

General Details:

School Telephone Number - 97315232 (school hours and term dates).

Mobiles (for excursions only).

Leonie - 0419511133 Lisa S- 0421249976.

Karron-0410646542 (for absentee texts)

Contact List: Please annually ask administrator for up- to- date contact list of names of our GC (Governing Council) after our AGM and current P and F (Parent and Friends committee). Please keep us informed of any changes in contacts for your family.

School Dates:

4 school terms- see annual handout and check school website under calendar tab

<http://www.childsideschool.wa.edu.au/>

School Development Days held each term usually at end of week 5. These are days set aside for staff to work on different aspects of school planning and reviews, required in order to be a registered school. have a midterm break.

Times: School starts at 8:50 and finishes at 3:10 EXCEPT on Wednesdays at 2pm, **Early Close** to allow for Learning Team Debriefs and Staff Children Dialogues. Please be prompt with both pick up and arrivals.

It is beneficial for families to arrive on time each day so that children can settle in and the daily rhythm can begin (see *Morning Arrival Session*). Children often find it harder to 'warm up' socially and intellectually for the day if they always arrive late. They also miss valuable practice time, especially the older children, and children need practice to gain mastery and confidence with number facts and spelling (just like they do for music, swimming, reading, riding a bike...) Morning Work is 'Use it or Lose it' practice time of basic, fundamental spelling, writing, reading fluency, number facts, handwriting, letter formation.... It is a transition time between home and school- especially for younger children and is an opportunity to help children settle and engage before their parents leave.

Communication:

Communication is an enormous part of the children's curriculum and learning. It is also a major focus for the school to be able to have effective communication with the different layers that exist in a school. This package is a one-way form of sharing information in order that we may all stay on the same page and begin the communication process with parents who choose this school as their preferred place of education for their child. There are multiple ways that staff and parents communicate with each other. It is a parent responsibility to seek out information if they have been away. Notes are placed in each Family Message Box, located in the community HUB.

Child Side School Stream messages:

These messages go out to every family in the school a number of times each week. They convey general 'housework' updates, dates of importance and details of what is going on around the school. See Administration Staff if you need help installing the school School Stream app.

Website:

<http://www.childsideschool.wa.edu.au/>

Please check this regularly for updates, especially the calendar and latest news tabs.

Community Whiteboard:

Is updated each Monday by the school Administrator with upcoming important dates and events. Notes about social family events, updates, help wanted, excursions, general reminders, lost items, Head Lice invasions... can be written up by all adults- staff and parents (we request that children value this communication space is between adults, that it is not a whiteboard for them to 'doodle' or wipe out). These whiteboards are located throughout the school. Please read the mobile one located in front of the middle building regularly. These messages will also be posted on the School Stream app and Facebook Group.

Educators' Story Park stories:

Each educator endeavours to share some details about the learning going on in each area through photos and journaling. These are weekly or fortnightly snippets into the groups' learning journey, their explorations, and curriculum insights and are a memory for children to use as a reflective tool. They are designed as an insight into the social and work life of *each group of children*, rather than about individual children. They are sent to families via Story Park email and are also in plastic display folders on table in lounge area in MAG room. We encourage children and families to view these together as a memory jogger for conversations. (What did you do today? "Nothing" or "I just played".) These make the learning opportunities visible and become a shared language about children's learning.

Learning Team Debriefs: The Continuity Educators and Leadership are available on various afternoons to debrief together with the family about their child's learning and progress or any queries, concerns or interests they may have about THEIR OWN child educationally. Appointments are necessary. Parents have a wealth of information and many significant insights into their own child which when combined with educator observations and professional insights to the child's development and capacity to learn and respond in a group setting = improved working and learning conditions for the child.

Urgent Concerns: The administrator and senior educator are available before/after school if matters are urgent. Please feel reassured that we, as professionals and as parents ourselves, understand that anxieties can grow bigger if left unattended for too long. We will hear your concerns (and they will be documented, if significant) and focus on solutions together. Please understand that solutions take time, understanding and concerted effort on behalf of all parties concerned. Processes will be followed.

Other People's Children: Please communicate any concerns you have through educators or co-principals ONLY, rather than directly to some-one else's child or to their parents. If you see or hear anything, especially if it involves your own child in conflict with others, refer it **immediately** to a **member of staff** as we have both short and long term strategies to help, and we know the 'story' behind each child and maybe any 'precursors' to the current situation. We are also trained to deal with the inevitable conflict between children and fluctuating group dynamics. Conflict resolution is a *Step by Step* process and also takes time and understanding to resolve or at least to try and work side by side (as they would be expected to do in neighbourhoods, a sporting club, an adult work place...) Staff are also here all day, throughout each week and can better place the pieces in the jigsaw and better work out the 'intent' or significance to each participant. Sometimes things seem worse than children intend, and the adult response determines how the children react, cope and respond. Staff are trained in appropriate responses (even if first response is not useful then staff debrief with children later). Please intervene if there is an immediate DANGER or significant safety issue.

Communication about breaches of Child Side Code of Conduct: If any family or staff member is concerned about breaches of the code of conduct or the enrolment agreement or 'hears or sees' anything within our community that makes them feel uncomfortable, we have a process that needs to be followed to minimise the potential harmful impact upon the health of the school. Those concerned have a responsibility to inform the co-principals (senior educator and the administrator) and refer anyone else concerned to do the same. The next steps will be undertaken by the co-principals and referred to the Chair of the GC if necessary and will consult AISWA for advice if necessary. We advise families to disengage from conversations both inside and outside of the school that may inflame situations or cause personal or professional stress to others. As a registered school we have processes to go through to determine an outcome or to seek resolutions. **Refer to Communication Procedure**

Annual School Report:

It is a federal government requirement that we prepare an annual report on our school. This report includes educator qualifications, staff retention, staff attendance, child attendance rates, staff professional development for the year and if we had a bigger cohort of children in each year level, data about their NAPLAN test results for the national literacy and numeracy that is done in years 3, 5, 7, 9. As we have less than 5 children in each cohort it becomes a confidentiality issue to publish data. As a school we prefer parents to focus on their own child and their phase of development and look at their child's progress in context with many other factors rather than just literacy and numeracy in isolation or statistics. Copies of current and past school reports are available for parents to read in a file kept in the Office or on our website.

