



2021 Early Learning and Care Family Handbook



Contents

Welcome to ECMS	4
Quality Standard: Teaching and Learning	6
The importance of play	7
ECMS policies and procedures	9
Preparing for your first day	10
Enrolment form	11
Meeting your educators	11
Supporting your child's transition	11
Once your child starts	12
What your child should wear	12
What to bring	12
Involving our families	14
How you can be involved in your child's kindergarten	14
Family helpers	15
Other ways you can be involved in your child's kindergarten	16
No smoking or alcohol	16
Excursions	16
Storypark	17
Documentation of learning	17
Inclusion support	18
Children from culturally & linguistically diverse backgrounds	19
Children from Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander backgrounds	19
Languages Other Than English (LOTE) & Language Programs	20
Feedback	21
When we are open and closed	22
Operating hours and session times	22
Professional development days – additional closures	23
Fees Policy	24
QikKids	25
Flexible billing options	25
Billing	25

Overdue accounts and late payment fees	26
Late collection of children	26
Public holidays	26
Abesteeism	26
Cancellation of booking	27
Child Care Subsidy	27
The importance of safety	28
Building and playground safety	28
Emergency procedures and equipment	29
Visitor's book	29
Your child's health and wellbeing	30
ECMS policies	30
Your child's health	31
Medication	31
Illness and infectious disease	32
Immunisation	33
Health conditions	34
Allergies	35
Accidents and injuries	35
Incidents and accidents	36
Medical emergencies	36
Child safe environment	36
Use of social media	37
Court orders	38
Work health and safety	38
ECMS staff	39
Parent and Family Charter	39
Your privacy	40
Purpose for which information is collected	41
Disclosure of personal information including health information	41
Laws that require us to collect specific information	42
Access to information	42
Please contact us	43

Welcome to ECMS

Thank you for choosing an Early Childhood Management Services (ECMS) early learning centre.

For over 22 years we have been working with families in over 60 services across Melbourne to deliver high quality and inclusive early learning and care to over 6,500 children each week.

We are pleased to have the opportunity to be part of your child's early years. Early childhood education plays an integral role in a child's development and social interaction. Our education program is carefully planned to encourage curiosity, collaboration, perseverance, problem solving and other dispositions that establish a life long love of learning and positive relationships.

We provide:

- High-quality play-based educational programs designed around children's interests and developmental needs.
- Qualified and dedicated educators who work in close partnership with families to maximise children's learning outcomes before school.
- Safe and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments filled with plenty of resources and materials to support children's learning.
- Strong ties to the local community to enhance children's social connections and a sense of belonging.
- We share updates of your child's learning and time via an accessible and secure App.

We look forward to meeting your child and sharing these very special years with you.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Hume
Acting CEO

Eight Vital Skills that Children Develop in Early Years Programs

These skills form the foundations of your child's ongoing development and wellbeing - both now and later in life.

1

Confidence

Play-based learning experiences build children's interests and capabilities. Children become curious explorers and researchers of their world to experiment and problem-solve.

2

Participation and contribution

Children are encouraged to contribute to their community every day and become participants in their world. This gives children a real sense of ownership and belonging to their community.

3

Problem-solving

Children are given lots of opportunities to choose and decide how things happen. Children will learn patterns, sequencing, puzzle solving and reasoning - these are like a gym for their brain!

4

Language and communication

We foster a language-rich environment with conversation, storytelling and singing. This gives children a voice to be heard and understood - encouraging them to connect and belong.

5

Emotional regulation

Children begin to understand that action and reaction are linked - they can master self-control and have an impact on what happens.

6

Relationship-building

Children develop meaningful relationships with others and learn how to communicate and play with their peers and educators. They learn about themselves in groups, how to start conversations and understand and collaborate with each other.

7

Empathy

Children have opportunities to explore and practice empathy with other children. Our educators will design play-based experiences that encourage your child to understand and develop language around empathy.

8

Resilience

Children are encouraged to step out of their comfort zone, try new things and find ways to overcome challenges by being strong, brave and confident.

Quality Standard: Teaching & Learning

All ECMS services operate in accordance with the National Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF). Developed in 2009, these frameworks provide the foundation for professional practice for early childhood professionals working with children from birth to eight years.

The frameworks describe the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning, with a strong emphasis on learning through play.

