procedures to ensure these Standards are embedded and to strengthen our child safety practices.

The first of these seven Standards stipulates that every organisation working with children must develop a Child Safety Statement and or a Child Safe Policy.

Thornbury Kindergarten's Child Safety Statement

The protection of children is the responsibility of **everyone involved at Thornbury Kindergarten**, including staff, parents and volunteers. We all share the responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children.

Thornbury Kindergarten has zero tolerance towards child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and keeping them safe at all times. The Committee of Management is committed to implementing the minimum Child Safe standards and creating a child safe organisation.

Thornbury Kindergarten holds children's safety and wellbeing central to all its work in practice, recruitment, professional development, advocacy and policy work.

Thornbury Kindergarten is committed to the wellbeing of all children, families, staff, volunteers and partners in its delivery of quality early childhood education. We strive to create a sense of belonging for all children and families irrespective of ethnicity, culture, language, beliefs, gender, age, socioeconomic status, level of ability or family structure. This commitment is reflected in the Kinder's philosophy and everyday teaching practice.

In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, Thornbury Kindergarten endorses the rights of all children to participate, have purpose, be protected and ensure that prevention from risk and harm is paramount in all we do.

We are committed to:

- Empowering children
 - Thornbury Kindergarten recognises that children have a voice and are vital and active participants in our organisation. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say.
 - Taking all concerns, allegations and indications seriously by responding robustly and consistently in-line with the Kinder's policies and procedures.

- Upholding the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe, at all times.
- Embracing inclusion and diversity
 - Promoting a culture of inclusion as a principle for all children including Aboriginal children, children at-risk, children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and children of all abilities.
 - Encouraging active partnerships with parents/guardians and families and ensuring that best practice is based on a child/family-centred approach with shared outcomes for children's learning, health, safety, wellbeing and development.
- Fulfilling our Duty of Care
 - Ensuring that the health, safety and wellbeing of children in our care is protected at all times in the pursuit of promoting their learning, development and wellbeing.
 - Fulfilling our duty-of-care obligations under the law by protecting children from any reasonable or foreseeable risk of injury or harm.
 - Ensuring that people caring for children in our organisation act in the best interests of the child and take all reasonable steps to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing at all times.
 - Promoting prevention of child abuse by identifying potential risks early in the pathway of emerging risk and acting.
 - Notifying appropriate organisations such as the Department of Health & Human Services, Child FIRST or Victoria Police regarding any concerns on the safety and wellbeing of a child.
 - Reviewing and monitoring all TK systems and processes regularly to ensure they meet requirements to uphold child safety.
 - Implementing a robust child safe recruitment process in-line with the child safe organisation indicators when employing staff and volunteers.
 - Ensuring that the Child Safety Standards are mandatory professional development requirements for ALL TK staff.

If you would like a copy of our Child Safety Policy and Procedure or further information about our plans to ensure we continue to provide quality and safe services, please contact Danielle Logan, Child Safety Support Officer, childsafety@thornburykinder.com

Code of Conduct

The protection of children is the responsibility of **everyone involved with Thornbury Kindergarten**, including staff, parents and volunteers. We all share the responsibility for promoting the wellbeing and safety of children.

Thornbury Kindergarten has zero tolerance for child abuse and is committed to acting in the best interests of children and keeping them safe at all times. The

Committee of Management is committed to implementing the minimum Child Safe standards and creating a child safe organisation.

The Code of Conduct contributes to a culture of child safety. Ours establishes clear expectations for appropriate conduct, behaviour and interactions with children around the kindergarten and applies to all staff, committee members, volunteers and families. It spells out professional boundaries, ethical behaviour and acceptable relationships.

You can find the Code of Conduct Policy on the Thornbury Kindergarten website. A hard copy of the policy is located in each of the foyers.

We ask that you read this important document and acknowledge your intent to comply with it.

If you need any assistance accessing the Code of Conduct, please email childsafety@thornburykinder.com

Processes for reporting Child Safety incidents or concerns

The staff at Thornbury Kindergarten play a critical role in protecting the children in our care. All staff must act when they form a reasonable belief or have a suspicion that a child has been, or is at risk of, being abused. For Early Childhood Teachers it is a mandatory requirement to report incidents or concerns to the relevant authorities.

