FORREST EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Pre-School
Childcare
Out of School Hours Care
(03) 5236 6540
www.forrestps.vic.edu.au

PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET

2014

Updated 28/1/2014
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WELCOME

Thank you for choosing to send your child to Forrest Early Learning Centre. We trust your experience will be happy and rewarding. Forrest Early Learning Centre contains a small rural Pre-School, Out of School Hours Care and Childcare incorporated within Forrest Primary School. The Early Learning Centre has its own classroom and art room, and a good-sized playground for outdoor activities. The group size is small and friendly with a great community feel where everyone knows each other and looks out for each other.

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE VISION

Forrest Pre-School follows the vision “Belonging, Being and Becoming” of the Early Years Framework (EYLF) for Australia, set up by the Government 2009. The learning outcomes are: Identity, Community, Wellbeing, and Learning & Communication. Please let the teacher know if you want to learn more about the EYLF.

Forrest Pre-School runs a play-based program, where every child and its family are respected and valued. We believe that children learn best when they feel safe and happy. We are interested in the children’s ideas and questions, and encourage reflective thinking. The children are seen as competent and capable learners, and we wish to provide an environment where every child can develop at their own pace. We believe that children develop and learn in different ways, and all areas of learning and development are equally important and inter-connected.

OUR VALUES

At Forrest Primary School and Forrest Early Learning Centre we practice the following values...

Responsibility for Learning/ Personal Best

This means being accountable for our behaviour and our work, being independent and doing things in the very best way we can. We show that we are responsible for learning when we:

- care for our things
- listen to our Educators
- care about our work
- help others learn
- finish jobs that we’re given to do
- are proud of our work
- use our talents
- are organised
- follow rules
- are on time
- keep trying even when it’s hard

Co-operation

This means working together and Support/appreciating each other to achieve the things we have to do. We show cooperation when we:

- share our ideas
- let people have a turn
- accept the ideas and opinions of others even if they’re not the same as ours
- are friendly
- have nice manners
- play games fairly
- listen to each other
- do the jobs we’re given to do without complaining
- don’t mind if we don’t always get our own way
- help others
- are generous
- encourage each other
- are patient with each other
- are happy
- can forgive other people and give them another chance

Respect

This means caring about people and treating them in the way we would want to be treated.

We show respect when we:

- are polite
- listen to and don’t interrupt people when they are speaking
- take care of our things and other people’s things
- follow rules, are friendly and kind to others
- talk about problems and find good ways to fix them
- praise and respect other people
- accept the ideas and opinions of others even if they’re not the same as ours
- use good manners
- treat other people like we’d like to be treated
- let other people do their work
- think before we speak
- talk to others to without hurting their feelings
- do things for other people without being asked

Having Fun

This means enjoying the things we do at school, having fun and being positive and enthusiastic. We show having fun when we:

- share happy times with our friends and Teachers
- participate in activities
smile and laugh a lot
• have fun learning new things
• appreciate the things people do for us
• give 100% to everything we do
• tell other people that their work is great
• encourage others
• tell funny stories and jokes
• make people smile and laugh
• tell other people that we like them and like playing with them
• are interested in what other people have to say
• look on the bright side
• understand the appropriateness of our humour

Honesty
This means being truthful and trustworthy. We show that we are honest when we:
• tell the truth even if we know we may be in trouble
• admit when we’re wrong or have made a mistake
• keep the promises that we make
• report only things that are true
• respect other people’s property
• return the things we have found to their right place
• keep private information about other people to ourselves
• say what we feel but still take care that we don’t hurt other people’s feelings

Support/ appreciation
This means caring about other people and helping other people. It means being responsible so that others can trust us and count on us. We show Support/ appreciation when we:
• are a really good friend
• do the things we said we would do
• think before we speak
• don’t spread stories about other people
• let people join our games
• are nice to people
• help other people in all sorts of ways
• try to understand how people are feeling
• share our things
• listen to each other
• make sure other people aren’t lonely
• look after other people
• make other people feel good
At Forrest Primary School Learning Centre we pride ourselves in our genuine care and concern for the welfare of our pupils. If at any time you are worried, confused or would like to ask a question please do so. Our dedicated staff are here to assist and work with you to make your child’s journey a wonderful learning experience. We encourage all parents to feel comfortable about talking to our team of dedicated and professional staff about matters relating to your child’s health and well-being.