These frameworks form a part of the National Quality Framework, and are supported in their implementation by the National Quality Standard. The NQF provides the national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement in all kindergartens and early learning and care (long day care) services. Both the NQF and NQS are overseen by a national regulatory body the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

ECMS is committed to ensuring that we adhere to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) which was ratified by Australia in 1990. This Convention recognises that children have the same rights as adults, however need special protection because of their development and vulnerability. These rights ensure that children have the right to be cared for and have a home, be protected from harm or abuse, access to and participation in education, and to live a full, healthy life.



The importance of play

Play is the best vehicle for young children's learning and development, providing endless opportunities for robust, deep learning that contributes to healthy brain and physical development for young children. Play underpins the approach taken to teaching and learning in the EYLF. The EYLF recognises the importance of communication and language, including early literacy and numeracy, and social and emotional development experiences to provide a strong foundation for developing a love of learning and relationships.

The EYLF conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning from birth to five years - and through the transitions to school. It communicates these expectations through the following five learning outcomes:

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

Play provides the means for children to organise and make sense of their social worlds, as they engage actively with people, objects and representations. Children play to learn, not learn to play.

Play is a context for learning that:

- Allows for the expression of personality and uniqueness.
- Enhances dispositions such as curiosity and creativity.
- Enables children to make connections between prior experiences and new learning.
- Assists children to develop relationships and concepts that are essential stepping stones to the more formal reading and writing learning that happens at school.
- Stimulates a sense of wellbeing.

It is during play that children learn and expand on life skills such as confidence, relationship building, emotional regulation, problem solving, empathy and resilience.

All ECMS educators use the EYLF and the VEYLDF to to guide their decisions around the play-based learning program that is provided to the children in our services. Our programs are developed based on your child's individual needs and interests as well as the collective interests of the group.



ECMS policies and procedures

ECMS is committed to ensuring that all children receive high-quality play-based learning in a safe and inclusive environment. We have a number of policies and procedures that support our staff in their work with children and families. ECMS policies and procedures are available to be viewed on our website at: www.ecms.org.au/ecms-policies or via hard copy at your child's service. If you would like to view these documents, please see your Centre Director.



Preparing for your first day

Starting early learning and care is a special time for families. Your child can look forward to engaging in new experiences, developing friendships and learning valuable lifelong skills. Before your child starts, there are some things you can do to help ensure your child enjoy a smooth transition to early learning and care.

Enrolment form

Make sure your enrolment form and any other required documents (e.g. Immunisation History, Medical Management Plans if applicable) are collated and fully completed before your child starts early learning and care. Your child will not be able to start at the service until this is received, as this is a regulatory requirement.

There is a statement on the enrolment form that requires you to sign to acknowledge that you have read this handbook and adhere to all the conditions outlined in it for your child's attendance at ECMS services.

Meeting your educators

Before you start the early learning and care journey with your child, the educator's will spend some time with you. This is a great opportunity to share your child's likes, dislikes, interests and concerns and to ask any questions that you may have. During the orientation process you will be provided with detailed information about what needs to be brought to the service.

Supporting your child's transition

Our educators will support your child and family to transition into early learning and care. Other helpful suggestions are:

- Visit the service one or more times to meet educators and explore the learning environments.
- Talk to your child about what to expect at early learning and care.
- Tell your child when they will be attending, their educator's names and the activities that they can look forward to.
- Talk to your child about your childhood.
- Read your child stories about early learning and care or about trying new things.
- Make sure your child sees you talking and interacting with your educators. If they can see that you trust and like our educators, this will help with their transition.

Once your child starts

- Establish good relationships with your child's educators. Speak to them if the time permits or you could engage in an activity with your child and an educator.
- You may like to stay initially with your child to engage in play or watch them as they play. You can reduce this as your child becomes more confident in their new environment.
- If your child is anxious, try to be calm and acknowledge how they feel. When it is time to leave, let them know you will be collecting them later in the day. Our educators will support your child to settle in.
- When you collect your child, take some time to ask them about their day such as what was their favourite experience or moment from the day.

What your child should wear

Children are encouraged to wear comfortable clothing which allows for freedom of movement while being mindful of both the weather conditions and the safe sleeping guidelines. Children's clothing should be suitable for messy and active play and suitable shoes that enclose their feet with a firm grip sole.

