

# Early Learning Handbook



Mundaring  
CHRISTIAN COLLEGE



# Welcome

Welcome to the Mundaring Christian College Early Learning Community. We are excited to partner with you at the beginning of your child's learning journey.

We believe that each child reflects God's good and loving nature and strive to design a program and environment that fosters and nourishes your child in that way. We represent a Christian worldview that encourages caring relationships both within the school and the wider community and believe that children flourish when provided with a firm foundation built on faith.



*"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."*

- Jeremiah 29:11 -

# Early Childhood Team



**Early Childhood  
Coordinator**

Mrs Amy Holden



**Teacher**

Mrs Kat McKenna



**Teacher**

Mrs Christine Nolan

# What We Believe and How We Teach

## Inquiry-based Learning

Inquiry-based learning is a learning approach that focuses on investigation and problem-solving by reversing the order of learning. Instead of presenting the information up front, we, as teachers, give a series of scenarios, questions, and problems for students to navigate throughout the day. Inquiry-based learning prioritises problems that require critical and creative thinking so students can develop their ability to ask questions, design investigations, interpret evidence, form explanations and arguments, and communicate findings.

## Play-based Learning

Learning through play is an important part of children's development and learning. Through play, children make sense of the world around them, practise social skills, foster oral language, problem solve and develop early literacy and numeracy skills. Play-based learning also allows children to gain self-confidence and build resilience while engaging in new experiences and environments. Children will be scaffolded when engaging in play-based learning to ensure experiences are purposeful and enriching.



# The Environment as the Third Teacher

We recognise the importance of the environment and acknowledge that children learn best in a supportive and rich environment where they feel happy, secure and valued. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are designed to be set up with meaningful activities that enable children to participate in uninterrupted exploration, play and learning. Teachers develop learning opportunities and provisions that are created around the children's interests and curiosity.

We value the child as central to their own learning and are supported in pursuing their own interests, by providing multiple opportunities to express themselves.



# Bush Kindy

Students will go on a Bush Kindy adventure to ignite their curiosity and connection to nature.

They will be provided with new experiences as they explore the natural world. Bush Kindy aims to promote self-help skills, resilience, risk taking, alongside social and emotional development.



Bush Kindy takes the classroom outside, where children can lead through play and be guided on their adventures to develop skills that they can carry beyond the classroom.

# What we Teach

## Early Years Learning Framework

EYLF (Early Years Learning Framework), developed by the WA School Curriculum and Standards Authority, describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming. Belonging is the basis for living a fulfilling life.

Children feel they belong because of their relationships with their family, community, culture and place. 'Being' is about living here and now.

Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'; to play, try new things and have fun.



'Becoming' is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become. The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning, from birth to five years and through the transition to school.

## **EYLF communicates these expectations through five learning outcomes:**

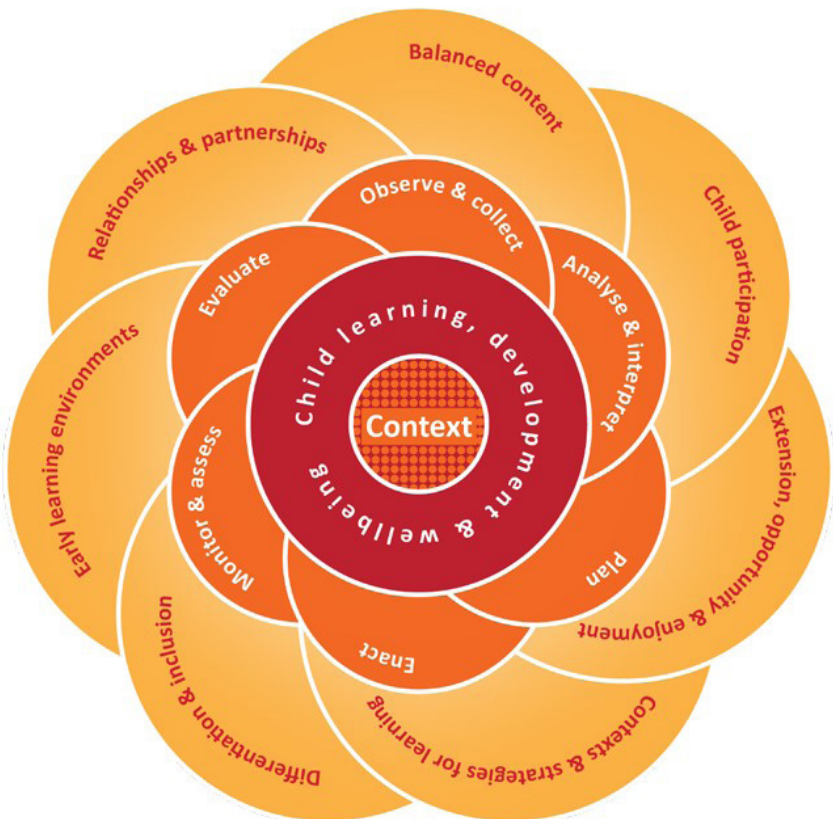
- Children have a strong **sense of identity**.
- Children are **connected with and contribute to their world**.
- Children have a strong sense of **well-being**.
- Children are **effective communicators**.
- Children are **confident and involved learners**.



