

# Little Pioneers Early Learning Centre

## Parent Handbook



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## **Welcome**

We would like to welcome you to the Little Pioneers ELC (Early Learning Centre). Our aim is to provide a place where families and children feel safe, secure and confident, and feel a sense of belonging within our community.

This Handbook contains information to assist in settling your child into our Kindy classes, and to help answer any questions you may have. If you require more detailed information, please do not hesitate to consult with one of our Nominated Supervisors or team members.

### **Little Pioneers Early Learning Centre Philosophy Statement**

At Little Pioneers Early Learning Centre, we believe that family and strong partnerships are vital to the overall success of a child's education and care. We therefore value and encourage parents to actively become involved in their child's learning journey. The staff and educators provide an atmosphere of strong relationships, leadership, care, trust, support and mutual respect. We recognise the diverse values and cultural beliefs of families and the wider community, and aim to embed respectful multi-cultural and Indigenous practices in order to instil in our children strong respect for our country's diversity.

Our child-centred, play-based environment enables children to explore and learn in a safe and nurturing space. Our Curriculum is guided through multiple theorists, and the children are supported to achieve their full potential, and to reach their developmental milestones. Skill assessments provide vital information that enables educators to support each and every child as they work towards reaching their learning goals. We recognise the importance of teaching children how to lead a healthy lifestyle, and therefore embed healthy practices into our daily routine. Our physical fitness program supports our children to reach their personal gross motor goals. We also aim to increase our children's awareness of how to take care of our planet by teaching; environmentally responsible behaviours, and how to contribute to a more sustainable future. Many of these practices are embedded into our Early Learning Centre's environment, and the children are given opportunities to be actively involved in sustainable practices at a school community level.

We communicate with children in a respectful manner, and engage them in experiences that promote the learning of the Principles and Practices of the Early Years Learning Framework and the National Quality Standards. Exploring and discovering creates opportunities for our children to develop agency through voicing their interests and making meaningful choices that will assist their learning. We aim for continuous improvement by reflecting and working in partnership with the whole school community, and always strive for excellence in early childhood education.

**Centre Management****Approved Provider**

An Approved Provider is a person or an entity who is granted approval under the Education and Care Service National Law. This approval authorises the Approved Provider to operate an approved education and care service. Our Approved Provider is Village School Association Inc.

**Nominated Supervisor**

The Nominated Supervisor is the person with responsibility for the day-to-day management of an approved service. The National Law requires that Approved Providers must not operate a service without a Nominated Supervisor for that service. In the absence of a Nominated Supervisor, a Certified Supervisor will need to consent to filling the Nominated Supervisor role. Currently, our Nominated Supervisor is the Pioneer Village School Principal.

**Responsible person**

Under National Law, a responsible person must be physically present at a service at all times that an Approved Service operates. A Responsible Person can be: the Approved Provider; or the Nominated Supervisor; or a Certified Supervisor who has consented to being placed in day to day charge of the service.

**Educational Leader**

Our Educational Leader is a fully qualified primary school teachers with a Bachelor of Education. The role of the Educational Leader is to lead the development and implementation of the educational curriculum.

**Staffing**

All staff employed by Little Pioneers ELC Centre holds a minimum Certificate 3 qualification. We employ Early Childhood Teachers, Diploma trained qualified educators, as well as Certificate 3 trained educators.

**Early Years Teacher**

The programs and planning is conducted by a qualified, TRBWA registered, Early Childhood Teacher. The program provides children with meaningful experiences that promote social, emotional, language, intellectual, creative and physical development.

We believe in always striving for further improvement. To this end, educators are encouraged to undertake further study, and are involved in professional development throughout each year.

**Parent Involvement**

Parents are our biggest support. Their encouragement and assistance, in whatever way, such as coming to a parent night, collecting resources, contributing ideas to the program, or attending a special event day is of invaluable assistance.

At Little Pioneers we encourage parent input. Families are encouraged to be involved and your ideas and suggestions will be greatly appreciated. We are always happy to have families share their ideas.

In the first instance, parents can be involved by explaining their child's temperament, stages of development, likes and dislikes, to our educators. Even though a parent's life is very busy, we would appreciate a few minutes to talk about how your child is progressing. We appreciate being told the little things we need to know e.g. changes in sleeping patterns, any development you observe, the cold your child appears to be contracting, or how an activity was enjoyed.

To give children the best opportunity for development, educators and families work hand-in-hand. We want children to gain the best that is possible from our school, so please do keep in touch and discuss any milestones, problems, concerns or feelings with the staff.

### **Important Information about our Service**

The following information will help you to understand the administrative requirements of enrolling your child into Pioneer Village School and the operational policies families need to be aware of.

### **Contact Details**

**Phone:** 9399 6999 **Address:** 7 Albany Highway Armadale – within the Pioneer Village School Grounds

**Website:** [www.pvs.wa.edu.au](http://www.pvs.wa.edu.au)

**Email:** [reception@pvs.wa.edu.au](mailto:reception@pvs.wa.edu.au)

### **Hours of Operation**

The service is open from 7.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. for Long Day Care throughout the year, excluding public holidays and two weeks over Christmas/New Year where we close. *Please be aware you are charged fees for public holidays throughout the year, but not for the closure over the Christmas period.*

The following sessions are available:

Long Session 7:00am-6:00pm.

