

☆ play ☆ independence ☆ social ☆ community ☆ discovery ☆ health ☆ learning ☆ fun ☆

"a great start in life"



Somerville  
Kindergarten

# Handbook 2021

development ☆ identity ☆ imagine ☆ friendships ☆ discovery ☆ health ☆ quality education ☆ laughter ☆ nurturing

relationships ☆ safe environment ☆ imagination ☆ identity ☆ play ☆ create ☆ laugh ☆ experimenting ☆ friends

☆ community ☆ stimulating ☆ creativity ☆ family ☆ wellbeing ☆ experiences ☆ social ☆

## SOMERVILLE KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

At Somerville Kindergarten we believe in creating a positive, supportive and friendly centre for children and their families to belong to and feel welcomed and involved in their child's education and community. Respectful relationships involve staff and families connecting to show acceptance and support of all families in our community, acknowledging diversity and valuing uniqueness, regardless of culture, religion or sex.

We believe that working in partnership with families enriches the service we provide to our community, creating an environment that is inclusive and provides a sense of belonging. We will support and help children in their learning about themselves and their world to establish meaningful connections to their world and those in it.

We want children to be able to learn and develop in our Kindergarten through following their interests and experiences. We want each child to reach their potential through accessing learning areas of our program by providing play and learning areas that cater to children's individuality and expected learning outcomes for each child. We acknowledge that each child learns differently and we will help motivate and ensure each child feels success in who they are and their learning. We want children to be confident learners, self-motivated, challenged, engaged and enjoy themselves along the way in a happy, stimulating and welcoming learning environment.

We want children to learn and play in a natural environment and have freedom to express ideas and be encouraged to follow through, extend interests and reflect on what they have learnt. Our natural environment will include our surroundings, items from nature (beach, bush, garden, forest, etc.) and living through incursions and excursions from the Mornington Peninsula.

Our families have expressed their values in care, friendliness and structure so we will support these values in our program and approach. We believe in a group eating time where children and educators sit together in a relaxed social setting. We value mat and circle times with groups where children learn to sit and contribute and listen to each other and educators. We will provide child initiated teacher initiated learning experiences for all children.

We value healthy lifestyles and will provide families with information and support to practice healthy choices and provide healthy food for their child whilst at kindergarten.

We respect cultural diversity and will provide opportunities from a multi-cultural perspective. We also believe our curriculum should reflect an understanding of aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.

The staff at Somerville Kindergarten believe in a holistic approach to learning and believe reflective practices is of great importance to engaging children learning and teaching within our centre. We believe that the children's emergent learning and development outcomes should foster children to:

- Have a strong sense of identity
- Be connected and contribute to their world
- Have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Be confident and involved learners
- Be effective communicators

# About Us

Operating since 1959, Somerville Kindergarten offers quality early childhood education, in a caring and relaxed environment. We are a non-affiliated, family friendly and community run centre, providing 3-year-old and 4-year-old group sessions.

The staff and committee recognize the importance of children with additional needs having the opportunity to attend regular kindergarten sessions. Special arrangement such as hours of attendance and integration aide requirements may need to be worked out by the Teachers with the parents. The kindergarten is wheelchair accessible.

## **Our Staff**

Our staff have extensive Early Childhood experience and are committed to providing programs that allow children to learn through play. The staff commitment to the kindergarten is evident by the number of years of service given by both our teachers and assistants. The stability of long-term staff allows them to create a happy, safe and secure environment for our children. It also helps to build a strong sense of community within the kindergarten families.

## **Communication & Relationships**

Somerville Kindergarten is committed to promoting a friendly, comfortable and co-operative relationship between parents and teaching staff.

Communication at the kindergarten will occur via the following means:

- Kindergarten Handbook
- Foyer notice boards
- Notices in your child's kindergarten pocket
- Annual survey
- Regular bulletin
- Facebook page and kindergarten website
- Informal communication with your child's teacher before or after kindergarten sessions with the option to set up extra meetings with your child's teacher should they be required

## **Arriving & Departing Safely**

The safety of all of our children is of utmost importance.

When arriving and departing from kinder, please be sure that all doors are closed behind you. Also, please ensure the front door 'clicks' shut when leaving.

Car parking is available on Eramosa Rd East. Please observe parking signs and note that under no circumstances is parking permitted within the car park, drive way or the grounds of the school or kindergarten. This is strictly reserved for staff only, including after school hours.

It is also requested that the paved pathways be used when walking to and from kinder.

## **Parent Help Roster**

Parents and/or caregivers are required to stay for 2 sessions or more per term, to help with the smooth running of the program. Your child loves having you here and the teachers appreciate the help. Even if you can stay for part of the session, 1-2 hours, it's a great help.