Written individual child education reports: these go out to parents twice a year, in line with government requirements. This written communication is intended to:

- update parents on details about learning in different phases of childhood, literacy and numeracy progress and other curriculum areas which are often integrated in practice. We use words to convey the child's level in correlation to the expected level of achievement as determined by year levels in the Australian Curriculum or outcome levels in the WA Outline Curriculum. PLEASE ask an Educator if you want to know more!
- indicate to parents that we know their child as an individual and in relation to learning the curriculum

If parents and educators have strong lines of communication open throughout the year, nothing should be a surprise on these written reports.

Website: Our website has relevant policies and the annual school report located under the Documents tab for your information.

Governing Council (GC): We are required by school registration processes (DoE- Department of Education, Non-Government Schools) to have a constitution and to have a defined 'body/group' that takes a **specific** level of responsibility and interest in enabling the school to carry out its purpose and mission. This group is defined as our Governing Council (GC) and together as a committee, members have a specific legal and moral shared responsibility to ensure the health and sustainability of the school as a registered independent school within The Child Side way. The GC members make decisions on behalf of and act in the best interests of the school (not as individuals or as parents seeking what is best for their own personal needs or their child's). The Governing Council (GC) **enables** the school (children, staff, and families) to create a welcoming educational culture for children, as a community of learners, to live and learn authentically as children within prescribed regulations as set by the registration process. (See our *mission statements, objects of the school, our core business and purpose and our vision statements.*) The GC is responsible for strategic planning and governance and checks and balances while the staff are responsible for the day to day operational management. Our

Governing Council helps ensure that our school is healthy in regard to:

- finances,
- Infrastructure development,
- our historical foundations and educational origins- The Child Side Way
- the objects and vision of our school
- satisfied and inspired staff (ensuring that staff are nurtured and are aligned with our philosophy), maintaining and improving staff working conditions which flow through for the children
- supporting staff to meet required regulations and professional standards within the Child Side way...
- providing a satisfactory standard of education

Our GC is about the 'big picture' and is on a journey to intellectually nourish and support our community ensuring it is ethical, viable and educationally credible. The Chair of the GC liaises regularly with co-principals and assists them in the roles of following processes and informed decision making, including the grievance procedure and selecting and deploying staff. The Chair of the GC, together with school staff, are responsible for ensuring any group sharing our site are aligned and are working in the best educational interests of the children as a learning community. This includes playgroup.

Communicating Our Assumptions-:

In the past we have taken these points for granted and not articulated assumptions from the school's perspective, so we are trying to be 'visible' and proactive. BPEA (Big Picture Education) talks about openly sharing assumptions and having **clarity** conversations with each other (staff, parents, and children) and tuning each other in regularly regarding the work we do and what we propose to do. *"We all live under the same sky, but don't all have the same horizon."* - K. Adenauer

We assume:

- Families and staff want to be here, this is an active and an informed choice.
- Families are curious about our work, and they support and endorse our work upon enrolment as a family within our school.
- Families and staff will be advocates for the children's learning community and our work both in and outside of this community. We assume you will ask staff questions and read and reflect on any written materials and partake in any school- driven conversation about our work (given the realities of life with a young family and other work/world commitments of course!)
- Families and staff understand and honour that everyone has the right to make their own choices free from pressure or coercion and that there are channels of communication and protocols within any organisation that need to be respected. Lobby groups and self-interest groups are not conducive to community life at our school. It is everyone's responsibility to protect the educational credibility of our school and to allow individual people to make their own decisions within their own context. Need to be aware of the 'bystander effect' (when others feel intimidated by watching and hearing others) and lobby groups that can potentially form within any organisation. Small organisations are especially vulnerable, especially if their community is not well read or strong in their understandings about the work and reasons behind their organisation. We can all help the children grow and learn through using protocols and understanding the nature of a small, independent workplace with it's reams of responsibilities.
- Families, staff and children know they have to find their own 'place' within our community which has been established since 2003. It is essential for newcomers to 'create' and 'earn' a place for themselves within our community within **The Child Side** context and story, knowing this takes time, effort and identifying with our work. Existing staff, families and children are in their own 'spaces' they have created over the years.

There is room for everybody to make their own niche without interrupting or changing the work already being done.

- Families, staff and children know and operate within our approach to discipline framework (See Dr. Louise Porter's 'Guiding Children's Behaviour and Motivating Children- on our website or seek a hard copy from us). We work with The No Blame approach and restorative justice practices which are long, slow, deep processes and are embedded in all that we do (Prof. Donna Cross- Friendly Schools). **Everyone has a right and responsibility to** make sure that bullying in any form is discouraged and is unacceptable for anybody, including staff and parents. *"The teachers/educators of our children deserve the same quality of treatment that we expect them to offer our children."* Hilliard 1985, p22. *'Children are highly sensitive to the morale of the people around them. Therefore, providing staff with conducive working conditions (working within the Child Side way) not only helps staff, but directly affects the children in their care. A supportive work environment enables adults to be more affectionate, less distant and less controlling with the children. Staffing levels (adult to child ratios) are also considered critical in determining the quality of care which children receive.'* (Porter p 215, Katz, Smith et al). BPEA (Big Picture Ed) maintains through research and experience that personalised learning only works with engaged staff who know their students well. This requires a higher adult to child ratio and long-term relationships with both student and their family. Families and staff share equal responsibility for ensuring quality, positive working relationships with each other. It is vital that adults can model and demonstrate effective, respectful working relationships to children.

Communicating The Inconvenient Truth:

"The inescapable conclusion is that children's development is shaped for better or worse, by their closest adult relationships." Moore 2006.

Homes and schools are where children spend most of their time in the most formative of their years, so these relationships are crucial. The bottom line is that we, staff and parents alike, are ALL busy, tired, financially stretched, have life stress and other personal commitments outside of this school community- so we can't use this as a 21st century 'out' clause. We have the expectation that all staff and families are **valuable crew members**. We all matter to the children and if every adult here adds something of themselves, a gift of time, a gift of energy to fix, repair, collect, engage, read.... a smile, a load of kitchen washing, being punctual, notice our work and each other in small positive ways... then our 'soup' of life will taste, smell, look and be delicious as well as nutritious for everyone ESPECIALLY the children's learning community where they spend 6 hours a day, 5 days a week for most of their childhood.