Protecting children and promoting their safety is everyone's business within the Thornbury Kindergarten community. If you hold a concern about the safety and/or wellbeing of a child at Thornbury Kindergarten you should raise this concern with one of:

- The Director (email: director@thornburykinder.com)
- The Child Safety Officer (email: childsafety@thornburykinder.com)
- Your child's teacher
- The President (email: president@thornburykinder.com)

If a child is in immediate danger, call emergency services on 000.

11 Medication, accidents and illness

Accident and illness

If your child has an accident at kindergarten not requiring medical attention, we'll provide appropriate first aid and record the details in an incident report. We'll ask you to read and sign this report when you arrive to collect your child. This form can only be signed by a parent, legal guardian or person authorised via the enrolment form. If another person is picking your child up we'll pass on the information to them so they can inform you and we'll require you to sign the report next time you're at the centre.

In the event of an accident requiring medical attention we'll contact you immediately. Please make sure your details are always up to date.

If your child becomes unwell while at kindergarten, you'll be called to collect your child. We'll record the details and ask you to read and sign the report when you arrive. This form can only be signed by a parent or legal guardian. If we're unable to reach you we'll call your emergency contacts. In this case you'll be asked to sign the illness report when you're next in the centre.

Medication

If your child needs to have prescription medication administered during the kindergarten session, there's a strict procedure that must be followed:

- Prescription medication must be in its original container with the prescription label indicating the child's name and dosage required. The medication cannot be expired. All medication must be handed to a member of staff; it should never be left in the child's bag. **Medicine which has not been prescribed by a doctor, such as Panadol, cannot be administered by staff.**
- Staff will ask you to fill in a form. This form can only be signed by a parent, a legal guardian or an emergency contact person.
- If someone else is bringing your child to kindergarten, we need your written permission first. We'll fill out the form and you'll then be required to counter-sign next time you're in the centre. We're unable to administer medication unless this has been completed correctly.
- Before administering the medication, two members of staff will cross reference your information with that on the container. The medication will be administered by one staff member and witnessed by the other.
- We'll then fill out the remainder of the form and you'll be asked to sign it again when you pick up your child as confirmation.

Important

We are unable to administer medication "as required". We're not qualified to

make a medical assessment.

Action plans

Some children who attend kindergarten may have enduring medical conditions that require careful management. Examples of these are children with asthma or life-threatening allergies (see also “Anaphylaxis”, below). In the cases of these children, we work with parents and their doctor to develop action plans in the event of an acute change in health. Parents are required to notify the centre of any changes to the management of their child's health.

Important note

Children who have life-threatening medical conditions are unable to commence in the Thornbury Kindergarten program until their parents or guardians have supplied the kindergarten with an action plan and medication (if required).

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. The most common causes in young children are eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, cow milk, bee or other insect stings, and some medications.

Staff and parents or guardians need to be aware that it's not possible to achieve a completely allergen-free environment in any centre that's open to the general community.

We instruct staff to never assume that an allergen has been eliminated from the environment. Instead the kindergarten recognises the need to adopt a range of procedures and risk minimisation strategies to reduce the risk of a child having an anaphylactic reaction.

The kindergarten has a comprehensive anaphylaxis policy and procedure. It's important that parents and guardians:

- Make staff aware of any known allergy their child may have
- Ensure they are familiar with the Anaphylaxis Policy and procedure
- Develop anaphylaxis action plans and other strategies with doctors and then develop a risk minimisation plan with staff at the kinder

If emergency management of the condition involves use of an EpiPen® kit, parents must provide the centre with a kit for their child. It's the policy of the kinder that no child who has been prescribed an EpiPen® is permitted to attend the centre or its programs without that EpiPen®.

Please note: all EpiPens® have expiration dates, and it's important to check and replace expired medications, including epinephrine.

Asthma

Asthma is a chronic, treatable health condition that affects approximately one in 10 Australian children. It is generally accepted that children under six years of age do not have the skills and ability to recognise and manage their own asthma without adult assistance. With this in mind, we recognise and promote responsible asthma management strategies.

Staff have current approved emergency asthma management training.