## **Snack Time & Healthy Eating**

The safety and wellbeing of our children is paramount. We are a 'nut free' centre and follow a healthy eating policy. This is necessary for providing a safe environment for all of our children. Children with severe nut allergies/anaphylaxis need to be safe in the kindergarten environment. We request that all parents refrain from sending foods containing any or anything derived from nuts e.g. peanut butter, nutella, muesli bars etc.

We ensure that children acknowledge the policy of a 'healthy snack' and to bring fresh fruit or vegetables, yoghurt, cheese, sandwiches, popcorn etc at snack time with a drink of water. We request that no 'bad' foods such as chocolate, crisps, sweets be sent at a snack with your child.

## **Celebrations**

There will be times at Kindergarten that different foods will be served as part of our program. This may include cooking done by the children, celebrations at different times of the year and birthday celebrations.

Please feel free to send along cakes or birthday treat with your child on their special day, however, with food allergies on the rise, it has become more difficult to know what is acceptable to bring. If you are making or buying a celebratory food item, please ensure that you are aware of all ingredients and bring a copy of the ingredient list to kinder.

The kindergarten does encourage non-food treats for the children – for example stickers, stamps and balloons.

Please remember to tell staff about any allergies or dislikes your child has. This information can be outlined in the confidential enrolment form.

## **Suitable Clothing and Footwear**

Please dress your child in clothes that are comfortable, easily washed and easily managed at the toilet. Both the indoor and outdoor activities involve an element of 'messy' play. The kindergarten provides smocks but these are often only partially effective. Both you and your child will be happier if they are in suitable clothing.

Please ensure your child has appropriate, safe, strong footwear – shoes or sandals. **NO THONGS PLEASE.** In warm weather children are allowed to remove shoes and socks, so please encourage your child to learn how to take them on and off. Help will be given to those who can't manage their footwear.

**HATS ARE COMPULSORY DURING TERM 1 & TERM 4 (see Sun Smart Policy).**

## **Somerville Kindergarten T-Shirts, Windcheaters and Hats**

Somerville Kindergarten has T-shirts, windcheaters and hats with the Somerville logo on the front. If you wish to purchase any of these items, order forms are available at the kindergarten.

## **Special Events/Excursions/Incursions**

Throughout the year special events will be held such as Mother's Day morning/afternoon tea, Father's Night, Pyjama day, Teddy Bear's picnic & pizza day. Excursions and incursions will be organized as part of the 4yo program (some incursions are organised for the 3yo program). These are left to the discretion of the teachers with Committee of Management approval.

## **Program Philosophy**

At Somerville Kindergarten, we are proud of our well-established, carefully planned and responsive play-based program. It reflects sound research that children learn best through play and by engaging in experiences that interest them. As such it achieves the 'outcomes' central to the National 'Early Years Learning Framework' set out by the Department of Early Education & Childhood Development.

The five outcomes relate to: -

1. **Identity** – the children will have a strong sense of identity;
2. **Community** – the children are connected with & contribute to their world;
3. **Wellbeing** – the children have a strong sense of wellbeing;
4. **Learning** – the children are confident and involved learners;
5. **Communication** – the children are effective communicators.

Specifically, the program provides opportunities for the children to learn: -

- To feel confident;
- To be independent;
- To use their body skillfully;
- To communicate with others;
- To express themselves through speech, movement, music and art;
- To observe, question and organize their thinking about the world;
- To be eager for new experiences;
- To develop creative thoughts;
- To extend their interests.

The teachers display a fortnightly written program, set out in a flow chart or 'mind map' format that shows how activities flow from needs and interests and demonstrates the inter-related nature of children's learning in different areas.

Somerville Kindergarten is committed to creating an environment of acceptance – embracing all levels of skills and abilities, all cultural and languages.

Somerville Kindergarten will operate in 2021 as one group of 3-year-old and four separate 4-year-old groups, run as a 'Rotational Kindergarten'. The 3-year-old kindergarten group attends for 6 hours per week, and the 4-year-old groups will attend for 15 hours per week. The 4-year-old groups are known as either 'Grasshoppers A, B, C or D', and the 3-year-old group are the 'Ladybugs'. The current timetable is attached to this handbook.

## **Settling In**

The new experience of kindergarten may seem wonderful or fearful to your child. They may find a new world with exciting things to do or a bewildering and frightening place from which they would like to escape. Your child may discover pleasant companions with whom to share experiences or strange children who are overwhelming in their rush of movement, loud voices and exuberance.

Your child may regard the Teacher as a friend in whom they can trust or as an unfamiliar grown up whom they regard with suspicion. All children need understanding and support when they first come to kindergarten.

## **Before Starting**

Occasionally talk about kindergarten in a casual, positive manner e.g. 'you'll be going to kindergarten soon ... there are lots of interesting things to do there'. Do not build it up to sound like a party; just be optimistic in your approach. Never use kindergarten as a threat e.g. 'you won't be able to do that at kinder'.