Expectations of all families and staff:

- **That we are all readers** (and there is always a constant barrage of information sent out both internally within our school and from external sources) and we are interested and curious about the work we do, the Child Side way. Knowledge is empowering and enriching!
- **We lead collectively from the children's lives and from Child Side's educational foundations**, not for our own gain or comfort or personal viewpoints.
- **We are all advocates for the children's learning community both within this school community and outside in the world.** We have to question our own intent, if we can't advocate and stand up for our own children's learning community and workplace then why are we here? The school has formal channels and protocols for all types of communication including for staff and families who need to clarify or question or do have a concern. Any organisation has these and expects these to be followed and respected.
- **The acknowledgement that it is the role of the staff to make professional, informed decisions as a collaborative team, with the role of the 'principal'** (in consultation with others e.g. our GC- Governing Council and AISWA- Association of Independent schools WA) accountable for decision making on behalf of the whole school and it's long term health, also ensuring that registration requirements are met. At this point in time, we have

a shared role of co-accountability and decision making between the Senior Educator role and the Business and Administration role. The chain of communication is expected to **always** include these 2 leadership roles. The long-term health and best interests of the wellbeing of **the whole school** has priority over individual short term or self-interest needs. It is the role of the 'co-principals' to ensure this is always considered and communicated. It is the responsibility of ALL enrolled families and employed staff to share concerns and pass 'hearsay' onto the co-principals and advise others to do the same, rather than become a 'mouth-piece' for others. Families and staff are expected to be able to work **within Child Side protocols and the Code of Conduct**, trusting the educational credibility and work within the Child Side way as well as meeting prescribed registration requirements. Co-principals are expected to liaise with families and staff and seek advice or share why the decision was made from appropriate sources (e.g.: AISWA, GC) in good faith and with the integrity of all stakeholders in mind (including themselves), especially keeping the well-being of the children's learning community a priority.

- **Understanding and respecting that 'Child Side' is independent** of any single persona and stands alone, in its own education right and is educationally credible enough to exist regardless of particular individuals. Understanding that Child Side is an **independent** school and makes its own decisions on 'how' to carry out its work WITHIN registration requirements. It is not what we do that is different, only 'how' we choose to do it (based upon research and informed, for example, by Reggio Emilia, BPEA, EYLF, brain research...)

Family Enrolment and family engagement:

Families have a unique role in our school and in other Big Picture inspired schools. They make a conscious choice for their child to become part of the Child Side way and Big Picture thinking. They enrol at the school through an 'Expression of Interest' application process (introduced 2011) to make sure that the school is a good long-term match for the family and vice versa after carefully considering:

1. The school's 'work' and how their child can benefit from being part of this group context long term. Why Child Side? Why personalised learning?
2. How both the Child Side community and the family can mutually support and enhance each other in the educational interests of the enrolled children.

Specific examples of family engagement within our school community:

- Time and genuine interest to read and reflect on school distributed information, to stay informed and keep up to date (regarding the school and one's own child)
- attending their child's termly learning exhibitions or making alternative arrangements to be part of the accountability process; contributing to their child's portfolios (year 7-10)
- **reading with and to their child frequently at home** (regardless of child's reading ability, level or age)- Mem Fox recommends children should have heard 1000 stories before they reach school age! *Fluency, comprehension and vocabulary building* are essentially enhanced by reading side by side with an adult at home. Please see an educator for more information. Reading is an essential 21st century life skill and parents can make the biggest difference.
- being part of school gatherings when possible eg: Christmas spiral, Easter breakfast, other rituals and traditions over the year.
- participating in one or more aspects of school life e.g.: enterprise, morning work practice sessions, P and F, GC, busy bees, fundraisers,
- Reading their child's reports, attending any individualised meetings regarding one's own child, being knowledgeable about their own child (academically, socially, emotionally, developmentally...)- both seeking and sharing this knowledge.
- Being punctual especially in the morning so children's transition can be smooth and useful- morning work is an important practice time and time to touch base.
- Strong yet realistic advocacy for children. Child Side makes a commitment to our young people in **two separate yet continuous phases and structures**- Playgroup 0-4(parent assisted), School K-Year 10. Children everywhere need adults to barrack for them and to

give childhood a worthwhile 'status'. We all need to understand group dynamics and the processes of becoming social through childhood and adolescence in order to be able to support children (learning to be social potentially can be traumatic and stressful for both child and their parent alike, wherever one mixes in a group). Other people's children need our understanding, support and encouragement too.

- Entering our Data base of 'Living Books' in which children, staff and the GC can access families' skills, interests, experiences to enrich and enable learning and the development of the school by personalising the parent as another legitimate voice in the children's workplace. **Side by side...real life, real work, real learning...**
- sharing and donating these parent skills at busy bees and fund-raisers or on short term committees for school development eg: finances, building
- redirecting other families queries and concerns to the staff

Family Engagement within the wider community...

The children who have been experiencing the Child Side way their whole school careers are being acknowledged by the 'outside' world as being capable and competent in many different arenas. These long-term Child Siders have supportive, world-friendly parents whom make every effort to connect their children to the world out of school through sport, the arts, travel, community clubs, music lessons, concerts, work places, extended family and their own neighbourhoods. Committed Child Sider families understand the importance of 'act, belong, commit' the ABC of healthy connected communities both inside school and outside of it. Research shows deeply connected children generally have stronger coping strategies in life and are less likely to disengage, self-harm or engage in anti-social behaviours through the adolescent years and early adulthood while the brain is still developing and maturing. (Maggie Dent)

Learning is not limited to school.... the world is an amazing classroom when shared side by side with a variety of interested and supportive mentors...

Child Side School Motto:

We live and work by our guidelines:

- **Be safe**
- **Be kind**
- **Be creative**

We **intentionally teach, encourage and expect all children** to consider these in their daily interactions and work (at a child level as they are NOT mini-adults). We do not assume children come with these understandings and skills naturally... We are very proactive and obvious about these guidelines. We know these may take a lifetime to develop and refine. We are also realistic in our expectations with children in a group environment. These are constantly reinforced, drip by drip by drip...