What to bring

- A backpack/bag.
- A complete change of clothing (including extra if your child is not independent in going to the toilet).
- A wide-brimmed sun hat when the Ultra Violet (UV) rating is over three. We also encourage the application of SPF 30 or higher sunscreen before attending, and sunglasses are also recommended. Further information on our Sun Protection Policy can be found at www.ecms.org.au/ecms-policies.
- In winter – a warm coat.
- Comfortable shoes for playing and climbing (thongs and crocs are not recommended).

- Bottles, dummies (pacifiers) and other items required for infants.
- If your child would like to bring along a favourite toy from home, please let your educator know (educators cannot accept responsibility for toys brought from home).
- All items from home should have your child's name written on them for easy identification of belongings.



Involving our Families

How you can be involved in your child's early learning and care

ECMS Parent Activity Groups (PAG) are an exciting way for parents to contribute to their child's early learning service.

Unlike a traditional committee of management, a PAG doesn't have any service management responsibility. ECMS takes care of this. A PAG builds meaningful connections between parents, educators, and the local community.

Every PAG is different. Each community shapes their group to suit their context, interests, available time, specialised expertise, cultural preferences, and needs. PAGs are based on four key principles/purposes:

- Making things happen
- Helping families belong
- Giving families a voice
- Doing it your way!

Please refer to our website at www.ecms.org.au/resources-pags for further information, or speak with your Centre Director.

Family Helpers

ECMS believes that volunteering develops strong partnerships between our services, families, volunteers, community services, and the broader community. These partnerships contribute to children's development and learning. Family members are invited, encouraged and supported to be a family helper on a regular, occasional, or ad hoc basis.

ECMS is committed to child safety and ensures that all volunteer family members have a valid Victorian Working with Children Check (WWC). Volunteers will be asked to provide their WWC on each occasion to ensure that this is valid. Volunteers will also be requested to sign-in to the visitor's book on each occasion as it is a requirement of the Education and Care Services Law and Regulations that the service maintains records of family helpers participating in the program.

Families are encouraged to apply for a volunteer Working with Children Check at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply. There is no charge for volunteer Working with Children Checks.

Other ways you can be involved

- Providing feedback regularly and participating in our Annual Parent Survey conducted in term three.
- Volunteering to be involved in a parent advisory group (PAG) or committee to support the service and enhance the experience of your child and children for years to come.
- Supporting fundraising and working bee initiatives.
- Attending events and parent information evenings.
- Offering to participate in the educational program, sharing your skills and knowledge (such as storytelling, musical instruments, gardening, arts and crafts etc.).

Speak to your child's educator about other ways you can become involved in the early learning and care service.

No smoking or alcohol

Please be advised that all ECMS services are designated as smoke free at all times. This includes both internal and external areas of our services. As outlined in the ECMS Code of Conduct, educators, staff and volunteers must not consume alcohol or be affected by alcohol or drugs (including prescription medications) that may impair their capacity to carry out the duties of their role.

Excursions

Learning can take place in many settings and, as such, excursions form a valuable part of our program. Risk assessments are conducted by staff prior to any excursion taking place and parents will be required to sign written permission for their child to attend. Parents are actively encouraged to attend these excursions to support the children and staff and will require a Working with Children Check.

Storypark

ECMS uses Storypark in all of our services to communicate with families. Storypark is an online communication platform that enables educators to share regular information about children's development, milestones and experiences with families and it belongs to you (meaning you will have access to it at the end of the year).

Storypark can be used to communicate learning stories, updates and for program and planning purposes. It can also be used as a tool for broadcasting emergencies. Families are administrators of their child's account and can decide who has access to their child's information.

Families will receive an email from the service to set up your Storypark account on enrolment. Further information can be obtained from www.storypark.com.au/families or speak with your child's educators. We encourage you to read your emails often (especially service broadcasts) to stay up to date with service news.

Documentation of learning

As part of documenting children's learning educators may wish to photograph or video your child at the service and/or on excursions. Consent for use of these images is in the enrolment form and parents are able to nominate if and how their children's photographs/videos may be used by staff.



Inclusion support

ECMS is committed to ensuring that our services are accessible to and meet the needs of all children. We strive to create learning communities that are rich in diversity and where all children have access to high-quality education and care, and are given opportunities to reach their full potential. Our differential approach ensures that each child is treated as an individual and that they are recognised for who they are. Research indicates that participation in a quality early childhood setting has strong links to better outcomes in adult life.

We recognise that each family and child is unique, and work in partnership with families to identify children's strengths and needs, ensuring every child is included in our play-based learning programs. We plan learning experiences and environments that best support your child's interests, needs, abilities, culture, communication strengths and learning style.