## **What your child needs for Kindergarten**

A kindergarten bag/backpack large enough to bring their snack in a lunchbox, drink bottle and spare clothes (undies, socks, pants, top) in case of an accident.

## **First Days**

During the early sessions, be prepared for your child to be resistant and reluctant for you to leave their side. Plan to be able to stay with your child for as long as the Teacher thinks is necessary. She will tell you when it is time to say good-bye. Our program is designed to let you settle your child in a relaxed way.

Please pass on to the Teacher anything that has happened since the previous day, which is important to the child. When collecting your child try not to rush in and out, ask, 'have you had a happy time' rather than 'have you been good?'

Don't expect a pre-school child to give you a detailed account of the day's activities. If you ask them what they did, your child will probably say 'nothing' – this is very normal. If you are really concerned ask the Teacher or stay for a session and see for yourself.

## **Teacher's Role**

The Teacher will be friendly but will not expect a quick response from a new child. She will show them the material and suggest things they may care to do but will not force them. The Teacher will watch for any indication of interest in a particular activity and will follow it up with the child as she gets the opportunity. She will explain the few rules which all the children are expected to obey and will be ready to remind them if they forget, without being impatient or cross.

The Teacher will be ready to help your child if difficulties arise with other children or in the use of equipment but will also encourage independence and let them have the satisfaction of overcoming difficulties unaided when she thinks they are capable of it. The Teacher will provide many interesting things for your child to do such as playing with sand and water, painting, block building, construction and waste material using transport toys etc. There will be books, musical instruments and times for listening to stories, singing and playing games.

The Teacher will not be comparing your child with any other children but will value them for their own individuality.

## **Friends**

Your child will form friendships with other children. These friends will teach your child to give and take, both essential if one is to feel at ease in a group. Your child's friends will teach them how to adapt their behavior to suit different occasions and different personalities. Friends will enrich their ideas and extend their knowledge. Children love to invite a special friend home and if your child is having difficulty settling into kindergarten, this can help.

## **Behaviour**

Somerville Kindergarten aims to provide a safe, challenging, educational environment for all children. The staff will try to give your child a sense of belonging and security within the group. They will encourage positive behavior and value and respect each child as an individual. Clear behavioral limits are set for the safety and protection of everyone. The staff aims to develop each child's self-esteem and self-discipline. They will help children learn the consequence of different behaviors.

The Kindergarten Behavior Management Policy is available to read. It is located in the foyer in the Policy Manual. If you wish to raise any concern about any of these matters, please contact the Teacher.

## **Cultural and Religious Diversity**

Somerville Kindergarten is committed to delivering a service that embraces cultural, language and religious differences. Throughout the year, the Teachers strive to incorporate activities that reflect this, using themes, materials and language that recognize the varying backgrounds of our kindergarten families. They welcome any contribution you may wish to make e.g. explaining a religious festival, cooking a special dish, singing a song, bringing in items from home etc.

Please discuss with the Teacher if you or your child need written material translated into a language other than English.

# **Enrolments**

The Mornington Peninsula Shire handles all enrolments for Kindergartens and Preschools, for children attending 3yo or 4yo Kinder.

Parents will need to register their child with the Shire during the 3-month Registration period from February to April, in the year prior to the child attending Kinder.

*Eligibility:* to be placed in the allocation group (ie: on the list), you must be a resident or ratepayer of the Mornington Peninsula Shire and your child must turn 3 (for 3yo) or 4 (for 4yo) years of age by the 30<sup>th</sup> April, in the year they will attend.

For further information regarding the new Enrolment Procedures please read the following information on the Shires website, or contact the kinder.

[http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Services\\_For\\_You/Children\\_Families/Kindergarten\\_Preschool](http://www.mornpen.vic.gov.au/Services_For_You/Children_Families/Kindergarten_Preschool)

# **Immunisation**

Under the new 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, commencing on 1 January 2016, before enrolling a child, early childhood services will have to first obtain evidence that the child is:

'Fully immunised for their age or on a vaccination catch-up program or unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons'

For further information please request a fact sheet from our staff or see the latest version at:

<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/immunisation/factsheets/no-jab-no-play.htm>

## **Fees & Levies**

All the costs of operating the kindergarten (including staff salaries, materials and equipment, some excursions, upkeep of buildings and grounds, new facilities and teaching resources) are covered by: -

|                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Government funding | - approx 70% |
| Fees               | - approx 20% |
| Fundraising        | - approx 10% |

### **Government Funding**

The Victorian & Federal Government currently provide funding for each 4-year-old place, subject to certain requirements (for details contact the Administration Manager or Teacher). There is NO government funding for 3-year-old kindergarten sessions.

### **Fees & Levies**

The Executive Committee sets fee levels each year during the budget/planning preparation process. Fees are kept as affordable as possible, whilst ensuring the continuing viability and quality of the kindergarten service and without relying on fundraising for everyday operating expenses.