Short Session 8.30am-3:05pm.

### **Enrolment**

Prior to commencement, you will receive an enrolment pack. This includes all of the necessary paperwork required by the Service. To enrol your child, you are required to complete and sign the Enrolment Form and Complying Agreement. Please ensure that we are notified of any changes that may occur, such as change of address or phone number as soon as possible.

**All completed forms must be returned to school prior to your child's orientation.** If there are court orders in place, we will also need to be provided with a copy to be kept on file. The details required on the enrolment form are needed by our educators to help them take the best possible care of your child. It is also a legal licensing requirement. All information is strictly confidential. If any of the details on the enrolment form change, you are asked to advise us immediately.

**Enrolment Process:**

1. Register Interest on the PVS website <https://pvs.wa.edu.au/early-learning-centre/>
2. A staff member will contact you to arrange a tour.
3. Apply for the Child Care Subsidy through Centrelink if you intended to claim the subsidy. The subsidy can only be backdated 28 days so it's recommended you apply well before you intend to start your child.
4. Submit a completed enrolment form ensuring that the Customer Reference Numbers (CRN) for the child and claiming parent have been supplied. The enrolment form is also the Complying Written Agreement.
5. Provide all required documentation, e.g. child's birth certificate, immunisation record, custodial papers, court orders, medical conditions plans etc, and pay the \$395.00 non-refundable School Enrolment Fee.
6. Book an orientation session.
7. Confirm your Little Pioneers ELC enrolment and attendance pattern on your myGov account to ensure you receive your Child Care Subsidy.

**Inclusion**

We provide an inclusive environment that aims to support the needs of every child. If you require additional support for your child please let us know. Our support agency is Communicare. Please discuss your child's needs with our ELC Educational Leader. Inclusion support aims to provide your child and the educators caring for your child with information, advice, care plans, and access to training and funding to support the whole room.

**Priority of Access**

Little Pioneers ELC adheres to the Priority of Access Guidelines, to ensure the children who most require care are about to access it.

The priority list indicates the following:

- Priority 1 – a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Priority 2 – a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test
- Priority 3 – any other child

Within these priority listings are further guidelines, more information can be found at [https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/07\\_2015/instruction\\_sheet\\_10\\_-\\_priority\\_of\\_access\\_guidelines\\_for\\_child\\_care\\_services.pdf#:~:text=The%20Priority%20of%20Access%20Guidelines%20are%20set%20out,Outside%20School%20Hours%20Care%20and%20In-Home%20Care%20services.](https://www.dss.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/07_2015/instruction_sheet_10_-_priority_of_access_guidelines_for_child_care_services.pdf#:~:text=The%20Priority%20of%20Access%20Guidelines%20are%20set%20out,Outside%20School%20Hours%20Care%20and%20In-Home%20Care%20services.)

If the centre is approached to provide a place for a child who fits a higher priority criteria, we are obliged to vacate a lower priority placement for this child. In this circumstance as much notice will be given as possible and we will do everything possible to find an arrangement to best suit the needs of families.

**Where to Find Everything**

In the centre you will find everything you need to know including:

- Our Philosophy - displayed
- Parent Handbook - displayed
- Staffing Information - displayed
- Service Approval - displayed
- Policy Manual – on request
- Quality Improvement Plan – on display once completed

**Current Fees**

Our fees are reviewed on an annual basis by Pioneer Village School. Casual days require at least 24 hours’ notice to book or cancel, and must be confirmed either by a staff member or by e-mail – availability of casual days is not guaranteed. Our current fee schedules are:

Long Session	Short Session	Casual Long Session	Casual Short Session
\$105	\$98	\$119	\$111

**Payment of Fees**

Operation of our program is dependent on maintaining fees. Please read the following information carefully.

**Permanent Bookings**

Permanent bookings operate on an ongoing basis and roll over from year to year unless otherwise communicated by the enrolling guardian/parent. **Two weeks’ written notice** is required if families wish to cease enrolment at Little Pioneers ELC, or change their child’s permanent booking. Notification must be provided in writing via email. A confirmation email will be provided. Permanent bookings can be for a short or long day session.

Please contact us via email or by telephone if your child is absent for any reason e.g. sickness, holiday etc. **Fees apply for absences on all permanent bookings, regardless of why the child is unable to attend.**

Please Note: We are unable to provide swap, or make up, days if your child is unable to attend a regular booked day.

**Casual Bookings**

**All casual bookings are subject to the availability of places.** A casual booking may include multiple days and/or multiple children from the same family. A casual booking is not a guaranteed placement in the ELC. Casual bookings are utilised as a rare or once off occurrence to meet the needs of families. They must be booked via email and are confirmed once you receive a confirmation email of your booking. We are unable to accept walk-ins. **24 hours’ notice is required to cancel any casual booking. Full fees will apply for any cancellations that don’t comply with the notice period.**

Fees are direct debited weekly.

Please be aware that if an invoice day falls on a public holiday, or during a holiday period where administration staff are on leave, statements will be provided on the next business day after opening.

Statements of Entitlement and Fee Statements can be accessed on the Xplor app.