In some circumstances additional support can be provided. This may be ongoing or for short periods.

If you believe your family and/or child will require additional support to fully access the program, it is important that you speak as soon as possible with your child's educator – they are best placed to guide you through a successful transition.

If you require further advice or support, we encourage you to contact your Centre Director.

Children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

ECMS has a family centred practice approach to all of our services and ensures that children and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds feel welcome. We encourage family history and rituals within our programming. You can assist your child by providing us with information in regards to their languages, beliefs and cultural practices during your orientation period.

Children from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander backgrounds

ECMS acknowledges, respects and values the traditions, heritages, stories, rituals and histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Many ECMS services have a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) which outlines each service's commitment to valuing each child's cultural and family values and practices. If you would like to view a copy of your service's RAP please see your Centre Director.

Languages Other Than English (LOTE)

In all programs languages are incorporated into everyday learning activities to allow children to use the language themselves. They will be encouraged to engage in language learning through play, art, music and stories, increasing their vocabulary along the way. Staff who have languages other than English are encouraged to share these with children as well as parents/guardians who would like to participate in the program.

Feedback

ECMS encourages feedback from families about our services and your experience. Both positive and negative feedback is welcomed to ensure that we are constantly meeting the needs of families. If you have a concern regarding your child's education or care, please raise the issue with your child's educator in the first instance, then the Centre Director if necessary.

If after these discussions you are not satisfied with the response, you are encouraged to contact your Area Manager (the name and contact details of this person are listed on the Compliments and Concerns poster on display at your service).

Should you wish to take the matter further, please contact the Director, Early Childhood Education at ECMS on (03) 8481 1100.

For a full outline of the Complaints and Feedback Policy and Procedure, please review the ECMS Operational Policy and Procedures Manual available at your service or online at www.ecms.org.au/policies.



When we are open and closed

Operating hours and session times

Each service will close for two weeks at the end of the year from Wednesday 23 December 2020 and reopen on Tuesday 12 January 2021. Please check with your children's service to confirm specific operating hours.

These times are also published on the ECMS website at www.ecms.org.au.

Professional development days – additional closures

ECMS is committed to delivering ongoing support and training for our educators. Our services are closed for one day each year, to offer ECMS educators the opportunity to participate in training, development and networking. This opportunity enhances educator’s skills and knowledge, which benefits all children, families and the wider community. Families will be notified via Storypark and notice boards with the dates for these closures at least four weeks in advance.

Public Holidays 2021	
New Year’s Day	Friday 1 January
Australia Day	Tuesday 26 January
Labour Day	Monday 8 March
Good Friday	Friday 2 April
Easter Monday	Monday 5 April
Anzac Day	Sunday 25 April
Queen’s Birthday	Monday 14 June
ECMS Annual Conference Day	TBA
Grand Final Holiday	TBA
Melbourne Cup Day	Tuesday 2 November
Christmas Day Holiday	Monday 27 December
Boxing Day Holiday	Tuesday 28 December
All ECMS children’s services are closed on public holidays.	



Fees Policy

ECMS aims to ensure our services provide high quality education and care, are affordable for all families and build sustainable operations and programs for future children and families. A copy of the ECMS Early Learning Centre Fee Policy has been provided in your enrolment pack or can be viewed at www.ecms.org.au. Fees are reviewed annually and fee increases implemented in January of every year.

QikKids

ECMS uses QikKids to manage family fees and bookings.

Families can now access the QikKids My Family Lounge. This app will allow you to:

- View your Family Statements
- Book extra casual days when needed
- Notify the service of your child's absence for the day/s
- Update your family details

To download the My Family Lounge app, head to www.qikkids.au/My-Family-Lounge/download-app.

Please see your Centre Director for more information on the My Family Lounge app.

Flexible booking options

Your Early Learning and Care Centre is able to offer you flexible booking options. 9-hour, 10-hour and full-day bookings will be available to assist families to maximise their Child Care Subsidy. Sessions will commence from the time that the child is signed into the service. A grace period of 30 minutes will apply at pick-up times. If the pick-up time and grace period are exceeded, a flexible booking late pick-up fee of \$10 per hour applies.

For children booked into full-day sessions, the late collection fee will continue to apply as noted below.

Billing

Families will be billed on a fortnightly basis, and are expected to pay two weeks in advance. This is set up through direct credit or debit facilities using DebitSuccess.