Being safe- we actively 'teach', discuss and demonstrate safety across a range of situations including:

- *physical safety-* sharp knives, hot stoves and drinks, active games, body strength and control, safe 'touches' and a 'safe' body zone to touch (a comforting rub or tag on the back between the shoulders and hips), medication, alcohol, electricity, sun safety, fires, sticks, spiders and snakes, water safety and protocols, risks in nature and the built environment ...
- *personal and social safety, intellectual and emotional safety-* internet, books, persuasive texts, advertising, media, lobby groups, emotive language, reframing 'secrets' as 'surprises' in that 'all WILL be revealed', 'gut' feelings, plagiarism in writing ..., friendship does have highs and lows, 'best' friends....
- *Cyber safety – keeping safe when using the internet 'think before you click', protecting personal information, social media safety...*
- We raise awareness of risks and develop risk management WITH the children, not just for them. Life is risky but with care- not fear, we focus on the healthy approach to risk

management while encouraging adventure, engagement and getting the most out of an authentic childhood.

- Child Side Code of Conduct (age appropriate for children.)

We are informed by written resources such as:

The National Safety Schools Framework- Dr Donna Cross and 'Managing Risk in Play Provision: Implementation Guide" –Ball, Gill, Spigal.

Being kind: we actively teach and intentionally embed 'being kind' in all we do. Being kind includes being kind to oneself and:

- getting your work completed,
- wearing a hat,
- saying 'no' to personal temptation or a friend who is distracting you,
- getting enough sleep,
- practising reading and spelling so it is easier for your brain to remember and work to 'flow',
- asking for help,
- self-regulation,
- impulse control,
- being wrong, making mistakes, laughing at yourself....
- picking up rubbish, even if it isn't yours...

Being kind involves being **big, strong, wise and kind** and is very different to being nice or just polite. Being **wise** means knowing the situation and long-term impact (which children and youth **will** need adult support). Being **wise** means being able to reason and cope/understand strong emotion.

Being kind the Child Side way involves:

- 'tough love' -adults being big, strong (firm), wise and kind in delivery of message/ limit and boundary setting, following through with consequences that will help the child learn responsibility without crushing the spirit or ruining the relationship between the adult and child.
- communicating on an age-appropriate level, often even physically getting down to the young child's height for eye contact.
- communicating care and respect and the reasons behind saying "No or Stop...", communicating trust and hopefulness, things will improve
- being kind means adults setting limits and defining 'beautiful' boundaries (Maggie Dent, Dr Louise Porter, Dr Donna Cross) and helping children see the reasons behind adult or group expectations, understand the need and purpose of rules and to become involved in the solutions... to be able to live, learn and function in a group.
- understanding that home and workplaces **are** different... working in a group setting has different protocols and responsibilities to the home and requires new personal qualities eg: patience, not to take everything personally...
- being kind means developing the capacity to understand a behaviour (not necessarily to accept) and move forwards...
- It does NOT mean being submissive or that 'anything goes'.
- Being kind means defining and delivering **both rights and responsibilities hand in hand...** (at an age-appropriate level)
- Being kind means interacting with **dignity** regardless of age or situation. (Reggio Emilia- Children and adults may have different knowledges and experiences but both have equal dignity).

Being creative... we actively model and explore ways of being creative and resourceful. We actively dissect 'popular culture' and visual and written media/material together with the children (in an age-appropriate manner) and the impact and influence it has on us all, especially children. We encourage them to learn from adults and products but not just to reproduce or copy mindlessly. We encourage, model and teach creative thinking and creative

solutions as well as creative and imaginative play that is healthy and age appropriate. We encourage children and staff to contest conventional ideas and expectations and to visualise and explore a variety of creative and sometimes original thoughts. Being creative is a way of thinking as well as a way of approaching work and communicating. Integrating creative arts in everyday work, learning and presentation often challenges and deepens thinking, generating discussion and a greater level of awareness. We view teaching as an interactive, creative process- The **art** of teaching as much as the science of teaching.

Food, Health and Hygiene:

Please note that: An ambulance will be called in an emergency and parents of the “patient” transported will be responsible for the ambulance transport costs.

Child Side School has no liability /responsibility for any personal property belonging to staff, students, visitors, families, (playgroup and school).

Fruit/Lunch Times: School provides **all** food necessary for a healthy daily morning tea and lunch and sourcing, growing, budgeting, preparing food is an essential part of all children's learning curriculum. Please do not send in any food without consulting staff first. We do have children with severe food allergies that can be life threatening (**Child Side is a Tree Nut Free School**). In the cases of children with special dietary requirements, parents are asked to provide any special bread/cheese and write a list of alternatives or food to be avoided. Alternatives for baking are also provided by parents and kept in freezer or special flour provided. Parents are asked to teach their child to monitor their own food choices as staff try their best, but lunch time (with 70 + children) is busy! We eat together at tables and share conversation. We enjoy the ritual and nutrition- a slow food process.

Shared Feasts: Families provide a plate of home prepared food for special activity days that children organise, shared festivities/rituals such as our Easter Breakfast and learning exhibitions. Excursions require a packed picnic lunch from home.

Allergies: If your child has a food allergy, we require a medical certificate or medical management plan to see how serious the response is and if in the case of known (diagnosed) anaphylactic, an e-pen will need to be provided and updated when required. The school does carry both an e-pen and asthma relievers (Ventolin puffers and spacers) for emergencies.

Drinks: Only **Water** in drink bottles for everybody for health reasons. Children have their own fridge to store water bottles if they wish. Please label all water bottles, especially younger children's so we know whose they are. Please take them home to wash and return each day (part of child's personal responsibility).

Preparation and Clean-up: all children are involved regularly in food preparation and clean up as part of shared responsibility, creating rituals, life –skills and part of the health curriculum.

Hygiene: We remind children to wash hands around preparing and eating food and after blowing nose. Toilet hygiene needs continued reinforcement at home for all ages, as in our experience, children rush when going to the toilet at school and often forget to flush and wash hands. Hygiene starts at home and children (even as teenagers) will need **constant** reminding about sneezing, tissues, coughing, washing hands.... Colour coded clothes are used for various activities relating to food surfaces, floor spill, art tables.... See note on kitchen wall.