**A late fee of \$2 per minute or part thereof will be charged directly onto your account for each child who remains at the Centre after 6:00pm.**

Anyone experiencing difficulties in meeting their fee obligations can speak to the supervisor to make mutually agreeable arrangements. Failure to do so may result in the cancellation of your child's place. Please refer to our Payment of Fees Policy for further information.

### **Non-Attendance Guidelines**

Please advise us if your child will not be attending their booked session wherever possible. All absences will be recorded on Xplor.

### **Child Care Subsidy**

The Australian Government provides financial assistance to eligible families to help cover the cost of child care. Child Care Subsidy (CCS) is paid directly to us. We then pass this on to families in the form of fee reductions. Families must then pay the gap fee charged directly to the school.

Child Care Subsidy levels are different for each family and depend on individual circumstances. Child Care Subsidy is determined by three key factors:

- How much 'work related' activity you and your partner undertake each fortnight. The entitlement is based on the lesser activity figure.
- Your combined family income.
- The type of care required.

CCS entitlements are payable on 42 allowable absences per year after which full fees apply for further absent days unless approved. In special circumstances, you may receive CCS for more than 42 absence days. Please discuss this with our Centre Director if you wish to look into this further. You may need to provide supporting documents. You can only use an absence day after your child has physically attended Little Pioneers ELC for the first time.

For further information visit:

[education.gov.au](http://education.gov.au)

or

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy>

**Please note:** The forms that you sign for the purposes of CCS are legal documents, and we are asked to remind you that giving false information is a criminal offence. It is your responsibility to notify the Government Services if your circumstances change.

### **Confidentiality and Records**

Little Pioneers ELC has a duty to keep adequate records about staff, parents and children in order to operate responsibly and legally. The school will protect the interests of the children, their parents and the staff including appropriate privacy and confidentiality. Archived records will be stored in a safe and secure manner in accordance with the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Please refer to our Privacy policies for further information.

### **National Quality Framework**

We are guided by the National Quality Framework. The framework is based on contemporary research and evidence of how children learn and develop. As part of the framework we are committed to continuous

improvement and reflective practices. Little Pioneers ELC also adheres to all relevant industry and workplace legislation.

**National Legislative Framework**

The National Legislative Framework is established through an applied laws system and consists of the:

- *Education and Care Services National Law*; and
- *Education and Care Services National Regulations*.

**National Quality Standard**

The *National Quality Standard* sets a national benchmark for the quality of education and care services. The *National Quality Standard* is divided into seven Quality Areas:

1. Educational program and practice.
2. Children's health and safety.
3. Physical environment.
4. Staffing arrangements.
5. Relationships with children.
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities.
7. Leadership and service management.

**National quality rating and assessment process**

We will be assessed and rated against each of the seven Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations and be given an overall rating. The rating and assessment process aims to drive continuous quality improvement at Services and provide families with better information for making choices about their children's education and care. Our service is yet to undergo an assessment, but will do so at some point.

**Quality Improvement Plan**

We, like all services, are required to develop and maintain a Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in relation to the seven quality areas. Our QIP will highlight our strengths, as well as areas we have identified as needing to be improved. For more information regarding the National Quality Framework, please speak to one of our educators or visit the website [www.acecqa.gov.au](http://www.acecqa.gov.au)

**Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)**

The Early Years Learning Framework is a National Framework for children birth to 5 years. Educators use the framework to develop learning programs that are responsive to children's interests, ideas, strengths and recognise that children learn through play.

The Framework has five learning outcomes. They are;

- 1) Children have a strong sense of identity
- 2) Children are connected 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

The Australian Government's *Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming* describes the principles, practices and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school.

[www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy\\_Agenda/Quality/Documents/EYLF\\_Ed\\_Guid\\_e.pdf](http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Policy_Agenda/Quality/Documents/EYLF_Ed_Guid_e.pdf)

The following is an extract from *Belonging, Being & Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia*.

#### **“A VISION FOR CHILDREN’S LEARNING”**

‘All children experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life. Fundamental to the framework is a view of children’s lives as characterised by *Belonging, Being and Becoming*. From before birth, children are connected to family, community, culture and place. The earliest development and learning takes place through these relationships, particularly within families, who are children’s first and most influential educators. As children participate in everyday life, they develop interests and construct their own identities and understandings of the world.’

#### **BELONGING**

Experiencing belonging – knowing where and with whom you belong – is integral to human existence. Children belong first to a family, a cultural group, a neighbourhood and a wider community. *Belonging* acknowledges children’s interdependence with others and the basis of relationships in defining identities. In early childhood, and throughout life, relationships are crucial to a sense of belonging. Belonging is central to being and becoming in that it shapes who children are and who they can become.

#### **BEING**

Childhood is a time to be, to seek and make meaning of the world. *Being* recognises the significance of the here and now in children’s lives. It is about the present and them knowing themselves, building and maintaining relationships with others, engaging with life’s joys and complexities, and meeting challenges in everyday life. The early childhood years are not solely preparation for the future but also about the present.

#### **BECOMING**

Children’s identities, knowledge, understandings, capacities, skills and relationships change during childhood. They are shaped by many different events and circumstances. *Becoming* reflects this process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as young children learn and grow. It emphasises learning to participate fully and actively in society.