Overdue accounts and late payment fees

- A late payment fee will be charged if an account is overdue by eight days without prior notice. When the account is overdue by 9-15 days the family will be contacted by the Centre Director to verbally request payment.
- If an account is outstanding for more than 15 days, the family will receive an account statement calling for immediate payment of arrears.
- If an account is overdue by 31 days – or exceeds \$1000 – and the family has not made suitable payment arrangements, the child's place at the service will be forfeited, until the account has been settled and the account will be put out to debt.
- Families experiencing financial difficulty must agree to a payment plan with their Centre Director which is designed to clear debts while maintaining regular payments for ongoing childcare services.

Late collection of children

If a family is delayed through unavoidable circumstances, they must contact the early learning and care staff to advise the details and when the child will be collected. If the service has not been contacted, a staff member will attempt to contact both parents and emergency contacts before calling the police. A late collection fee will be charged at \$15 for the first five minutes and then \$10 every 10 minutes after that.

Public holidays

Fees are calculated on a weekly basis including public holidays. Families will be charged for public holidays at the same rate as a regular day of care.

Absenteeism

If your child is absent for the day, parents are advised to use the QikKids My Family Lounge to mark this absence or telephone the service as soon as possible to inform educators. If your child is sick, it is important to inform the service of the nature of the illness, symptoms, and any diagnosis to assist in containing the spread of illness.

Cancellation of booking

Families are required to provide two weeks' written notice of cancellation of a booking. Fees will continue to apply until a written cancellation of the booking is received. If your child does not attend the service for any of the last two weeks without a medical certificate, it is important that you know that under the Child Care subsidy law, full fees will apply and you will not be eligible for the Child Care Subsidy, therefore the full fee will be applied to this time period.

Child Care Subsidy

The Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to services from the government to offset costs to families.

Three things determine a family's level of Child Care Subsidy:

1. The combined family income
2. Your fortnightly family activity level - how much your family works, train, study or volunteer
3. The fees charged by the early learning and care service.

For more information on the Child Care Package, please visit the following website:

www.education.gov.au/child-care-package-information-resources-families.

If you have any questions, please feel free to speak with your Centre Director.

The full Fees Payment Policy is available for your review at your child's service or on the ECMS website at:

www.ecms.org.au/ecms-policies.



The importance of safety

Building and playground safety

ECMS staff conduct daily safety inspections of the indoor and outdoor environments. Any hazards are removed or made inaccessible to children and reported to management/local council for further action. The Australian Standards for Playgrounds are used to guide all outdoor equipment purchases. Please refer to the ECMS Building Safety Checks and Maintenance of Buildings and Equipment Policy which is available at your children's service or on the ECMS website: www.ecms.org.au/policies.

Emergency procedures and equipment

Fire extinguishers and first aid kits are located at each children's service and are regularly maintained. Emergency evacuation procedures are clearly displayed at each children's service. Staff are required to practice emergency evacuation procedures with the children each term. In the event of an emergency evacuation, the procedures outlined in the displayed information will be followed. Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as feasible to collect their child and kept up to date via Storypark, text message and phone.

Visitor's book

All visitors must sign in and out in the service's visitor's book. This is a regulatory requirement and is important for the security of children, parents and educators. Visitors include any maintenance personnel, local council employees, government representatives, ECMS representatives, specialists, parents assisting for the day, etc. All visitors are required to hold a valid Victorian Working with Children Check. This will be checked and verified as up to date on each occasion of a visitor's attendance. The visitor's book provides a record of visitors on the premises in the event of an emergency evacuation.



Your child's health and wellbeing

ECMS policies

Your child's health and wellbeing is important to us. We have a range of policies that cover all aspects of operation and quality of our children's services. We invite you to review these policies, to discuss them with your educators, and to provide feedback. Policies are available at your child's service and on the ECMS website: www.ecms.org.au/policies

Your child's health

In order to care for your child effectively, parents are requested to inform ECMS staff on arrival if their child has been unwell in the last 24 hours and/or if they have been given any medication (prescription or over the counter). Parents are requested to confirm the medication and the last time of administration. This information will assist us to provide your child with the best possible care and support throughout the day.

Medication

Administering medication to children at the request of their parents is a task that requires attention to detail, record keeping, teamwork and communication with children and families. Medication (including prescription, over-the-counter and homeopathic medications) will not be administered to a child without authorisation by a parent or person with the authority to consent to administration of medical attention to the child.