Sicknesses: Please keep all children home when unwell, especially when contagious. Unwell children cannot learn effectively and low-grade illness can persist and lead to general feelings

of unwellness for great lengths of time if children are not properly rested. Please **train** children in preventative measures against the spread of infection such as using a tissue and throwing it away, washing hands, covering nose/mouth when coughing/sneezing and washing hands after toileting, blowing nose etc. Children of ALL ages need constant reminders.

Medicines: If your child requires medicine during school hours, it needs to be labelled CLEARLY with your child's name and handed to the educator NOT left in their bag. Any medication, even homeopathic, needs to be kept in office medicine cabinet and staff notified. Please note that it is challenging for staff to remember to give antibiotics or whatever is required during a busy school day, so please find ways to remind them (e.g. texting a staff member at the appropriate time). Any medication to be administered by staff needs to be written by the parent in the Medicine Book, kept in the office, detailing name of child, medicine, dose etc and staff are required to sign and have a witness sign when administered. This again is a government requirement.

Absentee Notes: All school aged children in the compulsory years of schooling (pre-primary+) require a written note explaining their absence on those specific dates. This is a government requirement as is educators keeping a daily attendance roll. Please text school administrator on morning of absence and follow up by sending an absentee School Stream message through. We also have the government process to follow, for high unexplained absenteeism. The school needs to be satisfied that the reason is legitimate. The Education department expects that children have at least a 90% attendance record.

Asthma: Our school is an Asthma Friendly School and staff engage in refresher Asthma first aid training every couple of years. Any enrolled child who has asthma is recorded and all staff notified. Ventolin is kept in the first aid box and in waist belts taken on excursions. However, any child with asthma should be well prepared and carry their own. Parents are also asked to be very sensible during 'risk' times when sending their child to school such as after respiratory illness, or when other risk factors are higher than usual.

Head Lice: This is a common curse in whatever place groups of children meet. Please check your child's hair regularly, especially before returning after holidays and if you notice ANY signs of scratching hair. Head lice are hard to spot and checking using normal hair conditioner and a special lice comb is the best way- you will be amazed. There are plenty of natural alternatives to using chemicals on the market. The most importance advice is to **re-treat** 7 days after the initial treatment. The Health Department of WA has an up-to-date website.

School Health and Dental Checks: Similar to government schools, families have access to the services of the Dental Van and the School Health Nurse who does regulation testing at certain year levels (hearing, vision in Kindergarten). These services are very limited and do not replace in any way your own private family doctor/dentist. Our administrator will hand out details when the time comes for them to visit us.

Dress Requirements: School is children's workplace and a child's work is often messy, active and requires sitting on the floor, climbing, running and being outside in the sun, wind and puddles. Children need practical, hardy work clothes free of advertising anything, logos or commercial images such as Spiderman. Older children are especially requested to dress appropriately for their workplace (school and on excursions).

Spare clothes: Please provide a spare set of clothes for *all* children in winter and for younger children all year around. Please provide a labelled cloth bag to carry them in.

Shoes: Children love to go around barefoot, especially when climbing (actually safer) and it is a source of sensory information and learning through touch and feel for young children especially. However, children **are** required to have shoes at school and to look after them (healthy habit) and take home daily as part of their personal responsibility- just like adults keep track of their own car keys. **Closed in shoes**, especially on Wednesdays for cross country, walking and running for fitness are ESSENTIAL. Please also label socks- we have millions of odd ones never claimed!

Sun Safety and Hats: Everybody, including staff, wear hats when outdoors especially during the summer, spring months. Please provide one daily, labelled with names, as we find them lying around everywhere. Please check for hats with young children before you leave each morning and apply sunscreen if you wish. Covered shoulders with sleeved T-shirts are necessary to protect shoulders (especially girl's clothing). We work outdoors each day, it is a valuable learning space, so EVERYONE needs sun protection and practical active clothes.

Lost Property: Clothing is not a high priority for children, and they easily lose track of what is theirs and where they put it. Every child has a personal space in their main learning area to store a cloth bag with their **name** on to store their personal belongings. Please help them to do this daily as it is not very interesting for them, so they often forget and we have mountains of jumpers, hats, socks at the end of every term which gets donated to Good Sammies if not claimed before the end of each term.

Regular and punctual attendance:

If your child arrives late or leaves early parents need to sign them in or out in the book dedicated to this purpose in the office (government requirement). Regular and punctual attendance is important in many ways:

- Children get the **time** to build authentic relationships with each other, all staff, children in different groups outside their comfort zone and with the ideas and curriculum connections (side by side). When children regularly miss days (except due to illness) they can often just graze the surface of experiences and miss the deep connections. They can tend to become lost or float and Big Ideas (integrated curriculum projects developed over a term) tend to be less meaningful and children become disconnected and disengage.
- Children get to experience a rich array of engaging experiences that build intellect and knowledge **over time** (not one off, isolated tasks). They get to be part of the whole learning cycle and understand the Step by Step process. Missing a step can lead to 'holes' in independent work and thinking down the track.
- They become important community members and active learners, rather than remaining passive because they are unsure or unfamiliar. They have more of a credible 'voice' and role in the children's community because they are known and valued across the spectrum. (FIFO children – those children that 'fly in, fly out' of the day/week/term can become 'fringe dwellers' socially, intellectually and as part of the children's work community by the nature of their inconsistent attendance.
- Self-organisation and time management skills can be missed out on with unpredictable and inconsistent attendance.
- Children who are regularly late in the mornings, miss many important fluency and practice based opportunities which are intended to make some literacy and numeracy skills automatic (hand-writing, touch-typing, spelling, number facts, and reading). The regular lack of this practice opportunity hinders children's flow and rate of learning.

- Children who regularly leave early also miss many integrated opportunities to develop skills, engage in reflection and self-evaluation sessions and miss the satisfaction of completing partnered work (afternoon sessions).