The kindergarten has a comprehensive Asthma Policy and procedure. It's important that as a parent or guardian you:

- Make staff aware if your child has asthma
- Ensure you are familiar with the Asthma Policy and procedure
- Develop an asthma action plans with doctors and then develop a risk minimisation plan with staff at the kinder
- Provide appropriate medication and equipment for your child, in the original box and labelled with your child's name

Please note: all medications have expiration dates, and it's important to check and replace expired medications.

Head lice

While children are at kindergarten, families may have contact with head lice. Head lice are tiny insects that live in the hair, and feed by sucking blood. They only live in human hair, and can only survive for 24 to 48 hours when not on a head and able to feed. Head lice are transferred from one person to another by direct hair to hair contact – they don't have wings or jumping legs so they can't fly or jump from head to head.

Signs of head lice include:

- Itchiness, especially at the back of the head, neck and behind the ears
- A red rash on the scalp and/or neck
- Tiny silver eggs at the base of the hair shaft – these are called nits.

Many infestations, however, have **no** symptoms. It's therefore important to check children's hair regularly for lice.

If lice are found, you need to treat your child's hair. There are a variety of treatments for head lice which your pharmacist will be able to advise you on. As no treatment kills all of the eggs in one go, you'll need to use two applications one week apart.

According to the Victorian state government's Health Regulations, children with head lice can only be readmitted to kindergarten once treatment has commenced (which can be as soon as the next day).

In order to reduce transfer of head lice to your child, we recommend parents tie their child's hair back if it's long.

Exclusions due to illness

If children have an infectious disease they may be excluded from kindergarten. Examples of diseases to which exclusion may apply include:

- Chicken pox
- Diarrhoea
- Measles
- Gastroenteritis
- Conjunctivitis
- Hand, foot, and mouth disease
- Mumps
- Rubella
- Whooping cough

Children with these conditions may have to wait a certain period of time until their illness is no longer considered contagious, or may need a medical clearance certificate. Sometimes relatives of the child with the infectious disease, may also need to be excluded from attending kindergarten. These are requirements under the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001. The full list of diseases to which exclusion applies, and the period of exclusion, are provided in Appendix 1.

If your child is unwell and you're unsure whether it's safe for them to return to kindergarten, speak to your doctor. If your child is diagnosed with an infectious disease that requires exclusion, please notify the kindergarten teaching staff. This allows staff to inform all other parents and guardians of any outbreak of infectious disease at the kindergarten. A notice will be displayed on the front door of the centre detailing which disease has been confirmed and the number of reported cases.

When to stay home from kinder

When deciding whether or not to keep your child home due to illness please consider the following:

- Is my child well enough to comfortably take part in the day's activities?
- Will my child pass on their illness to other children or staff?
- Will my child's teacher be able to care for my child without it impacting on their ability to educate and care for other children?
- If I felt like this, would I go to work or study?

Children who are ill can recover more quickly if they can rest and be cared for at

home.

12 Environmental care

Australia faces many environmental challenges. At Thornbury Kindergarten we believe that individuals can make small changes to conserve our precious natural resources and promote sustainable living. We're committed to providing children with a curriculum that incorporates raising awareness of environmental issues and provides learning experiences centred on the concept of environmental responsibility.

We encourage everyone to:

- Reduce
- Reuse
- Recycle
- Compost

Staff at the kindergarten act as role models for children by:

- Using recycled paper
- Reusing materials where possible
- Separating recyclable from non-recyclable materials and recycling as much material as possible
- Turning off lights when they're not needed
- Using heating and cooling appropriately and with discretion
- Controlling use of water in play
- Providing a worm compost system for children to compost their food scraps

At lunch and snack times, we encourage children to separate the food scraps (for the worms), recyclables (for pasting/collage table) and rubbish (for the bin).

Waste-free lunchboxes

We encourage parents to support our efforts through packing waste-free lunches where possible. You can do this by:

- Packing lunch in re-usable containers such as a lunchbox
- Including water in refillable bottles
- Wrapping food in a cloth napkin or a biodegradable wrapping such as greaseproof paper or paper bag
- Reducing the amount of pre-packed foods
- Including more fresh produce in lunchboxes – fresh fruit requires no wrapping other than its skin

For more tips you can visit www.wastefreelunches.org

You might also like to start your own compost bin or worm farm at home. Darebin

City Council has compost aerators and worm farms for sale, and provide information on composting.