Tara Hulonce- Principal

ELC BACKGROUND

The Forrest Early Learning Centre, part of Forrest Primary School is situated 35 km south east of Colac in the Otway Ranges. The school has proudly served the rural community since 1885 and the Pre-School commenced operation in 2000. Prior to 2014, School Council held a service agreement to run Preschool and Occasional Care services. In 2014, the service agreement will alter to reflect the changing needs of the Forrest community. Our new centre based license will enable the exciting development of Forrest Early Learning Centre, which provides more comprehensive childcare and educational service options.

The school has extensive gardens and grounds providing active and passive play areas, and several well maintained play equipment areas. The grounds cover four hectares with an oval, a tennis/basketball court and a safe adventure playground with ample room for further development of play and environmental study areas. The Early Learning Centre is complete with safe and stimulating outdoor play areas suitable for children under school age.

At Forrest we believe that children deserve the opportunity to fulfil their potential. We know this can best occur when children are actively engaged in learning tasks in a safe, positive and supportive environment, where individual assistance is readily available. Multi-level class structures are a feature of our school and pre-school, which encourages cross-age learning. To realise these aims we encourage community support with active participation.

Educators work together in a purposeful and professional manner to plan and implement programs. Pre-School and Childcare programs are based upon the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. The (VEYLDF) is designed to advance all children’s learning and development from birth to eight years of age. The framework provides early childhood professionals with a common language for describing outcomes for children, and describes practice principles to guide early childhood professionals to work together, with children and with families to achieve the best outcomes for every child.

Effective communication is a feature of our Pre-School. Weekly newsletters communicate school happenings and allow for local groups to advertise coming events. The website is another great source of information and includes a calendar of events. See http://www.forrestps.vic.edu.au/

Forrest Early Learning Centre is firmly committed to providing excellence in education and is continually assessing school, pre-school and student needs for further plans and improving student outcomes.

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN THE CENTRE
The Victorian State Government (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development) regulates the operation of the centre. The Pre-School holds a standard licence (number 2850). The centre is inspected regularly by a Children's Services Adviser from the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This adviser ensures that the Centre is operating legally and in accordance with the National Regulations for Education and Care Services 2012 and the National Law Act 2010, (copies of these can be found in the Pre-school office). The inspections also include the assessment of buildings and grounds. Most Children’s Services follow the new National Quality Framework (NQF) which introduces improved child to educator ratios, new qualification requirements for educators and a focus on learning outcomes. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) oversees these changes nationally for the benefit of families. From 2013, all Children’s Services also get assessed against seven quality areas in the new National Quality Standard (NQS). Different rating levels can be awarded for each quality area, as well as an overall rating. More information about the ratings can be found on the ACECQA website. [http://www.acecqa.gov.au/](http://www.acecqa.gov.au/)

**CENTRE TIMETABLE**

Our Early Learning Centre is a vibrant and happy place to learn, with many programs to suit all ages of children, from babies and toddlers through to Primary School aged children. The following program has been developed after extensive community consultation and we are very excited to be able to offer increased services in 2014.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
<th>FRIDAY</th>
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<tr>
<td>9am-2pm</td>
<td>Cuddly Koalas CHILDCARE</td>
<td>Cuddly Koalas CHILDCARE</td>
<td>PRE-SCHOOL (3 &amp; 4 YO)</td>
<td>PRE-SCHOOL (3 &amp; 4 YO)</td>
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<td>2pm-6pm</td>
<td>Friendly Frogs CHILDCARE</td>
<td>Friendly Frogs CHILDCARE</td>
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<td>3.30-6pm</td>
<td>AWESOME AFTERS Out of School Hours Care</td>
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**OUR SERVICES AND EDUCATORS**

- Forrest Pre-School 9am-2pm Wednesday- Friday (15 hours a week)
Service approval number SE- 0000 3552 (ACECQA)

Pre-School Teacher: Mrs Lena Collopy

**Lena Collopy** is a qualified Pre-School teacher. She started working at Forrest Pre-School in 2010. Lena has previously taught at Winston Hills Pre-School (3-year olds), Kalker Montessori Centre (2-5 year olds), and Hagnäs School in Sweden (6-year olds). Lena has also worked many years as a Child Care Worker in different settings in Sweden. Lena is enthusiastic about our centre extending Pre-School to 15 hours a week.

- **Forrest CUDDLY KOALAS Childcare** 9am- 2pm Monday- Friday

Childcare Educator: Ms Caralyn Grgic

**Caralyn Grgic** is our Childcare Educator (birth- 4 years). She started working as the Assistant in 2012, and has completed Certificate III in Early Childhood Services. Caralyn was also previously our Co-ordinator for the After School Care Program at Forrest Primary School. Having extensive experience as a Family Day Carer she’s looking forward to working solely with younger children in 2014 whilst she gains her Diploma qualification.