Communicating Details of the Daily Timetable:

Morning Arrival Session:

The first session of the day begins at 8:50 when families arrive at school. This time is set aside to:

- welcome children as individuals,
- begin settling and separating rhythms which are individual to each child and family (younger children),
- get organised for the day (store personal items such as water bottle, hat...)
- begin individual practice tasks (set specifically by each educator to allow school –aged children opportunities to practice certain literacy and numeracy skills and to begin the day with purpose. Please see your child's core educator for details.
- For our younger children we recommend one of the following: reading a story together, drawing generated by the child with the parent scribing words to match the picture, practicing writing their own name, practising forming letters and numbers correctly, counting games, block building...
- Allow social communication time for children to greet each other and 'touch base' in a purposeful manner. Children need to connect, notice each other and be noticed too.
- Lower cortisol levels in the body (stress hormone) by providing a gentle easing in time, a transition between home and school.
- provide opportunities for parents to liaise with the educator about any general queries or support required and to share information regarding their child. Educators are on hand to support parents and children with morning practice sessions (which replace ALL homework, except one-on-one reading together at home).
- Provide the educator opportunities to seek out parents for gathering or sharing information about events and following through with individual children with previous events or requests, solutions or meetings.
- Allow parents to work and communicate intellectually with their children as they work together. Help parents engage with their child through literacy and numeracy.
- Allow parents as community to build relationships each day with each other during the home/school transition.

Morning Meeting: After morning work children either head off to a morning meeting with their group to plan, reflect, get organised for the day or begin a Fit For Life session eg: Mountain bike programme/ball skills etc.

Skill Builder: Curriculum based skills and learning processes are intentionally taught at each child's point of need (PON) AND in context with the Australian Curriculum year level expectation, providing that the child has the prerequisites to develop these skills eg: children need to understand fractions before they can work with decimals. **Over the week** skill builder sessions include a:

- Physical skill (depending upon weather and educator discretion for the timing) such as hand-eye coordination or flexibility. Sometimes it is general fitness like a walk or jog around the lake. This is a non-competitive, general health and well-being setting where all children are expected to actively participate. Physical activity improves mood and perseverance as well as physical health benefits. (Most families at Child Side School include a sport or physical activity **after school hours** as part of **their** responsibilities and engaging with their local communities e.g.; football, dancing, speed-skating, runners club, netball, gymnastics, swimming lessons, horse riding, baseball.)

This physical session is followed by focusing on a skill from either literacy or numeracy or both.... Examples include:

- Literacy skill- such as a spelling pattern or a close look at how to write a report or a story. It also could be looking at a research skill such as using the glossary, contents page, using

sub-headings to scan and access information. It could be a reading skill such as matching sounds to letter symbols or using the first sound in a word to predict the word. It maybe a computer skill (middle and older children) or looking at specifics of grammar. These skills are based on the children's needs as a group and as individuals. They are also based on curriculum development.

- Mathematical skill: mathematical skill such as problem-solving, making and interpreting a graph, counting in groups of 2, finding places on a map using grid references, exploring number facts to 100, decimal places. Once again skills are based on the children's needs as a group and as individuals. They are also based on the prescribed curriculum.

Skills are explored in depth and children are given time to become competent with them before moving on. These skills are connected to Big Ideas as well, where children may need to use them in context, but have to learn and practice them with a specific focus and they are **explicitly taught** by the educator. ..

Skill builder also explicitly focuses on particular fundamental interpersonal skills and attitudes necessary for co-operative and collaborative learning such as:

- Time management
- Perseverance
- Problem-solving, with a focus on solution-based thinking
- Conflict resolution
- Self and group organisational skills and roles
- Active listening
- Focused intellectual conversation
- Critical and constructive thinking
- Tolerance
- Multiple perspectives
- Giving and receiving constructive feedback,
- Language of negotiation.
- Emotional resiliency
- Understanding group dynamics and social 'politics' inherent at any age in human interactions!

These skills and attitudes are detailed as Personal Qualities BPE, National General Capabilities- Australian Curriculum- Values –WA Curriculum framework).

Kindergarten and Pre-primary aged children engage in experiences that are hands-on, play-based and oral language based that integrate numeracy, literacy and group cohesion skills. The focus in the Early Years of Childhood is Belonging, Being and Becoming (The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia EYLF).

Fruit, processing time (social chat, active wake-up or other 'down time' needed for the brain to process subconsciously new or different information.) This time is at the educators' discretion based on the children's needs, the length and intensity of the learning focus sessions and the particular group dynamics of that day.

Big Ideas: A large block of time to integrate the curriculum, life-skills and most importantly the children's interests, voices and ideas. It is the child's curriculum growing from what they know and involving a rich, diverse deep journey. TOGETHER, educators and children embark on a long term investigation (sometimes a whole term) driven by a particular experience and curriculum area (e.g. science) and integrated with literacy, numeracy and other curriculum areas in meaningful, real and purposeful ways for the children. Some examples of Big Ideas have been:

- Flight
- How things work
- My Place, our Space
- Marine and Maritime Studies
- Energy
- Long, long ago

- Rivers and Life

Big ideas involve experiments, excursions (mostly middle and older groups – see *Excursions*), visiting experts (parents as 'Living Books', community members, specialists), exploring the local environment, 'desk-top' research using books/people/internet/observation, theory building, field research (action research), construction, creative arts and creative, solution-based thinking. Skill Builder focus skills are used throughout these investigations, especially co-operative and collaborative learning skills !!!!!

Exhibitions –Years 4-10. Big Ideas often involve (at the educator's discretion) a shared celebration of the journey and a group review. Educators and children decide on the format for sharing and make some aspect of their journey 'public' for families. Some examples are:

- Exhibition of work (including drafts and early stages to show progress) with children present to answer questions or share details.
- Power Point Presentations by older children.
- Wall Gallery (visual displays) with children acting as guides.
- Demonstrations
- Learning Conversation sessions, where families work alongside children in a supportive and interactive sharing session.