You can find out more at www.darebin.vic.gov.au

13 Celebrations and festivals

Celebrations and festivals are important to all of us and we try to acknowledge as many as possible in the centre. There are many ways we do this:

- Displays in the foyer are a visual representation. They offer a talking point, allowing parents to discuss these special days with their children.
- Discussions at group times: what is happening, who is celebrating, and different ways to celebrate. We emphasise the “giving” and “sharing” aspects of festivals.
- Inviting families to come and share any special celebration that’s important to them. Some examples include Eid, Greek Easter and Chinese New Year.

We are very fortunate to have staff from diverse backgrounds, but this means we may not celebrate the same days as you, or in the same way. Please approach staff and let us know of any celebrations or festivals of importance to your family.

Making presents and gifts

Children are encouraged to make or prepare special things for the people in their lives at kinder. We remind the children about “practical” gifts like a hug, tidying our toys, etc. We provide extra materials for gift and card making, along with wrapping paper.

If your child doesn’t come home with a special gift for an occasion or day, please don’t think they’ve been deprived of the opportunity – instead, they will have exercised their right to choose. We don’t insist each child make “a present” for a number of reasons:

- Not all the children want to make a set thing. The “gift” is therefore not coming from the child but from the teacher. It’s also not the child’s work but the teacher’s.
- It’s an important element of our educational philosophy that the children engage in unstructured, open-ended activities.
- We want to instil the values of generosity, giving and sharing.

We believe in teaching children that creating and sharing special things should be something they *want* to do. When we tell children what to give and when to give it, it becomes something they *have* to do.

Bring your culture into the centre

If you wish to share a day that’s special to you and your family, we would love to include this in our program. Come and see us in advance and discuss what you

have in mind.

If making something is part of your celebration or culture (for example, colouring eggs for Greek Easter), we'd love to make it a kinder activity. We will, however, need you (or an available representative) to come in and demonstrate it with the children.

Birthdays and name days – marking milestones

We enjoy celebrating birthdays and name days together. It's an exciting time for all of us. It's important that you discuss with your child's teacher how birthdays and name days are celebrated as each group may observe the occasion in a different way.

If you'd like to bring a cake, individual cupcakes, a healthy treat or a non-food item to share with the group, we welcome it. Keep in mind food regulations require that if you bring food into the kinder, you also need to bring in a list of all ingredients. We'll display the list for all parents to see before anyone starts eating.

Don't forget candles!

14 Bush Kinder and Out & About Kinder

For each group in our four-year-old program, four hours per week is dedicated to time outside kinder exploring the wider world.

Children in Bush Kinder groups spend time at local parkland, while children in the Out & About Kinder groups will go on adventures near and far – to local landmarks, nearby schools, the Town Hall and more.

Both groups will go on excursions and experience incursions (have people come to visit the kinder) as part of their usual curriculum.

Bush Kinder

Thornbury Kindergarten's Bush Kinder program supports young children to develop responsibility for themselves and others through play. It also encourages the ability to independently assess and manage risk.

Attending kinder at an alternative setting also allows children to engage more widely in their local community, promoting feelings of belonging.

Children in a Bush Kinder group will attend three sessions per week in total: two at the kindergarten itself and one at the Bush Kinder site. While at the Bush Kinder session, they will have the opportunity to play in the rain, roll down grassy mounds, balance along fallen logs, get involved in dramatic play, find insects and draw with sticks in the ground.

Although the kinder policies and procedures are consistent with the Bush Kinder program, there is additional information available for families of children attending the Bush Kinder program. We have a separate Bush Kinder Handbook which will be distributed to families whose children are involved in the program. Please see a member of staff or the Committee if you would like any further information on Bush Kinder.

Out & About Kinder

Thornbury Kindergarten's Out & About Kinder program builds on the existing connection children and their families have to their community.

Out & About Kinder helps children develop positive connections to people and places and helps children to see themselves as active contributors to the world. It presents exciting opportunities to grasp the learning waiting to happen outside the kinder door, and to bring that learning back to home kinder.

During an Out & About excursion children might develop relationships with staff at the local primary school, notice and respond to the amount of rubbish left on

the footpath and develop a deeper level of road safety awareness and skills.