A deposit is payable on accepting a kindergarten place (i.e. confirmation of enrolment), this deposit will be deducted from the first term fees.

Parents will be notified of fees due each term.

Fee payment is compulsory regardless of whether you are absent for part of all term i.e. overseas trip, family holidays. This is due to the place/service being held for your child during the time. When Groups are accepted and paid for, there are no reductions in these costs if sessions are missed i.e. holidays, sickness. The Committee is responsible for the collection of fees and has the discretion to withdraw the kindergarten place in the event of continuing non-payment of fees. A copy of the Fees Policy is located in the Policies Handbook at the Kinder.

Families who are holders of a Health Care Card or Pensioner Health Benefit Card are entitled to a small amount of State Government fee relief (4yo kinder only). Please advise the Teacher or Enrolment Officer when enrolling to receive this benefit.

In individual cases of financial hardship, the Committee will consider the need for additional special fee arrangements. This may include paying by installments, extra fee relief, or reduced rates for more than one child. All financial discussions will be confidential. Parents should approach the kindergarten Treasurer if they are having difficulty with fee payment to negotiate the matter as quickly as possible.



# Parent Participation

Community kindergartens require commitment from parents to operate successfully. At Somerville Kindergarten, we promote open, friendly and co-operative relationships between staff and parents. Parents are invited to visit the kindergarten and share activities with their children. Working bees and social events are held regularly and provide an opportunity for families to actively join in kindergarten life.

## Committee

Parents can participate in the decision-making and operation of the kindergarten by joining the Committee of Management. An Executive Committee and Management Committee run Somerville Kindergarten. The Executive Committee is responsible for the financial management of the kinder. The Committees are made up of parents whose children are attending the kindergarten and the teachers of the kinder. Participating in the Committee is a wonderful opportunity to have a say in the running of the kindergarten whilst meeting a wide range of other parents and making great friends.

## Special Events/Fundraising

At Somerville Kindergarten, we actively encourage all families to participate in a range of special events. The aim of the special events is to promote children's friendship groups, parental friendships, community and lasting memories of kindergarten life.

The kindergarten cannot function without some level of fundraising and therefore a few targeted fundraising events are arranged where parent participation is essential, such as chocolate drives, sausage sizzle at Bunnings and the Trivia Night! Fundraising in the past has assisted the kindergarten to install a new playground, shade sails, new furniture.

# Term Dates 2021

- Term 1 – Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January – Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> April
- Term 2 – Monday 19<sup>th</sup> April - Friday 25<sup>th</sup> June
- Term 3 – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> July – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> September
- Term 4 – Monday 4<sup>th</sup> October – Friday 17<sup>th</sup> December\*

*\*Please note that the last week of term 4 will include cleaning of the kindergarten, on these cleaning days no sessions will be held.*

# Kindergarten Policies

A folder containing the following policies is located at the Kinder. Please contact a staff member if you wish to read or copy these. Thank you.

| Policy Name   | Quality Area |
|---|--------------|
| Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy   | 2            |
| Administration of First Aid Policy  | 2            |
| Administration of Medication Policy   | 2            |
| Anaphylaxis Policy  | 2            |
| Asthma Policy   | 2            |
| Child Safe Environment Policy   | 2            |
| Code of Conduct Policy  | 4            |
| Complaints and Grievances Policy  | 7            |
| Curriculum Development Policy   | 1            |
| Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy   | 2            |
| Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy  | 2            |
| Delivery and Collection of Children Policy  | 2            |
| Determining Responsible Person Policy   | 4            |
| Diabetes Policy   | 2            |
| Emergency and Evacuation Policy   | 2            |
| Enrolment and Orientation Policy  | 6            |
| Environmental Sustainability Policy   | 3            |
| Epilepsy Policy   | 2            |
| Excursions and Service Events Policy  | 2            |
| Fees Policy   | 7            |
| Food Safety Policy  | 2            |
| Governance and Management of the Service Policy   | 7            |
| Hygiene Policy  | 2            |
| Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy   | 2            |
| Inclusion and Equity Policy   | 1            |
| Information and Communication Technology Policy   | 7            |
| Interactions with Children Policy   | 5            |
| Nutrition and Active Play Policy (including Food, Beverages and Dietary Requirements)                                   | 2            |
| Occupational Health and Safety Policy   | 3            |
| Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy   | 4            |
| Privacy and Confidentiality Policy (including Confidentiality of Records)   | 7            |
| Relaxation and Sleep Policy   | 2            |
| Staffing Policy (including Qualifications, Supervision and Working with Children Checks/Criminal History Record Checks) | 4            |
| Sun Protection Policy   | 2            |
| Supervision of Children Policy  | 2            |
| Water Safety Policy   | 2            |