#### **Arrival and Collection of Children**

Our primary concern is the welfare and safety of your child. We therefore request that you comply with the following requirements.

#### **Signing In and Out**

Families are required to sign their child in and out of Little Pioneers ELC at the time of arrival and departure. This procedure is a legal requirement in Australia. We are required to submit children’s exact arrival and departure times. This is also linked to families Child Care Subsidy.

Signing in and out is done at the door. Parents and guardians are required to sign in/out via their Xplor App which is located at the front door. When signing in, children must be taken directly to an educator, do not allow them to join in before connecting with staff. This is also a great opportunity to communicate with staff if required. The

same information is required when you sign your child out, please directly inform a staff member you are signing your child out at the time.

Signing children in and out also ensures children's safety in the event of an emergency.

**The following policy applies to all families.**

Only parents or persons nominated on the enrolment form may pick up/drop off the child. No child will be allowed to go with an adult unless they have been nominated or we have been notified in writing. If an unauthorised person arrives to collect your child, the child will not be released until your authorisation (preferably in writing) has been obtained.

**Late Collections**

If you are unavoidably detained and unable to collect your child at the agreed time, you must telephone us to advise us of your expected time of arrival. If you need to arrange for another person to collect your child, you must provide full details about this person to us. If you have not contacted us and your child has not been collected by the agreed collection time, we will attempt to telephone you, or if this is not successful, the emergency contact people listed on your child's enrolment form will be contacted to arrange for his/her immediate collection.

The service has a policy of charging a late fee of \$2 a minute per child, to parents who are late to collect their children. This fee is to cover the costs of the staff's overtime hours. Our policy requires that Crisis Care and the Department for Child Protection is contacted to advise them of the situation if a parent is more than 30 minutes late without explanation and no-one else can be contacted.

**Family Meetings:**

Family meetings are available upon request. Please speak to the ELC Team Leader and we will arrange a meeting time that is convenient to you.

**Centre Events:**

Our enthusiastic staff will be planning a number of events throughout the year for you to connect with your child at School. Please keep an eye on the notice board and the Xplor app to ensure you don't miss any exciting opportunities.

**Communication with Parents**

Our educators are extremely supportive of children and their parents. Both parents of the child will be treated equally.

Concerns can be discussed with your child's educator or the Centre Manager at any reasonable time. All information pertaining to your child will always be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Please note that a staff member may not be able to have a private meeting if they are focusing on educating. If you require a meeting in private, please book in a time.

Where an enrolled child is not living with both parents/guardians, or where disputes arise in relation to responsibility of the child the following will apply:

- Parental responsibility remains with both parents/guardians jointly and individually except where it is altered by an order of the Family Court of Australia. In the absence of such an order, the child will be

released to either parent/guardian who is an authorised person to collect the child on the enrolment form.

- Where a non-enrolling parent cites an Order of the Family Court giving him/herself lawful access to the child, the Centre Manager will contact the enrolling parent to confirm the existence of the order and seek their direction on how to respond to the non-enrolling parent. Staff will not try to interpret or act on any court order without the approval of the enrolling parent.
- The child will only be released into the care of the enrolling parent/guardian, or other person specifically authorised by the enrolling parent/guardian, except when Department for Child Protection or Police specifically direct otherwise under the provisions of the law.

### **Parking**

The school car parks can get busy during peak drop off and pick up periods (8:15am – 8:30am and from 2:40pm – 3:15pm). We ask that all families park in the **Top Car Park** during the busy periods and follow the road rules. The Village speed limit of 8kmph must be observed. Please be vigilant of children in this area, especially school children walking or riding themselves to and from school. Children should always be closely supervised by their parent/family member while in the car park and walk with an adult. Please refer to the PVS Drop Off/ Collection Zone information on the SkoolBag App for further clarification.

Please note that Kindy children cannot use the school Drop Off Zone. They must be directly taken to the room by their parent/guardian, signed in/out, and handed directly to a staff member.

### **Children's Safety on the Roads**

In the case of a parent or guardian arriving at school to collect their child in a visibly intoxicated or unfit state to drive, they will be encouraged to contact an alternative adult to drive them and the child home, or we will offer to call a taxi at the expense of the parent/guardian.

**Where human life is at risk, any part of the above may not be able to be complied with and in such circumstances, the police will be immediately informed. Our staff will follow the service's Emergency Action Plan.**

### **Termination of Care**

In extreme circumstances it may be necessary to terminate a child's care. Exclusion of children from our school will only occur after all other avenues of communication and support have been exhausted and when:

- Professional advice confirms a child is in psychological danger as a result of an unusually prolonged inability to settle into care away from the parent.
- A child puts other children at risk through inappropriate behaviour.
- The parent continually fails to observe the hours of operation and/or fails to pay the required fee.

### **Family Grievance and Complaint Procedures**

We welcome all parent feedback, including grievances. All concerns are dealt with in a prompt, positive and fair manner.

If a parent has a concern about any aspect our service, please discuss the issue with the relevant staff member or with the Centre Manager. If you feel the problem is not being resolved, please read the PVS Concerns and Complaints policy found on our school website and follow the guidelines. Parents are also entitled to direct their

complaints to the Education and Care Regulatory Unit Boorloo Campus. Level 7, 130 Stirling Street, Perth WA 6000.  
Mailing Address: Locked Bag 5000 Fremantle WA 6959Ph. (08) 65518333.