We have a separate Out & About Handbook which will be distributed to families whose children are involved in the program. Please see a member of staff or the Committee if you would like any further information on Out & About Kinder.

15 Enrolments

All enrolments are processed through the City of Darebin Kindergarten and Child Care Registration System. Families and carers can now apply through an online portal – visit www.darebin.vic.gov.au

Paper copies are still available at any of the Darebin Customer Service Centres, by phone on 8470 8825, or online at www.darebin.vic.gov.au.

16 Privacy

Thornbury Kindergarten is committed to maintaining the privacy and confidentiality of children and their families.

Except in the circumstances of a medical emergency, threat to personal safety or as otherwise permitted or required by law, information you have provided to us will not be disclosed to persons other than those who require the information to provide the kindergarten service to you.

Please make sure that all details regarding who may or may not collect your child from the kinder are kept up to date.

We also ask that people visiting the centre, including parents, respect the privacy of others and don't take photographs of children without the explicit written consent of a parent.

Appendix 1: Exclusion

Minimum Period of Exclusion from Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts

The following table is taken from the Department of Health website and can be accessed at www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion/school-exclusion-table

The table indicates the minimum period of exclusion from schools and children's service centres required for infectious diseases cases and contacts as prescribed under the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations (2009) – Schedule 7. In this Schedule “medical certificate” means a certificate of a registered medical practitioner.

Condition	Exclusion of Cases	Exclusion of Contacts
Amoebiasis (<i>Entamoeba histolytica</i>)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours.	Not excluded.
Campylobacter	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours.	Not excluded.
Chickenpox	Exclude until all blisters have dried. This is usually at least 5 days after the rash appears in unimmunised children, but may be less in previously immunised children.	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded.
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased.	Not excluded.
Diarrhoea	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours.	Not excluded.
Diphtheria	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least two negative throat swabs, the first not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics and the other 48 hours later.	Exclude family/household contacts until cleared to return by the Secretary.
Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried.	Not excluded.
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until at least 4 days of appropriate antibiotic treatment has been completed.	Not excluded.
Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness.	Not excluded.
Hepatitis B	Exclusion is not necessary.	Not excluded.
Hepatitis C	Exclusion is not necessary.	Not excluded.
Herpes ("cold sores")	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible.	Not excluded.
Human immuno-deficiency virus infection (HIV/AIDS)	Exclusion is not necessary.	Not excluded.
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing.	Not excluded.
Influenza and	Exclude until well.	Not excluded unless considered necessary by

influenza like illnesses		the Secretary.
Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary.	Not excluded.
Measles*	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash.	Immunised contacts not excluded. Unimmunised contacts should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case. If unimmunised contacts are vaccinated within 72 hours of their first contact with the first case, or received NHIG within 144 hours of exposure, they may return to the facility.
Meningitis (bacteria - other than meningococcal meningitis)	Exclude until well.	Not excluded.
Meningococcal infection*	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed.	Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy.
Mumps*	Exclude for 9 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner).	Not excluded.
Pertussis* (whooping cough)	Exclude the child for 21 days after the onset of cough or until they have completed 5 days of a course of antibiotic treatment.	Contacts aged less than 7 years in the same room as the case who have not received three effective doses of pertussis vaccine should be excluded for 14 days after the last exposure to the infectious case, or until they have taken 5 days of a course of effective antibiotic treatment.
Poliomyelitis*	Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Re-admit after receiving medical certificate of recovery.	Not excluded.
Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (head lice)	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced.	Not excluded.
Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash.	Not excluded.
Salmonella, Shigella	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours.	Not excluded.
Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is produced.	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary.
Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well.	Not excluded.
Tuberculosis	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious.	Not excluded.
Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever)	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Secretary.	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Secretary.
Verotoxin producing <i>Escherichia coli</i> (VTEC)	Exclude if required by the Secretary and only for the period specified by the Secretary.	Not excluded.
Worms (Intestinal)	Exclude until there has not been a loose bowel motion for 24 hours.	Not excluded.

Out & About



Bush Kinder





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**Nelson
Alexander**

**8c Newcastle Street
Thornbury, Victoria 3071**

Phone 9484 1095 Fax 9484 6102

thornburykinder.com.au

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