All these celebrations and reviews are a means of offering children an authentic audience outside of educators and their own learning community. Children are involved in everything, and these events are definitely NOT traditional showcases of 'best work' or 'performances'. They are just a part of childhood development and show a snippet into the children's understandings and variety of skill levels. We remind families that:

- Childhood is a state of transformation and growth.
- "We make a commitment to focus on the potential and capabilities of every child" – Reggio Emilia.
- "A critical finding about the human brain: Each brain is not only unique; it is expanding at its own pace. ... Every brain is on a different timetable of development. –(Healey). This finding has dramatic implications for the organization of learning worldwide."- Eric Jensen
- "Sameness is the enemy of excellence and diversity. Tolerance is founded upon diversity." unknown

Lunch and Shared Responsibilities: Daily lunch is prepared by a small group of children with the guidance of an educator. Lunch is simple and healthy. All children share the responsibility for kitchen and general clean up, including washing their own plate sweeping, checking toilets are clean, watering indoor plants, sorting... We try and raise awareness of all that is involved in having a clean, safe, interesting school. Our school gets cleaned after school (cleaning of floors, surfaces and toilets not picking up and packing up after children). It is important children realise and appreciate there are no magic fairies. Children then make constructive choices indoors or out (timing at educators' discretion depending upon length and intensity of morning sessions)

Learning Conversations: After lunch we break into small interest or specific focus groups based upon children's interests or upon curriculum areas that educators decide need to be focused upon or into ability levels. These small groups allow children to have learning conversations with themselves, each other, the specific processes (eg: sewing or animation) and the materials and tools (e.g. the construction sets, woodwork, computers). Children need to do, explore, try, fail, experiment, commit, predict, construct, reflect ... and have intellectual conversations as they do so. Some examples of learning conversations are:

- Music
- Animation
- Sewing
- Book making
- Construction
- Drawing and painting

- Computer skills
- Woodwork
- Big History
- STEAM

3:10 Home time ritual: After a general tidy away, especially to clear floors and tables for our cleaning staff, children are expected to collect personal belongings to take outside so we can lock up. Often, we tidy up and children come back inside while adults chat and then leave stuff all over the place again. Please take-home water bottles for cleaning and filling (our water does not taste the greatest).

The importance of Wednesdays:

Wednesdays are a deliberate change in the daily rhythm. Our senior curriculum educator (Leonie) spends some of Wednesday doing education administration work (which is actually another full-time job), participates in meetings and also prepares for staff dialogues at 2pm early close (and does not have a direct teaching role on Wednesdays, although is often mentoring). All other staff have a working relationship with all children as part of being a cohesive and functioning community, so Wednesdays is a valuable way building mentoring relationships and engaging with active learning. The learning focus is on:

- Working collaboratively with those outside of your comfort zone and friendship group. Developing effective communication skills.
- Acknowledging developmental differences between ages and 'living' tolerance.
- Hands-on, practical life skills, especially through Bountiful Backyard and other legacy and impact projects.
- Life and relationship skills working with different adult specialists (for example: when to be like 'water' and go with the flow and when to be a 'rock'.) Children need to learn different codes to 'read' different 'visiting' adults and to be able to handle differences in order to learn a specific skill (singing, permaculture, juggling...) or to keep things moving along without taking things personally.
- Self-Management and time management, seeing a task through = self-satisfaction and real contributions to community.
- Offering opportunities for all children to gain experience (NOT just information) about environmental awareness, in particular their local environment which has the most impact on them, "You protect what you love and you love what you experience. Direct experience needs to be at the heart of environmental education." See "A Brighter Shade of Green– Rethinking Environmental Education" - Ian Cleary and Anzu Unel-Cleary- Kindred E-Magazine. Direct experience means finding and observing worms and bugs, weeding gardens, planting trees, having an outdoor picnic, organic gardening, cooking fresh produce straight from our garden, dip netting at the lake, monitoring the water level and quality, experiencing different weather patterns and its direct effect on the lake and gardens, making outdoor cubbies, nature treasure hunts, connecting art and science
- Exploring the Arts, such as visual art skills—tonal drawings and painting, observational drawings, photography, singing, storytelling, imaginative play, drama, dance or 3D models and constructions.
- Older children (YAC's) are involved as interns and MEO (More Experienced Others) in Legacy and impact projects across the school and developing 'employability' skills and capacities.

Please note that we are advocates of the **Slow School Movement** – Professor Maurice Holt (similar to the slow food movement – a reaction to fast food).

"The notion of 'slow' schools is gaining ground as educators react to the pressures of time and tests. Alice Russell reports.

Cram down a hamburger. Prepared to a formula, consumed and forgot in minutes, it has passing appeal but lacks the benefits of a proper meal.

In a similar way, say some parents and educators, schools are dishing up a "fast-food" education that stresses results at the expense of understanding and measures achievement with superficial tests.

"We've all been influenced by this notion that quality can be measured by standardised tests and quality can be measured by ranking schools in order of their standardised test results," says Melbourne education consultant Kathy Walker.

"That moves a whole community away from remembering what we're really on about, which is nurturing children so that they develop a set of skills and knowledge to help them in their life. And there isn't as much urgency as everyone seems to portray about it all happening within a given time frame."

Extract from Laid Back Learning- November 2004.

Curriculum Breadth and Depth:

We aim to help children **uncover** aspects of the curriculum rather than to 'cover' it superficially (Howard Gardner- Harvard University Of Education).

We aim for meaningful, intelligent connections and loaning children our 'consciousness' (talking aloud how we make decisions, filter information, write a report, kick a ball, deal with our stress, work out the answer to a number sum)...and mentoring them with our skills (Jerome Bruner). We offer an **integrated curriculum**, especially in the early childhood phase (3-8 year olds). Children and adolescence need many diverse, varied and multisensory ways to enrich their learning which spirals rather than moves forward in a straight line, step by step. We engage all children in the prescribed curriculum mandated in all schools. We weave in the learning areas of

- English
- Mathematics
- Technology and Enterprise
- Health and Physical education
- The Arts
- Science
- Society and Environment/History
- LOTE- (language other than English) which we have Chinese. LOTE is about gaining awareness and appreciation for culture and learning more about your own language and culture through learning about another. Learning a second language is great brain exercise and helps develop perseverance, tolerance and learning to do something which is hard!
- The EYLF
- BPEA learning goals.

Paperwork and Policies:

As per other schools we have to have a range of policies to cover all aspects of school life. Some of these policies are specifically written by us to reflect our own philosophy such as our TV, Computer and Literature policy, Discipline policy (Guiding children's Behaviour). However, most

policies are based on legislative requirements, and they are reviewed and ratified by the GC regularly. These include areas such as child protection, risk management, workplace health and safety, duty of care.... We also have procedures to ensure that outside experts have 'Working with Children checks' as per government regulations.

Safety and Evacuations: We have policies covering different aspects of safety such as fire and we have an evacuation plan which is practiced by children and staff throughout the year. Our Assembly Gathering point for evacuations is on the playing field. "Long and Loud, join the Crowd". We also have a 'lock down' procedure to be used in case of wild weather, snakes etc." Ring, ring ,ring stay in..."