### **Settling Your Child into Kindy**

We will support your child with settling into the new environments as well as support them during transitions. We believe that a well-developed settling experience creates a strong relationship between School and home. We understand that each child's experience during settling in is very individual. Our educators work carefully with each child to ensure their transition is a smooth and positive one.

For some children separating from family is a new experience. Often short visits before commencing care can ease the child into our routine. It is important that you talk to your child about starting school and what they can expect prior to visiting. Some children are happy to separate as soon as they see the equipment and resources, while others may be reluctant and shy. When you are ready to leave, tell your child you are leaving and that you will be back later in the day. Please do not leave without saying goodbye, as this may cause distress for your child.

### **Arrival Routine**

Our service opens at 7:00am each day. We remind families that we are legally unable to accept children until this time. Please ensure you hand over your child to an educator and never leave your child alone in the yard or room without an educator present.

On arrival, please sign in and then assist your child in putting their own bag away. On arrival children are to place their lunch boxes in the tubs out the front of the classroom, place their bag on their name hook, and move to the set activity. 7.00am – 8.30am is quiet activity time. When leaving, we always suggest saying goodbye to your child rather than sneaking out. If parents sneak out, children can become distressed as they can think their parent has disappeared and might not come back. Your child's educator will always be on hand to help you and your child say goodbye.

If children become distressed, or are unable to settle, please be rest assured we will contact you. Our educators will always tell you honestly how your child is. Be aware that some children settle quickly and others take longer or may be distressed by group care. Our educators will assess your child's emotional needs and discuss this with you. Regular attendance also helps a child to settle.



**Our Learning Program**

Children need plenty of time to explore alongside adults who respect a child's interests and how they learn. Both the EYLF (Early Years Learning Framework) and the NQS (National Quality Standards) support putting children's interests at the centre of the program. At Little Pioneers ELC, we encourage child-initiated experiences, where children use their personal choice to direct their own learning and exploration as well as the importance of school readiness.

For young children, learning often occurs through play. This is considered best practice in early childhood as it is developmentally appropriate. In the ELC, we truly value play and the physical, social, emotional and cognitive benefits it provides children. We facilitate many types of play including:

- Dramatic (role playing e.g. pretending to be doctors, using the play-kitchen)
- Sensory/manipulative (e.g. playdough, puzzles)
- Exploratory (e.g. using magnifying glasses to look at insects, treasure hunts)
- Physical (e.g. obstacle courses, running, playing with balls)
- Rule-based (board games, circle games, outdoor games)

Due to this focus on child-led play, you may discover that your child will not bring 'work' home every day. Please do not take this to mean that your child is not learning. Children are constantly learning through their play and interactions. We also find that some children simply are not interested in creating artwork or doing craft. We will never force children to do these activities, as we value the choices they make. Please take time to have a look at our curriculum and read updates on Xplor to see what the children are currently learning.

**The role of the Early Year's Educators**

Our educators provide a balance between child-led, child-initiated, and educator supported learning and recognise spontaneous teachable moments as they occur. We also believe our role involves encouraging children to share in the decision making and direction of what will happen during the day and to ensure they are ready for life at Pioneer Village School.

You will find your child's curriculum displayed in their room. We invite you to have input into its development. We love to hear what is happening at home or the highlights from your weekend so we can include these ideas and expand upon them in our curriculum; forming a strong link from home to school for children.

**Curriculum**

As part of the NQF (National Quality Framework), our educators follow the EYLF. The curriculum outlines the planned experiences on offer for your child. These experiences have been carefully planned to reflect each child's needs and interests as well as meeting their developmental requirements.

We offer a balanced program that provides opportunities to participate in; both indoor and outdoor learning experiences, quiet and active times, individual, small and large group play, as well as spontaneous play. The program is child centred, and allows children to experience a wide choice of materials and pursue their own interests.

Families are able to access their child's learning on the Xplor app and feedback and/or comment can be left by families.

Our environments reflect a holistic approach to learning and provide endless opportunities and possibilities that support children's wellbeing and education. Our classrooms and resources are arranged in the environment to empower and support children to actively engage in co-constructing their journey. Our physical environment and the atmosphere are designed to support and enhance children's learning.

### Routines

Everything that happens at school throughout the day is based around the routines of the children. Routines such as mealtimes, toileting and handwashing are all occasions that are rich in social opportunity and building life skills. Routines take into account the developmental needs of individual children, children's attendance patterns, climate and physical environment, the numbers and ages of children within a given group, children with additional needs, new children entering the group, as well as parents' expectations.

### Meals/Nutrition

Meals form a significant part of the daily routine. Meal times will provide positive learning experiences for children who will be encouraged to develop healthy eating habits. Parents/Guardians will be expected to provide lunch and snacks to meet each child's nutritional needs. **Due to allergies, we request that NO nut or nut products are brought to school.**

Please make sure that any food allergies have been communicated with an ASCIA allergy plan. If your child has a particular dislike, dietary need or cultural consideration involving food – please communicate this on your enrolment form, and let staff know.