Parent/guardians are required to:

- Authorise medication administration on the appropriate form and hand medication directly to an educator.
- Complete all necessary documentation required under the Education and Care Service National Law 2010 and Education and Care Service National Regulations 2011.
- Notify the service of any special medical treatment or consideration required for your child, and where necessary, in consultation with educators, develop appropriate medical management plan and risk minimisation plans.

Medication will only be administered:

- From its original container (whether prescribed or non-prescribed) before the expiry or use-by date.
- In accordance with any instructions attached to the medication or provided by a registered medical practitioner.
- For prescribed medications, from a container that bears the original label with the name of the child to whom it is prescribed.

Non-prescription medication (except paracetamol) will be administered for a maximum of two consecutive days in one week. Paracetamol will only be administered once in any one week. After this time a medical practitioners (doctor) authority is required stating the child's name, medication, dose and time to be given.

Illness and infectious disease

ECMS follows legislated procedures to promote children's health and minimise the spread of infection. Please keep your child at home if he/she is unwell. ECMS requires that children with the following symptoms or illness must be kept at home until they are completely well:

- High temperature (38 °C or above)
- Vomiting
- Loose bowel motions
- Rashes - any irritation that cannot be identified
- Red, swollen or discharging eyes
- If a child seems sick without obvious symptoms, for example unusually tired, irritable, lethargic, not eating or drinking
- Any of the infectious diseases listed in the Public health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 exclusion table that can be accessed at www.bit.ly/2YEVme7.

Parents/guardians will be asked to collect their child if they show any signs of the symptoms mentioned above of illnesses or infectious diseases. You will be required to keep your child at home for at least 24 hours, with symptoms not displayed for at least eight hours before returning to the service depending on the circumstances.

If your child becomes ill while in our care, you will be notified as soon as possible. An ill child will be kept comfortable and under observation until the parent/guardian, or authorised person collects the child from the service. Educators will complete the details of your child's illness in the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record and you will be required to read and sign this record upon collection of your child.

Under health regulations, children with a diagnosed infectious illness must not attend the children's service. Please refer to the Public health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019 exclusion table which can be accessed at www.bit.ly/2YEVme7.

This table lists applicable infectious diseases and exclusion times. Please contact your medical practitioner for further advice. In the event of your child suffering an infectious disease you may be required to provide ECMS with a medical clearance to return to the service.

Please inform staff as soon as possible if your child is diagnosed with an infectious illness. Educators are required to alert all families at the children's service, and at times, the Department of Health and Human Services. Confidentiality will be respected at all times.

In the event of a pandemic declaration, ECMS may be required to enforce further infection control practices and procedures, and pedagogical changes. These will be relevant to the advice from the authorities and will be consistent with the requirements of the relevant disease outbreak. Any additional measures required during a pandemic will be removed or reduced only under the advice of the Federal Department of Education Skills and Employment (DESE), Victorian Department of Education and Training (DET) and the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS).

Immunisation

In January 2016, the Australian Government introduced 'No Jab, No Play' legislation. Your child must be fully vaccinated for their age to attend any early learning and care service.

Please complete your child's immunisation details on their enrolment form and provide a current immunisation history statement, approved catch-up schedule or medical exemption form as soon as possible.

If your child is not vaccinated, our educators will support you through the process outlined in the No Jab, No Play toolkit, however your child will not be able to attend an ECMS service until their records meet the requirements of the law. You are required to provide the service with your child's updated immunisation records after any new immunisations and/or every six (6) months. For more information, please review ECMS' Immunisation Policy at www.ecms.org.au/immunisation-policy and your child's educators can also answer your questions.

Your child's Immunisation History Statement can be downloaded from your MyGov Account. Alternatively, go to your local Medicare office to download a copy from the Australian Immunisation Register, or ask your medical practitioner (doctor) for a copy. For children vaccinated overseas, parents will need to consult with their medical practitioner (doctor) who will transfer the information to the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register. Once these have been confirmed an Immunisation History Statement can be issued.

Health conditions

If your child has a medical condition that requires particular treatment and is attending the service, educators will provide support and care so that your child can participate equally in all aspects of the program.

Please inform your children's educators of your child's health condition. Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Medical Management plans are required for any child who is at risk of:

- Asthma
- An allergic reaction
- Anaphylaxis
- Eczema
- Allergic rhinitis (hay fever)
- Diabetes
- Epilepsy

Please consult with your medical practitioner (doctor) to obtain these plans if applicable.