# Kindergarten Curriculum

The Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines guide educators to develop a Kindergarten curriculum for Western Australian children. It is based on the key ideas and related content from the EYLF to construct a curriculum to ensure that all children in Kindy experience quality teaching and learning.

The following figure illustrates how dynamic, responsive and educational Kindergarten programs are developed when educators focus on each component, when making curriculum decisions.



# Our Programs

The following programs are implemented in each classroom to ensure consistency across the early years. They are programs supported by extensive research and development, and their implementation has seen positive growth in our student's academic and social-emotional development.



## Talk 4 Writing (Kindy)

Talk 4 Writing is a unique approach that uses spoken activities and play to deepen writing skills. The program focuses on developing students' oral language in the early years.

It develops the use of key connectives, story structure, vocabulary development, sentence structure and ideas banking. Students will work in blocks, with a focus text, for five weeks at a time. They will also partake in an invention task once a week.

## PLD

PLD provides an Australian, evidence-based approach to Structured Synthetic Phonics (SSP) for primary school educators. Aligned with the Science of Reading, PLD's SSP approach extends from the early years through to the upper primary years, thereby facilitating a whole school approach.

Through implementing this program in our classroom, students engage in one-minute explicit instruction activities regularly throughout the day to develop a solid foundational understanding of phonemic and phonological awareness skills and concepts. PLD advocates that targeting children's literacy, oral language, movement, and motor skills maximises their literacy and learning outcomes.



## Behaviour

In early learning, our focus for behaviour management is through connection. We strive to understand each student's needs and provide guidance and support through connection when students do not meet behavioural expectations. This includes the Zones of Regulation.

## Communication about a child's progress



### Seesaw

Regular updates and communication will be made through the SeeSaw app. You will be given a QR code on your child's first school day. If you have trouble downloading or accessing the app, please see your child's teacher.

## Portfolios



In Pre-Kindy and Kindy, a portfolio, which contains samples of your child's work, will be collated during the year. This collection aims to demonstrate the development and progress that your child has made. Parents have opportunities throughout the year to view their child's portfolio and add items/comments.

## Reporting Periods (Kindy)



A report will be given at the end of each semester (Term 2 and Term 4), to inform parents of their child's progress in relation to the Early Years Learning Framework and the Kindergarten Curriculum Guidelines.

## Speech Screening and Health Nurse (Kindy)



Children will each undertake a speech and language assessment. Speech and language screening is an effective way to measure a child's developmental skills and needs. Screening can provide a pathway for any required therapy, which can then assist children as soon as possible. These will be provided by Fremantle Speech Pathology and Lil Peeps OT Therapy.

# What to bring

Checklist	✓
School uniform consisting of shorts, skorts, tracksuit, faction polo	
College bucket hat	
Appropriate footwear (Enclosed shoes, preferably Velcro.)	
Healthy and nutritious lunchbox (Please be mindful that we are a nut and egg-aware school.)	
Drink bottle	
Spare set of clothing	
Library bag	

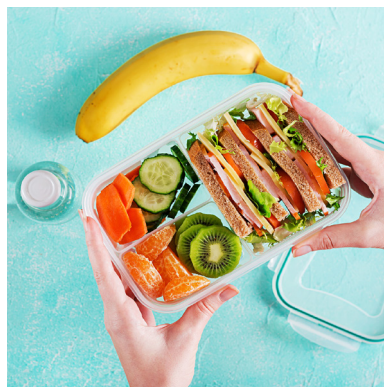
Please ensure all items are **clearly labelled** with your child's name.