Children will have the opportunity to be involved in food preparation as part of the program. Through this, children learn life skills on healthy eating, where food comes from, how to prepare food and much more.

Children's learning is supported during meal times by providing them with opportunities to:

- view meal times as social occasions by sitting together
- discuss nutrition and healthy eating
- use table manners

### What to bring

When your child is attending the ELC they will require:

- A bottle of **water (no juice or cordial)** labelled with your child's name.
- A healthy lunch and snacks in a lunch box with your child's name.
- A labelled legionnaire or bucket hat (please no caps) which can be purchased at Reception.
- Labelled Sun cream if your child isn't able to use the provided brand and labelled tube of nappy cream if your child isn't toilet trained.
- A change of clothes (several sets if toilet training).
- Zip lock bag/ wet bag to place soiled clothes in.

**Sleep Time**

Sleep and rest times are another daily routine for the children. Children requiring a sleep will be provided with an opportunity for rest after lunch or as required throughout the day. We provide mattresses and linen for children. Linen will be stored throughout the week in a labelled bag and washed regularly. Linen will only be sent home to be laundered if soiled. Please bring alongside any pillows or comfort items your child requires for sleep.

Educators will discuss your child's current sleep patterns during orientation. We adhere to SIDS guidelines. If your child doesn't nap, they will still be encouraged to rest.

**Nappies, Pull-Ups and Toilet Training**

Our educators treat children with respect and follow the wishes of the enrolling parent in relation to toileting. Children begin toilet training when they are developmentally ready, and our staff work with parents to make this a positive experience for children. We have child's size toilets and do not use potties. If your child has an accident on their sleeping linen, we kindly ask that these please be washed and returned the next time your child attends care. We ask that parent's supply a zip lock bag or own wet bag for such accidents.

Your child should arrive at school in their own clean Pull-Up and have clean and labelled disposable Pull-Ups in their bag. We have a supply for emergencies. We ask that families please supply a tub or tube of nappy rash cream for their child with their name on it to be left with us if it is required by their child.

In the event that a child soils their underwear and where it would be unhygienic to keep the item, we may dispose of them. If you would like a replacement pair, please inform the Centre Manager. If you would like us to keep soiled underwear, please inform educators and alternate arrangements of storing will be made. Please understand that we are unable to wash or clean soiled clothing.

**Little Pioneers Early Learning Centre does not launder nappies/Pull-Ups on site and asks that children wear disposables if they are not yet fully toilet trained.**

**What Should Your Child Wear?**

Pioneer Village School polos and shorts are available for purchase at the office. Sizes start from size 2. Should these sizes be too big for your child they may wear a navy alternate such as leggings, shorts, tee-shirt. It is important that children are dressed in comfortable clothes that do not restrict their enjoyment or participation. We are a Sun Smart School and therefore shirts that cover the shoulders, have collars and sleeves, and longer style skirts, leggings and shorts, are most suitable.

Please be aware that children will get grubby with paint, mud, sand or glue. We do provide aprons, but clothes can still get stained. Children need to have a pair of shoes (not thongs) and a large brimmed hat (no caps) **both clearly marked with their name**. We sell red wide brimmed hats at the office.

Please also provide an extra set of clothes in your child's bag to change into, should the need arise. Clothes that assist your child to self-toilet are beneficial for their own self confidence. We recommend that at least two pairs of spare underwear are included.

School bags are to be purchased at Reception and need to be clearly named. A trinket or interesting bag label can help children learn to identify their own belongings easily. All personal items should be clearly labelled with your child's name. This helps to minimise loss of items.

**Personal Toys**

We understand that many children would like to bring toys to school. However, 'sharing' these with other children can be a difficult concept for children to grasp. Experience has taught us that is better to leave personal toys at home and ask that you support and encourage this. Great distress is caused to children by their own toys being lost, broken or played with by other children. Whilst care is taken, we take no responsibility for broken or lost toys that do not belong to us.

Children are however welcome to bring a security/comfort toy. Please ensure these items are clearly labelled with the child's name.

Sometimes children accidentally put school toys into their bags and take them home. Please return these toys to us on your next visit.

**Special Events**

Special events which happen during the year can provide excellent learning and socialising opportunities for the children. We endeavour to reflect the cultural differences of all families in our programming. We will celebrate special events with the children that reflect the cultural heritage and ethnic origins of children.

**Birthdays**

Birthdays are a special time in the lives of young children! To help celebrate your child's birthday, we will encourage classmates to sing, and wish your child a Happy Birthday in a special mat session. Due to allergies, we cannot accept food for birthdays. This includes cakes and cupcakes.

**Supervision**

Safety is our primary concern; therefore, supervision is of the utmost importance. To ensure that children's play is supervised effectively, educators will:

- be engaged, understand and anticipate the needs of individual children
- be active participants in play where appropriate
- encourage child choice
- extend and scaffold children's play
- reinforce safe play practices with the children

**The staff: child ratios contained within the Education and Care Services National Regulations will be strictly adhered to by the service. 3-6 years 1:10**

**Guiding Children's Behaviour**

In order for our program to be successful, we must all work together in partnership to model and support appropriate behaviour. All children have the right to feel safe and secure. Children also have the right to receive care and attention from educators equally while attending. Educators will encourage children to speak about any concerns they may have.