Educators will work with families to develop procedures for the safe and effective management of these matters. This may include developing:

- A Risk Minimisation Plan
- An understanding of how to keep your child well
- An understanding of the signs and symptoms of the medical condition and requires attention or treatment
- A strategy of how to respond if your child shows any signs or symptoms.

Parents/caregivers are to supply all relevant medications required for their child and these are to remain on the premises for the duration of their care. Staff will monitor expiry dates regularly and will communicate with families when these are due for renewal. If your child's medication is not provided or available for staff to use in an emergency, children will be unable to attend the service.

Allergies

ECMS believes that the safety and wellbeing of children who are at risk of anaphylaxis, food allergies or food intolerances is paramount and is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment in which children can participate fully in all aspects of the program. ECMS staff will work collaboratively with parents to individually assess risks and develop risk minimisation and risk management strategies if required.

Accidents and injuries

Under the National Children's Services Regulations 2011, ECMS is required to follow procedures in the event of a child sustaining an injury and educators will deliver first aid to any children requiring it. All educators hold current first aid qualifications. At enrolment, parents are required to sign an authority for educators to seek emergency medical or ambulance assistance if necessary.

Incidents and accidents

If your child is involved in a minor incident (e.g. tripping over) or accident (e.g. bumping their head), educators will comfort your child, assess their condition, and monitor their wellbeing.

Educators will record the details on the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record and will contact you to discuss the incident. You may be required to collect your child and seek medical advice. You will be asked to read and sign the Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness record when you collect your child. Please inform the educator if your child's condition changes or if you seek medical advice.

Medical emergencies

Your child's wellbeing is our priority. If your child is involved in a medical emergency staff will administer first aid as required, call emergency services and contact you. Educators will be directed by paramedics. ECMS endeavours to keep you informed of all actions until you are with your child. Parents/guardians are responsible for any initial and subsequent medical costs (including all ambulance costs) associated with their child's accident/injury.

Dependent on the nature of the medical emergency, ECMS may be obligated by law to notify the Department of Education who then may choose to contact the parent.

Child safe environment

ECMS has a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that all children are safe in their care. ECMS is committed to:

- Ensuring the health, safety and wellbeing of children at the service is protected at all times whilst also promoting their learning and development.
- Fulfilling its duty of care obligations under the law by protecting children from any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm.
- Ensuring that people caring for children at the service act on the best interests of the child, and take all reasonable steps to ensure the child's safety and wellbeing at all times.

- Fulfilling its legal obligations to report all allegations and incidents of abuse, neglect and misconduct to the appropriate authorities.
- Supporting the rights of all children to feel safe, and to be safe at all times.
- Developing and maintaining a culture in which children feel valued, respected and cared for.
- Encouraging active participation from parents/guardians and families at the service, and ensuring that best practice is based on partnership approach and shared responsibility for children's health, safety, wellbeing and development.
- Promoting children's development and wellbeing.

A referral to Child FIRST or a report to Child Protection will be made whenever there are reasonable grounds to believe that a child has, or is likely to, suffer significant harm or the child's safety and/or wellbeing is at risk. All ECMS educators and registered teachers have mandatory reporting responsibilities and further information on this can be found at:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/providers/regulation/Pages/protectionprotocol.aspx>.

Please refer to the ECMS Child Safe Culture Policy available at your children's service or on the ECMS website:

www.ecms.org.au/policies. Actions and decisions made under this policy consider the importance of maintaining respectful and collaborative relationships with children and their families.

Use of social media

ECMS does not permit parents or guardians to take photographic or video images of another person's child. When engaging in personal social media activities, only photographs or videos of your own child are permitted. Parents are also required to ensure that messages/content are respectful and positive towards staff, other children and their families. Due to a potential conflict between personal and professional boundaries, parents are unable to make friend requests to their child's educators on any social media platform.

Court orders

If there are any court orders, parenting orders/plans or apprehended violence orders (AVO) relating to the powers, duties, responsibilities of authorities of any person in relation to your child, you are required to provide these orders to the service. ECMS is committed to ensuring that both parents are entitled to have a significant involvement in their child's care and welfare. However, unless specifically prohibited by a court order or parenting plan, ECMS will not refuse either parent in being involved in their child's education and care. ECMS staff are committed to ensuring that there are arrangements in place for communications between both parties.