- **Forrest FRIENDLY FROGS Childcare** 2-6pm Monday- Friday
- **Forrest Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)** 3.30-6pm Monday- Friday

Educator: Miss Emilia Guntang

**Emelia Guntang** is our Childcare Educator for the above programs working with children from Birth- 12 years. Holding a Certificate III in Early Childhood, she has extensive experience in early childhood and has worked in various childcare settings including health and fitness centres and stand-alone childcare centres. She is excited to be joining us in 2014 and looks forward to meeting everyone.

**TERM DATES 2014**

**Term 1:** Wednesday 29 January (Childcare/OSHC) and Thursday 30 January (Pre-School and School) to 4 April

**Term 2:** 22 April to 27 June**

**Term 3:** 14 July to 19 September

**Term 4:** 6 October to 19 December

* The first day of Term 1 is a student-free day in all government schools to allow for appropriate planning to take place for the arrival of students. ** Term 2 starts on Tuesday 22 April as Monday 21 April is a public holiday for Easter Monday. Please note: Friday 25 April is ANZAC Day.

**ELC CURRICULUM**

The (VEYLDF) is designed to advance all children’s learning and development from birth to eight years of age. The framework provides early childhood professionals with a common
language for describing outcomes for children, and describes practice principles to guide early childhood professionals to work together, with children and with families to achieve the best outcomes for every child.

The VEYLDF:

- Identifies five Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes for all children
- Identifies eight Practice Principles for Learning and Development, categorised as Collaborative, Effective and Reflective. The Practice Principles describe the most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together, with children and with families to facilitate learning and development
- Emphasizes the importance of supporting children’s and families’ transitions as they move within and across services throughout the early childhood period.

The Learning and Development Outcomes include:

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

For more information on this and other DEECD matters, please see http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The play-based program is planned around various topics or special interests of the children (a copy of the program plan is displayed on the Pre-School notice board). Pre-School sessions typically include indoor play, mat time, morning/ lunch, and outdoor play. On Fridays 9:00-10:30am, in the area below the Junior classroom we run “Forrest Kids Go Bush” program with the P-2 class.

CHILDCARE PROGRAMS

We are proud of our childcare programs as they meet the needs of the whole child as reflected in our Pre-School program. All of our childcare programs address the VEYDLF through a play-based curriculum. Activities are well planned and flexible, incorporating themes of special interest to the children and the group. A copy of the program plan is displayed on the ELC notice board. Childcare activities are very similar to those within the
Pre-School, which include free indoor play, drama, quiet time, reading time, morning tea/lunch, art activities and outdoor play. Special events held throughout the year will often incorporate the Pre-School program and Junior classroom school children. Parents will be invited to participate in various activities as the year progresses.

Childcare operates according to the same policies and processes as Forrest Pre-School.

**GENERAL INFORMATION A-Z**

**Birthdays**
We love to celebrate Birthdays! Parents are most welcome, but do not have to send a cake or something to share with the group on your child’s birthday. Please check with the teacher first, in case of allergies.

**Bushfire and Emergency Management**
The Forrest Early Learning Centre (Pre-School, School, OSHC and Childcare) have been identified as being in the highest fire risk area and will be closed on days that have been declared CODE RED by fire authorities. Where possible, parents will be provided with up to three days notice of closure. Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. You can access more information about children’s services closure on the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development website – see [www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires).

For up-to-date information on this year’s fire season, visit the CFA website at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.

**Child Care Benefit (CCB)**
The Pre-School is a registered Child Care Provider, which means that you may be able to claim back some of your fees through the Family Assistance Office. For further information about claiming CCB contact the Family Assistance Office directly on 136150.

**Children with special needs**
The committee appreciates and understands the importance of children with additional needs being given the opportunity to attend regular Pre-School sessions. Special requirements for your child may include the need for an additional assistant to help integrate your child as much as possible. Your child’s needs should be discussed with the Pre-School Educator and additional support services involved if necessary.

**Clothing**
The children should wear strong and practical clothing, so that they can play without feeling any discomfort. To help the children be independent, please avoid belts and difficult buttons. Their shoes should sit firmly on their feet for climbing and running (no thongs or Crocs). Good clothes should not be used at Pre-School as we often have painting and “messy activities”. Always pack some spare clothes in your child's bag in case of an accident or spilling.

**Concerns**
Always talk to the teacher if you have any concerns about your child or the running of the Pre-School. It is important to develop positive relationships based on mutual trust and open communication.
Confidentiality
All information on enrolment forms will be treated as confidential. Enrolment forms are stored in a locked filing cabinet. For more information on this see our Privacy Policy.