Excursions and Transport: We have policies on these and all parents of children going on excursions are required to sign and return permission slips.

Conveyance Allowance for travel: A conveyance allowance is available from the Department of Finance for travel to and from school. Families will need to register on-line through the school bus service and be approved on-line and to submit their travel log each term in order to claim reimbursement. Please see administration for further details.

Homework: We have a homework policy based upon research (including an Honours paper by Jacqueline Hubbard, literature by Alfie Kohn, Maggie Dent) that rejects traditional homework and schedules in favour of more positive, natural and beneficial experiences that help parents and children develop rich relationships and connection with less stress. At our school we choose for parents and children to engage in a range of healthy family-based tasks and we have developed some guidelines for families. See *Homework Guidelines*.

Reading is the most essential help children can receive at home. We have plenty of 'First Steps-how to help the reading process' information available. Viewing TV and movies TOGETHER at home is also essential to help children interpret and comprehend stereotypes, complex story lines, mixed messages, adult messages, marketing and commercialism, good vs bad (rather than many shades of grey), symbolism... Limiting TV watching and computer usage (even educational programmes) and making conscious choices about what to choose to watch is an essential life skill children can only learn through home. Parent responsibility is essential. Background TV, radio and images (left on all the time) can do harm and desensitise children without you even realising. The news is designed for adults NOT children. There is enormous amounts of research to back this up and growing evidence of harm.

Open Door Policy: We have a specific policy regarding hands-on parent involvement during daily learning sessions at school and this relates to **parents' rights and responsibilities** (one of the objects of our school in our constitution). Parents are welcome to be part of the school day in any capacity that supports the **group of children and the educator**, helping maintain the work carried out by the group under the guidance of the educator. Parents can also be invited in as 'Living Books' or may offer themselves as Living books to extend learning in an area they have a particular interest or experience with, once again working under the guidance of the educator. If parents would like to be part of the working day at any time, we require them to be part of a one-off learning team debrief to share and plan what their input would look, sound and feel like. This also enables support strategies to be shared so that the parent feels like a valued part of the learning community. Regular dialogue with the educator would be a priority so that common goals and understandings work in the best interests of the group. Families with younger siblings are requested to keep track of them throughout their time on-site at school to ensure their

safety and to keep interactions positive between these younger children and school children. Please see an educator if you would like to participate in the learning programme on a regular basis.

Data Collection sheets, enrolment forms, copies of birth certificates and immunization records (or signed conscientious objections): We are required to keep copies of all of these, so please make sure they are returned and updated when required.

Fees: Fee schedules change to keep up with increased educator salaries and other cost increases (including the cost of food and stationery which we provide as part of the curriculum), all of which are beyond our control. The governing council, together with our financial officer and on advice from funding bodies, set the fees each year. Family fees are what keep us afloat and are the price we pay for 'independence'.

"If you think education is expensive... try ignorance".

Abe Lincoln

Fees (and the recurrent funding we receive from the federal and state governments based on numbers of children) never cover all the costs, which is why we operate on the good will of staff, parents and other key people who believe in what we are trying to do. Staff are paid above award wages however is below what they could earn in other education systems they and are our most valuable resource, they create the supportive learning culture and help families raise their children well. The working conditions and a belief in what we are consciously trying to do is what attracts and retains staff.

Payment of fees: Please pay fees at the beginning of each term to help with cash flow and to help the administrator pay bills and plan ahead. Please see the administrator for direct debit details or other forms of payment. We understand how tough it is for families to dedicate this money for education as a family priority. Please let the administrator know ASAP if you need a flexible timing plan. However, like any business, we have financial obligations that we need to meet. We can't pay our bills without money!

Fee comparison:

Swimming lessons: \$120 per child for approximately 5-6 hours a term.

Music lessons: \$345 for a shared ½ hour lesson per week (5 hours per term).

Skating Coaching: \$8 per session 3 x per week.

Tax Deductible Gift Recipient Building Account: As a not for profit incorporated organisation we can give receipts for any donations to our building programme and it can be reclaimed as a tax deduction. Please see our administrator.

Busy bees, Fundraisers, P and F meetings (Parents and friends): Busy bees get a great deal of maintenance done both in and out of doors and many parents have a great many skills which we depend upon. As well as keeping costs down and having a feeling of community ownership and pride in our buildings and outdoors, busy bees are a way of building social capital, making connections (especially for dads, working parents, even grandparents) and mentoring other people's children as they help with real work, such as weeding, sweeping, putting furniture together. It is the physical labour that has brought our community together and helps us

maintain relationships and social connections. P and F meetings are designed to be 'low key' and social, while organising fundraising events. We have a number of regular fundraisers each year:

- A sausage sizzle outside of Bunnings
- Annual 'wheelathon' around the lake, where children are sponsored for laps
- 'Little Day Out' in October/November set up on our school site.
- Setting up and packing away the Boyanup Farmer's Markets.

Child Side Community Development: As well as relying on our parent community for active involvement in fundraising and maintenance activities we also try and organise guest speakers such as Maggie Dent- resiliency specialist and occasional whole school gatherings in the evenings for our community to engage in and with. We encourage constructive dialogue and parents and staff to seek 'good' information. Knowledge is empowering and creates sustainable communities.. We try to model to our children the ABC of community development- ACT, BELONG, COMMIT.... We are open to any suggestions that our community may want to converse about eg; BPEA

Shared Zones:

Playgroup

Our school is primarily set up for enrolled school children. However, we also feel that we have a social and moral obligation and responsibility to nurture children of families committed to our philosophy and aligned with our school principles and practices that are outside of primary school age. This builds up empathy and tolerance in our school aged children and helps them 'imbibe' positive parenting practices by being around hands-on parents. Children are people too, no matter what their age, and we choose to support parents with their rights to be involved with their children within our community. Playgroup is autonomous and seeks it's own funding. Playgroup follows the Child Side Code of Conduct and shares the same learning philosophies, principles and practices (at an age-appropriate level). Playgroup is a valuable addition to the school community and offers many mentoring opportunities.

Thank you for reading through this wealth of information, much of it will only make sense over time and when your child has experienced some these things. Please keep this handout to refer to for your own personal point of need.