



A Learning Community

# Preschool Parent Handbook 2021



*Namadgi Preschool is a place of wonder and learning for all of us*

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## School Overview

The Mission of staff at Namadgi School is to be a powerful force for change in the lives of our children and young people. Our Namadgi school community values diversity and our staff nurture social, cultural and academic differences. The Namadgi School P-10 setting means that students can grow and learn with their cohort from Preschool entry to Year 10 Graduation.

The core beliefs of Namadgi School centre around the understanding that all children can learn. Whilst this will look different from student to student our central belief is that through personalised learning approaches and differentiated classroom practice, all students will get what they need to thrive and grow at Namadgi.

We believe that the use of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning Skills, such as collaboration, problem solving, presentation skills, critical thinking, creativity, teamwork, digital literacy skills and exposure to learning a second language are core principles to incorporate into regular school practice from Preschool to Year 10. We believe that through these guiding principles our students will graduate ready to engage with the broader community and global society.

## Our School Vision and Values

At Namadgi P-10 School our vision is to be innovative and responsive to the contemporary world by providing students with access to quality 21<sup>st</sup> Century teaching and learning practices. We strive to create a collaborative culture that fosters educational partnerships throughout our community. Our staff are passionate about their professional knowledge and view learning as accessible and achievable for all.

The Namadgi School values include Learning, Caring, Respect and Positive Attitude. Our staff and community have helped shape these values and they are explicitly taught and recognised through pastoral care classes, award systems and the work of our executive team. Namadgi School is a Positive Behaviours for Learning (PBL) school. Our Positive Behaviour for Learning framework ensures students, staff, families and the school community all contribute to create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

## Welcome to Namadgi School

The first day of preschool is an exciting milestone in your child's life. Your child is embarking on a journey that will lead them on many roads of discovery and learning. We are here to help make your child's preschool year a rich experience and we look forward to an exciting year in partnership with you.

### Staff

- Principal: Tiffany Mahon
- Deputy Principal: Liz Baker-Matterson
- Executive Teacher: Anita McCarthy
- O'Halloran Preschool contact: 6142 0900
- School Phone number: 6142 0900
- School email: [info@namadgi.act.edu.au](mailto:info@namadgi.act.edu.au)

### ACT Education Contact Details

- 13 2281 (6207 0494) or [www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au)

# Namadgi Preschool Philosophy



We believe all children are curious, capable learners with ideas, strengths and voices. You will see unique children who love learning and taking risks, they naturally question, investigate, choose and explore the world around them.



We respect families as children's first educators, and we value the diverse qualities they bring to our Namadgi Preschool community. You will see a welcoming, supportive and inclusive environment with open communication.



We know that what happens for children in their early years is of critical importance to their lifelong wellbeing. You will see educators working together, striving for excellence in practice, cultivating a culture of inquiry and critical reflection, paying attention, documenting, and sharing learning, and being valued for their work with each child and family.



We understand quality learning happens in the context of secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships. You will see rich interactions, sustained conversations, irresistible environments, confident children immersed in play and acquiring social responsibility for the world around them.



We acknowledge the First Australians: The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples who have been taking care of this land for thousands and thousands and thousands of years. You will see respect for land and culture in our daily practice and a pursuit of further knowledge, understanding and connection.



# DAY to DAY - Operational



## Hours of Operation

Preschool classes operate from 9am to 3pm on Monday and Tuesday and every odd week Wednesday: or Thursday and Friday, and every even week Wednesday.

Regular attendance is important as this allows the children to settle into routines and establish themselves as part of the group.

**Drop off and pick up, please shut the gate after you go through.**

## Arrival

When you are dropping off your child for the start of the session, it is important that you bring your child to the classroom and wait until a staff member opens the door at 9am. Under no circumstances should you leave your child alone in the playground before the session. Educators are not responsible for your child until the session commences at 9am.

On arrival, please assist your child to:

- Place their bag in a locker
- Place their lunch box and drink bottle on the trolley provided
- Wash their hands

then,

- Check the window displays and notice board for any important information
- Stay for as long as you like and join in with your child

## Collecting your child at the end of the session

Please wait outside the classroom when you arrive as your child will be sent out to you. In accordance with the National Quality Standard, collection of children must be by a parent or authorised nominee over 16 years of age.

If any person who is not included on the enrolment form or authorised nominee form is collecting your child, a written note is required. If educators do not know the person picking up your child, they will be asked to show photographic identification (e.g. driver's license) before your child will be released into their care. In case of emergency you can phone through an authorisation, which must be signed when next at preschool.

When collecting your child:

- Check your child's "home pocket"
- Assist your child to wash their hands
- Help your child collect any belongings, artwork, etc.

## Separation from your child

Many children settle quickly and happily into preschool. Others find it more difficult. For some children, separation from parents or carers in the mornings can be quite stressful and worrying in the first few weeks. There are some simple ways to make that separation easier for your child and for you.