Development of the Whole Child
Forrest Pre-School and Early Learning Centre activities will include the following:

- **Fine Motor/ Hand-Eye Co-ordination**: Use of pencils, paintbrushes, scissors, puzzles, manipulative equipment, pasting, threading etc

- **Gross Motor**: Climbing, balancing, throwing, catching, pushing, pulling, digging and building strength and skill in various movements

- **Social/ Emotional**: Separating positively from the parent, being part of large and small groups, turn taking, sharing, confidence building, developing persistence in completion of tasks, understanding and caring for others

- **Cognitive**: Problem solving, games, pre-maths and pre-reading activities

- **Language**: Encourage a rich vocabulary through listening to stories and rhymes, discussion, questioning, classifying, exploring and describing events and items

- **Creativity**: Variety of craft mediums, construction sets, blocks, drama, music, movement

Enrolments
An enrolment form must be completed before a child can join Pre-School sessions. This is a legal requirement and all aspects of this form must be completed. Enrolment forms are available at the Pre-School/ Early Learning Centre.

Children are eligible for one year of funded Pre-School.

Parents are required to supply a copy of their child’s Birth Certificate and Immunisation Details with their enrolment forms. A concession card, if you have one, must be sighted by a staff member.

Fees
Fees are determined by the management committee and are reviewed annually. All fees must be paid promptly by the due date on the invoice.

- **Invoices for payment of Pre-School fees will be issued at the start of every term.**
- **Invoices for Childcare (Occasional Care) will be issued monthly.**

Invoices are payable at the School Office, please check with the office which payment facilities are available. Payment methods will be detailed on your invoice, and electronic fund transfer, Cash and Cheque are accepted. Please note that Childcare/ Occasional Care is billed separately to the Pre-School program as it is funded differently by the government. Please alert the School Office if you hold a current Health Care Card, as this will reduce your Pre-School liability.

Food and Drink
The Pre-School encourages healthy eating habits and follows a healthy eating program assisted by Otway Health. The children bring a healthy lunch to every session and we sit
down and eat together. The children also bring their own water bottle so they can have a drink whenever they are thirsty. We only drink water, no sweet drinks.

“Forrest Kids Go Bush” program

During Pre-School sessions, the “Forrest Kids Go Bush” program the children get to explore and play in a more natural environment (within the schoolyard) together with the P-2 class. Children are encouraged to learn from the natural environment, and use their imagination in play and creation. They are allowed to play responsibly with sticks and ropes, and encouraged to problem solve together. This program is intended to support young children through play, to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It encourages early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others. In so doing, children learn to take on challenges and accept responsibility.

Forrest Kids go Bush program is intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing children to experience nature and its elements across the seasons. Whatever the weather, children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring and learning in a bush or natural environment.

It is important for all parents to understand that children will be provided with the opportunity to climb trees, play in mud, build shelters etc. Safe risk taking will be encouraged which strongly supports children in building resilience. Parents need to have a clear understanding of appropriate protective clothing which will be needed for the children, as well as having a good grasp of what your children will be doing.

All of the children need to wear boots, long pants and have a rain- jacket; the program operates even if it’s raining.

Head Lice
Head lice are common at every school. Please treat your child/family with head lice treatment if they appear; also let the Pre-School know so all the children can be checked.

Helping to Learn at Home
- Storytelling- including simple fairytales, poems, rhymes and stories
- Books- teach your child to value books by role modelling, this may be a recipe or newspaper. Show them how to care for books, turning the pages carefully and putting books back on the shelf.
- Talking- discuss what you did today, what was the best thing you did? Take time to listen to your child and extend their vocabulary and thinking skills.
- Singing songs- make up simple chants for tasks around the house; cleaning teeth, going to bed etc.
- Counting and sorting objects- socks, cutlery, buttons, playing cards etc.
- Movement to Music- encourage dancing to different types of music including classical and folk music.
- Exploring colour- concentrating on one colour at a time, grouping items according to colour.
- Discussions about the seasons- how weather affects nature and daily activities, what we wear, what we do etc.
- Creative play - provide boxes and materials for cubbies and other activities like role playing.
- Informal Play Dates - with children of similar age/stage. The park or beach is a great place to meet with friends for a play and some fun.

*Remember - you are your child’s first teacher.*

*Childhood doesn’t last long - enjoy this special time together!*

**Indoor play**
The children choose what they want to spend most of the time playing with. The classroom is set up with a range of activities, including: puzzles, books, Lego, games, blocks, toy cars, painting, play-dough, creative art and home corner. While the children play, the teacher and assistant move around and interact with them. Special activities also include baking or cooking, finger painting or making gifts.