## Mealtimes

### Morning Tea and Lunch

Morning tea and lunch should consist of healthy foods such as:

- Fruit, vegetables (carrots, snap peas etc.)
- Cheese
- Dried fruit (apricots, sultanas, etc.)
- Crackers
- Sandwiches, wraps and savoury muffins



As students open their own lunch boxes, please make sure that the containers and clasps can be opened easily by little fingers. We encourage healthy eating practices and ask for your support by packing only healthy snacks for your child, such as fresh fruit, cheese, natural popcorn, and water.

# Healthy Separation

Some of the children attending sessions will be distressed when their parents leave. This is called “separation anxiety” and is often displayed by three-year-olds and some older children. In some cases, the distress will re-emerge when the parent collects the child at the end of the class. This is because the sight of the parent has brought back the memory of being left and can be a difficult time for children, parents and teachers alike.

Separation anxiety occurs when the child does not yet feel safe enough to be away from the people they know and trust; therefore, it is important to build that trust with the Early Learning Centre staff quickly. Trust can be built by showing the child that you, the parent, trust the teacher and are comfortable leaving them in the classroom.

Spend some time chatting with the teacher while your child plays nearby. When your child sees you trust the teacher, they will follow your lead. Your positive and matter-of-fact approach at home can also develop trust.



Develop a goodbye ritual with your child, e.g. give three waves, a quick hug or a “high five” and promptly depart. Children generally quickly settle once you have left. Staff will listen to the child’s feelings and acknowledge them and will quickly learn which activities are especially fun for your child.

You may like to leave something ‘special’ for your child to take care of until you return with a positive request, “Could you please look after this for me as I am going to be busy and you are SO responsible now that you are at school!”.

# Useful things to know

## Parent Help

Parent involvement is encouraged within the Early Learning environment. As parents, you have the most important role in your child's education, as their first teacher. Parental and family influences are lifelong.

It is essential for staff in the Early Learning Centre to form solid relationships, not only with the children but with their whole family, to work in partnership to provide the children with the best opportunities in life. Parent involvement allows children to see that parents and teachers work together and also enables the parents to gain a better understanding of the routines and activities that the children participate in.

At the first session of each term, a parent help roster will be placed on the notice board to which you are asked to add your name. Please arrange with the Office staff to complete the necessary requirements.

## Toileting

Children should be able to take care of their toileting needs independently; however, accidents happen and we deal with them calmly and discreetly. If soiling accidents continue regularly, parents will be contacted to discuss appropriate arrangements. Please ensure your child has a complete, spare set of clothes each day.

## Illness

For the sake of your child's well-being and that of others, please keep children at home if they are over-tired or unwell, particularly if they are suffering from a fever, any rash, eye/ear discharge, runny nose with coloured discharge, diarrhoea, vomiting, cough or any other signs of infectious disease. Please refer to the WA Health Website for further information.

## Immunisations

All children enrolling in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten must be fully immunised by law. Children enrolling in Pre-Primary and other Year groups will be required to supply an Immunisation report, regardless of Immunisation status. A record of the child's current immunisation status will be kept at the College office. In accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines, children who are not immunised will be expected to remain at home during outbreaks of some infectious diseases even if their child seems well.

## Absenteeism

If your child cannot attend school because of illness, holidays or any other reason, please inform the Office staff via telephone (9295 2688), Parent Portal, email or in person on the morning of the absence. The government requires that all absences be recorded on the roll, with the reason for the absence. If a child is absent and there has been no notification, an automated text message will be sent. Should there still be no communication regarding the absence, the Administration Assistant will phone you to ascertain the student's whereabouts. If your child has been absent, a written note or email is required.

## Early and Late departures

School starts at 8.30 am. On arrival, the teacher greets the students and marks the roll at 8:45 am. At the end of the school day, parents/guardians should collect their child from the classroom at 3:00 pm.

If you arrive late or depart early, please stop at the College Office to sign in/out using the electronic attendance system. The student will receive a note to take to their class teacher when arriving late for school. Students who are often late miss the vital start of the day and miss out on classwork. This lateness can be disruptive for other students and the class teacher. Please try to avoid this.

# Days and Times

**Pre-Kindy:** Thursdays and Fridays from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.

**Kindy:** Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8:30 am to 3:00 pm.



## Our Vision

*To be a flourishing learning community through excellent Christian Education that transforms lives for God's glory.*