Educators provide a secure, nurturing and stimulating environment, which encourages children to co-operate, enhances their self-esteem and encourages their ability to interact with others. Educators will build relationships with children based on mutual respect and trust. Where a child continues to display behaviour that is of concern parents/guardians will be consulted and asked to work with the educators to ensure consistent expectations.

You are encouraged to discuss your child's behaviour with the educators to ensure consistent behaviour expectations between home and the service. Behaviour expectations and limits will always be clearly expressed in positive terms and reinforced consistently in a developmentally appropriate way.

We have expectations and limits in the room that children will be involved in setting and implementing. Educators support children to ensure these limits are followed and valued.

Developing a supportive relationship with the children encourages them to learn skills in self-regulation. If children consistently displays unacceptable behaviour, a Team leader/Educational Leader will ensure:

- The expectations of the child's behaviour are realistic and appropriate to their developmental level.
- The child understands the expectations and limits.
- There is no conflict between school and home expectations.
- The child's needs are being met.
- The child has no impediments which may cause the unacceptable behaviour e.g. poor hearing, communication difficulties, illness or emotional distress.
- The child is not copying observed behaviour.
- Events at the service have not encouraged the behaviour.
- Consequences of the behaviour do not encourage it to persist.
- Strategies are consistently followed by all educators in contact with the child.

### **Alternative care**

If after the child has been given every chance to respond positively and parents have been provided with written responses regarding the strategies used to improve their child's behaviour, and if and all methods fail to result in a positive change, the Centre Manager will discuss alternative care with the parent, in consideration of the health and safety of other children.

### **Health and Safety Issues**

#### **Hygiene**

In group care situations, one of the most troublesome problem is controlling the spread of infections among the children and educators.

The application of universal hygiene procedures will be followed at the service at all times to control the spread of infection. Educators model a high level of personal hygiene at all times and place emphasis on the children learning and understanding why hygiene is important. Hand washing is central to this system and children will be introduced to washing their hands before all clean tasks (i.e. meals) and after all dirty tasks (i.e. after using the toilet) as soon as they are developmentally ready. We ask that parents wash their children's hands prior to and on arrival and departure each day.

#### **Head Lice**

Please note that;

- Educators/staff will examine children's head to look for eggs (nits) or lice near the scalp if they are scratching.

- Educators will ensure that a child suspected of being infested does not have close contact with other children for the rest of the day, and may be requested to wear a hat.
- When families come to collect their child they will be asked to commence treatment and keep the child away from the service until the day after appropriate treatment has been started, and the lice are removed. If they begin treatment prior to the next day exclusion is not necessary.
- The child may return to School the day after treatment has commenced and all live head lice have been removed. A few remaining eggs are not a reason for continued exclusion. However, the family must continue treatment until all eggs and hatchlings have been removed, usually over the following ten days.
- When an incident of head lice occurs at Little Pioneers, a notice will be displayed and/or electronic communication will be used to advise parents to check their children. A letter will be given to all parents advising how to check hair effectively using hair conditioner. Children with long hair must have their hair tied back to reduce the chance of reinfestation.

### Immunisation

Children who are **not** immunised **cannot** be enrolled into Little Pioneers **unless** they meet the guidelines set out by the Government, and have the required supporting documentation which must be provided to us.

Immunisation certificates (from MyGov accounts) must be provided upon enrolment. Parents must keep their children up to date with immunisations as the Government requires we collect another copy prior to the start of 4 Year Old Kindergarten.

Children who are not immunised (due to a Government approved exemption) will be excluded from care during outbreaks of some infectious diseases in accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines (guidelines can be obtained from the office), even if the child is well. This is to limit the spread of infection and protect unimmunised children.

Immunisation of children who attend the service will help to limit the spread of infection. We encourage parents to immunise their children against all diseases appropriate to the child's age. Please note that it is a legal requirement that the service have an AIR statement for all enrolled children that is no more than 2 months old at the time of enrolment.

### Exclusion

As a protection for all children and educators, children with infectious diseases will be excluded from Little Pioneers in accordance with the National Health & Medical Research Council exclusion guidelines. A clearance certificate from your child's doctor is required to pronounce the child fit for child care before your child can return to School.

If your child is unwell at home, please do not bring him/her to school. Fevers, vomiting, diarrhoea or unexplained rashes are some of the indications that a child should not be attending and need to stay home. Children who have vomited or had diarrhoea must be kept at home for a minimum of 24 hours from their last movement.

The Centre Manager or Responsible Person on duty may ask you to take your child home and refuse to accept your child into care if they have reason to believe your child is not well enough to attend. They may also call during the day and ask you to collect your child if they are unwell.

### Unwell children at School

We aim to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children, staff and families therefore, we are not able to care for children who are ill. If your child becomes unwell while in our care you will be contacted and asked to collect your child. If you are unable to collect, the person that you have nominated as your emergency contact will be called and asked to collect your child. Your child will be made as comfortable as possible and monitored while waiting to be collected.

Where we have asked you to seek medical advice regarding your child's health, you will be given details about your child's symptoms and information of any illnesses that have recently affected children and/or staff at School to relay to the doctor. The doctor will need to provide a Clearance Certificate that pronounces your child fit for care before they can return. It is important that we be notified if your child has become ill with a communicable disease so families can be notified.