**Interviews**
Term 1 - The Pre-School Teacher will arrange an interview with parents prior to the commencement of the Pre-School year in order to understand the needs of your child and to orientate parents with the Pre-School. Please bring your child’s Birth Certificate and Immunisation details to the interview if you have not already done so.

Term 2 - Interviews will also be held to discuss your child’s transition to school and pass the DEECD “Transition Statement” to the Prep Teacher. Lena will have regular meetings with the Prep Teacher during the Pre-School year to share relevant information and arrange transition sessions.

**Mail Pockets**
Every family has a pocket for mail. Please check it every time you come to Pre-School. A Newsletter is distributed every Thursday.

**Mat Time**
The teacher leads group activities, such as singing, movement, nursery rhymes, maths activities, games and stories. The children take turns doing Show and Tell, and looking after the class animal (soft toy).

**Morning Tea/Lunch**
All sit down to enjoy a healthy morning tea and lunch. Sometimes we eat outside.

**Outdoor play**
The children choose from a range of outdoor activities, such as playing in the sandpit, using the swings and climbing equipment, playing with the dolls, prams and balls, or running around having fun with one another.

**Parent participation**
The importance of parents to the Pre-School cannot be underestimated. Therefore, should parents wish to be involved and share in the many activities or contribute ideas, time of their expertise to the programs, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to help or present something, you are most welcome. Please talk to the teacher beforehand. Being such a small group, we don't have a parent on Pre-School duty...
as bigger Pre-Schools have. We do send home laundry to be washed with every family during the term.

Maintenance of the Pre-School grounds is through voluntary help.

We are sure that parents who are able to participate in the Pre-School activities will agree that this is a rewarding experience.

**Policies**
The Early Learning Centre Policies incorporate Pre-School, Childcare and Occasional Care and may be found in the Pre-School office. Please feel free to ask a staff member if you have questions or simply refer to them any time. These are regularly reviewed as part of our Quality Assurance processes.

**Pre-School Committee of Management**
A Preschool Committee operates at Forrest Primary School and membership is open to all parents and guardians of children attending the preschool. At Forrest Pre-School, we have a committee that currently meets once a month. Forrest Primary School Council holds the service agreement to operate the Pre-School, so all decisions regarding the operation of the Pre-School are ratified by the School Council. One committee member always attends the School Council's monthly meetings as well. Every parent is most welcome to take up a role as one of the committee members. The group aims to encourage participation and discussion by parents and guardians in all matters regarding our children’s education and provides an opportunity for parents to meet and gain a better understanding of the early childhood development programs. This group also works with the Fundraising Group to raise funds for the benefit of the preschool school. Information and meeting dates will be published in the school newsletter and on the school website. The Annual General Meeting is held in March each year.

**School Council**
We have a very dedicated group of parents and teachers on our School Council which manages our Early Learning Centre. Our 2013 School Council consists of:

**President:** Paul Troughton

**Executive Officer:** Tara Hulonce (DEECD)

**Minutes Secretary:** Craig Donahoo (DEECD)

**Members:** Richard Schuhmann, Andrew Broomfield, Sarah Lane

**Pre-School Representative:** Kim Coulter

The Annual General Meeting is held in March each year when new members and office bearers will be elected at this time.

**School Office Hours**
Principal- Mrs Tara Hulonce (daily)

Office Manager/ Bursar – Mrs Nadeesha Munasinghe Mon & Wed 8.30am-4.30pm
**Sick Children**
To avoid spreading germs and diseases, please keep your child at home if he/she is unwell or has been unwell during the night. Please let the Pre-School know if your child has an infectious disease so other parents can be warned and look for symptoms.

**Signing-in/Signing-out**
When you arrive at the Pre-School you need to sign in your child into the Sign-in book. You need to write the time, your signature, and the name of the person that is going to pick up your child. When you pick up your child, you need to write the time and sign it again. This is a requirement from the Department of Education and Childhood Development. Please tell the staff if someone else is picking up your child so we can make sure that their name is on the enrolment form.

**Sun Smart Policy**
During Terms 1 and 4, the children need to wear a hat for outdoors that protects the ears and the neck. Please apply sunscreen to your child’s skin at home before you come to Pre-School. No child is to wear sleeveless tops that expose their shoulders to the sun. These are recommendations from the SUN SMART POLICY.

**Toys**
Please don’t let your child bring any of their own toys to the Pre-School, except for Show and Tell. Children’s own toys can sometimes be misused inadvertently to steer friendships. The same goes for lip-gloss and jewellery.

*Once again welcome to Forrest Early Learning Centre, we look forward to sharing this part of your child’s educational journey with you!*