Parents are requested to issue the service with any updates or amendments to these plans as soon as possible to ensure that all parties can adhere to these orders. ECMS staff will not mediate disputes between parents in relation to contact with children, and parents may need to return to court to resolve these issues.

Work health and safety

ECMS is committed to ensuring that the safety of everyone who uses their services. Staff conduct daily checks in regards to the safety of the indoor and outdoor space as well as equipment. Should you become aware of an area of our service which you believe to be unsafe then please direct your concerns to the Centre Director as soon as possible.

ECMS staff

ECMS has a highly qualified workforce and values all of its employees. ECMS has an obligation to ensure a safe, harassment free working environment for all. As such, staff at the service deserve your respect and courtesy. It is not acceptable to treat staff aggressively or threaten them face to face or via social or print media. Should you be unhappy with any aspect of your child's education and care then please refer to our Complaints and Feedback Policy located on the ECMS website.

ECMS requests that parents do not engage staff to care for their children outside the service, whether this is for payment or not. This can place the staff member in a conflict of interest between both their professional and personal boundaries.

Parent and Family Charter

ECMS prides itself on being a child safe organisation where all children can come into our services with confidence, knowing they will be welcomed, respected and safe. This means that all visitors and users of our services are expected to behave in a civil, polite and friendly way with all children, families and staff. All ECMS services will have the "Parent and Family Charter" poster displayed. This poster details the expectations of ECMS to all families and community members who utilise our services. If you have any concerns, issues or complaints about any aspect of the service, please seek advice from our staff on how to progress your concerns/complaints, and please be assured this will be taken most seriously.



Your privacy

We believe your privacy is important.

We have put in place a Privacy Policy, which illustrates how we will collect, use, disclose, manage and transfer personal information, including health information. This policy is available on request.

Our service is, in some of its activities, bound by privacy legislation.

- If we need to collect health information we are subject to the Health Records Act (Vic).
- If we have collected information as a service provider to the state government, we are covered by the Information Privacy Act (Vic). With all other transactions involving personal information, we are covered by the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988.

Purpose for which information is collected

Reasons why we collect personal information:

Personal information and health information collected in relation to:	Primary purpose for which information will be used:
Children and parents/guardians	To enable us to provide for the education and care of the child attending the service and to enable us to manage and administer the services as we are required.
Committee members	To work with committees in the management of ECMS services.
Job applicants, employees, contractors, volunteers and students	To assess and (if necessary) to engage the employees, contractors, volunteers or students, as the case may be; To administer the individuals employment, contracts or placement of students and volunteers.

You should be aware that under relevant privacy legislation, other uses and disclosures of personal information are permitted, as set out in that legislation.

Disclosure of personal information, including health information

We may disclose some personal information, including health information, held about an individual to:

- Government departments or agencies as part of our legal and funding obligations e.g. Child Protection.
- Local government in relation to enrolment details for planning purposes.
- Children's services within the Central Enrolment Scheme managed by ECMS for the allocation of kindergarten places.
- Parent committees and advisory groups to enable them to contact users of their service.

- Insurance providers in relation to specific claims.
- Law enforcement agencies.
- Organisations providing services related to employee entitlements and employment.
- Anyone to who the individual authorises us to disclose information.

Laws that require us to collect specific information

The Education and Care Services' National Regulations, Associations Incorporations Act 1981 and employment related laws and agreements require us to collect specific information. Failure to provide the required information could affect:

- A child's enrolment at the service
- An employee's employment.

Access to information

Individuals on who we hold personal or health information are able to gain access to this information in accordance with applicable legislation. The procedure for doing this is set out in our Privacy Policy, which is available on request.

For further information on the privacy policy please contact your Area Manager, who's contact details can be found on the 'Communicating Compliments and Complaints' poster displayed at your child's service.

Please Contact Us

If at any time you have a query or concern, please don't hesitate to speak with your educators or contact the ECMS Support Services team at our Northcote office.

Email: ecms@ecms.org.au

Phone: (03) 8481 1100

Postal address: PO Box 182, Northcote 3070

Street address: 192 High St, Northcote 3070



Connect with ECMS

You can find the latest ECMS information and news on

-  ecms.org.au
-  facebook.com/ecmschildren
-  twitter.com/ecms_childhood
-  linkedin.com/company/early-childhood-management-services
-  instagram.com/ecms_childhood/
-  youtube.com/channel/UCmEgGJ57L4hnQ8GlayFrWOA