### Medication and Medical Conditions

If your child has a medical condition, requiring or not requiring medication or treatment, staff must be aware. This can be done by filling out a Medical Condition Form. If your child's condition requires staff training, please contact the Approved Provider to discuss how we can accommodate your child. If a staff member has specific training for your child, and they are absent, and a suitably trained replacement cannot be found, we may ask you to keep your child home.

Wherever possible, medication should be administered by parents/guardians at home. However, we are aware that this is not always feasible. Therefore, to ensure children's safety and welfare, the giving of medication at the service will be strictly monitored. Parents/guardians should consider whether the child who requires medication is well enough to be at School and to keep the child home if they are unwell.

**You must never leave medication in your child's bag.** You must inform an educator and complete an Authority to Give Medication Form. At the end of the day, you must collect the medication from educators.

**Where medication is needed for long term treatment (e.g. Asthma, epilepsy, ADHD), or your child has severe allergies (anaphylaxis) the service will need you and your child's doctor to complete a 'Risk Minimisation Plan', and/or 'ASCIA Emergency Action Plan'. Children will not be permitted to attend without their Risk Minimisation Plan and Emergency Action Plan being supplied to the service and without their required medication including asthma inhalers/Epi Pen on site.**

Medication will only be administered by educators if:

1. It is prescribed by a doctor and has the original pharmaceutical label detailing the child's name, the name of the medication, the required dosage, the date of dispensing and the expiry date; OR
2. It is still in the original pharmaceutical packaging (i.e. Non-prescription medication), indicating the name of the medication, the dosage, age appropriateness and the expiry date; AND
3. The parent has completed and signed the Medication Form to give us authority to administer.

If a child is receiving medication at home but not at School, we should still be notified of the purpose of the medication, its nature and the possible side effects it may have on the child while they are with us.

### Occupational Safety and Health

We are concerned with protecting the health and safety of children and educators at School.

In the interest of Occupational Safety and Health and the well-being of the children, the whole of Pioneer Village School including Little Pioneers is a smoke-free zone. This includes all indoor and outdoor play areas and anywhere that is within sight of the children. Parents are expected to adhere to this. Educators are vigilant to identify and remove any hazards that may create a risk to children or themselves. All equipment, toys and play areas are checked regularly to ensure they are clean and safe for children's use. *If you identify hazard, please inform an educator immediately.*

### **Sun Protection**

To ensure all children are protected from skin damage caused by harmful ultra-violet rays of the sun, the following applies: Children will be required to wear a hat which protects the face, neck and ears whenever outside i.e. legionnaire style or broad brimmed hats (no caps) and will be encouraged to use available areas of shade during outdoor activities. We ask that families provide a roll on sunscreen, minimum SPF 30+ for children to use. This aids in supporting children's self-help skills. The service has SPF 30+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen which will be provided for children that have not supplied their own. All sunscreen is applied 20 minutes before going outside when the UV reaches 3 or above. Outdoor play will not occur in extreme heat or at the hottest time of the day. Educators will act as role models, by wearing hats, applying sunscreen and seeking the shade wherever possible. If your child does not have a hat, they can use a clean spare one, which we then request you wash and return.

### **Emergency Procedures**

Our evacuation plans are reviewed regularly by an external agency and are displayed at all exit points. Emergency drills and lock-downs are practised different times and on different days to ensure all children and staff have the opportunity to participate. Evacuation procedures are displayed on the notice board. Parents are asked to familiarise themselves with these procedures. We also take part in whole school Emergency Drills once a term.

If a staff member is unwell and hasn't been replaced when your child arrives and the staffing ratio is exceeded, we will ask you to wait with your child until the relief educator arrives. If a staff member has to leave in an emergency situation, we may call you to collect your child.

### **Child Protection**

We believe that every child has the right to feel protected and safe and that it is our duty to respect that right. Our Child Protection Policies have been developed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children within our School. Our educators undertake regular training on child protection.

### **Accidents**

Despite every precaution, accidents will occur at the service from time to time. If your child has an accident or becomes injured while they are at School, our educators will ensure that an accident report is completed and provided to families on arrival. Family members will be contacted immediately of any injury above the shoulders, or that requires medical attention. For all other injuries families will be informed when they collect their child. We will ask you to sign an incident form to ensure that you have been fully informed about the incident and what action was taken to care for your child.

We have a fully stocked first aid cupboard and at least one educator is on duty who holds a current first aid qualification including Asthma and Anaphylaxis training. Our staff hold current First Aid, Asthma, and Anaphylaxis Qualifications.

**Lost Property**

Any items brought to School by the child should be clearly marked with the child's name, especially items of clothing. Please ask the Little Pioneers Educators for any misplaced items.

**Thank you for taking the time to read our Parent Handbook.  
Please speak with the Centre Manager if you require any further information.**

**Further Information**

Phone: (08) 9399 6999  
Email: [reception@pvs.wa.edu.au](mailto:reception@pvs.wa.edu.au)  
Website: [www.pvs.wa.edu.au](http://www.pvs.wa.edu.au)

Pioneer Village School  
7 Albany Highway, Armadale WA 6112  
PO Box 409, Armadale WA 6992