- Always speak positively about preschool and do not indicate to your child that you are worried about separation, even if this is true.
- There is no necessity for you to leave preschool quickly in the morning. Wait until you are ready, and you feel your child is settled. Just let an educator know that you intend to stay for a while and join in the activities if you wish.
- Always say goodbye when you leave and reassure your child that you will be back to collect him or her when it's time to go home. It is better to tell your child that you are leaving than to sneak away, even if your child will be upset.
- If you know your child will be upset when you leave, please let the educators know when you are ready to depart. Once you have said goodbye, depart promptly with a smile and a confident wave and, no matter how distressed your child sounds, keep walking. We will stay with your child. Be assured we will give you a call if your child doesn't settle.
- Most children are easily distracted by an activity and recover quickly. However, do not hesitate to ring after 20 minutes to check that your child has settled.

Allow these strategies time to work. If separation is still a problem after a few weeks, then please speak to the educator to discuss some other options.

## What do I need for my child for preschool?

A separate checklist is also provided with the preschool pack.

- A school uniform
- A large backpack – a size big enough to fit all your child's belongings (including lunch box, jumper, spare clothes and a library bag)
- A labelled library bag – to transport borrowed library books
- A labelled lunch box – filled with healthy food
- A labelled drink bottle – filled with water
- A labelled school hat with a brim
- A labelled coat for cold weather
- A full set of labelled spare clothes (including socks)

## Personal Belongings

We encourage children to **'leave home toys at home'**. Toys and other personal belongings can be easily lost or broken at preschool. They can also be the cause of unnecessary conflict between children. Children are welcome to bring in 'special' items to talk about as part of our oral language program, these will then be placed away for the rest of the day. We take all care, but no responsibility for the safe keeping of these special items.

## Food

### Lunches and Snacks



Provision is made for children to have two eating times during their preschool sessions. Parents/carers are urged to supply children with healthy foods which will enable the educators to assist in the development of lifelong healthy eating habits. Promoting a healthy lifestyle is an important part of our program. All children will need their own drink bottle with WATER ONLY. We discourage chips, chocolates, pre-packaged food, lollies and cordial.

It is against health regulations for educators to heat children's lunches.

### Food safety tips for homemade snacks and lunches

Healthy snacks and lunches are important for children and help with their concentration and learning. School lunches however spoil quickly, especially in the summer heat. Parents and care givers are reminded of a few simple safety rules to prepare safe and healthy school lunches and avoid the growth and contamination of food poisoning bacteria.

Because food is normally stored in a child's lunch box for several hours, the lunch box needs to be kept cool. This can be done by:

- Choosing an insulated lunch box or one with a freezer pack, or include a wrapped frozen water bottle to keep the lunch box cool
- Perishable foods such as dairy products, eggs and sliced meats should be kept cool and eaten within about four hours of preparation. Don't pack these foods if just cooked; first cool in the fridge overnight
- If including leftover meals such as meats, pasta and rice dishes, ensure you pack an ice block into the lunch box
- Healthy drinks, such as water and milk can be frozen overnight and then stored in your child's lunch box, helping to keep it cold

Educators will ensure that children keep their lunches in cool places away from direct sunlight and other heat sources that facilitate the development of food poisoning bacteria.

### Canteen

Preschool children will only use the canteen on designated special occasions. We will let you know in advance of these days.

### Birthdays

Birthdays are celebrated at preschool with a "birthday story". Please fill out the form provided and return it to your child's teacher. Your child is welcome to bring cupcakes or a healthy treat to share with the other children. Please ensure there is enough to share with all the children in the class on that day. If your child has a food allergy, we encourage you to send along appropriate treats your child can eat on other birthdays. We generally store them in the freezer until required.

## Clothing - Uniform

Namadgi School has a uniform for preschool. Students will need to wear a school hat, shirt, jumper and pants. There is a dress available. All uniform items can be purchased from our P&C uniform shop which is open Tuesday mornings from 8.45am - 9.15am and Thursday afternoons 2.45pm-3.15pm. Please **label all items** of clothing and pack spare underwear and suitable clothing in case of a change in the weather or for after extremely messy play.

Children often leave toileting to the last minute and trying to undo difficult belts and buttons can cause accidents. Please dress your child appropriately so that they feel confident to participate in all the challenges provided throughout the session. The children will be challenging themselves on the climbing equipment so sensible closed footwear, is essential. Thongs, gumboots and long dresses or skirts can be dangerous.



## Sun Protection Policy

Namadgi School enforces SunSmart the Sun Cancer Council Protection Policy. All children must wear a broad brimmed hat at preschool. If your child comes to school without a hat, we will ask them to play in the shade. Leaving a spare hat, clearly labelled, in your child's home pocket is a good idea. Children are not required to wear a hat in June and July due to the reduced UV rating in Canberra over these months. Please ensure that cords on hats are detachable in compliance with Directorate regulations. The cord must be designed to detach under minimal strain, or remove the cord altogether.



Please apply sunscreen to your child before attending each session, except June/July. Educators can assist children to reapply their own sunscreen during the day.

## Library – Wednesday is Library Day

Children have the opportunity to borrow books from the preschool library. The library book should be kept in a library bag whenever it is not being read. If books are damaged please return them to a staff member to be repaired.

## Hygiene Procedures

Educators, children and volunteers must adhere to the hand washing procedures.

All children must wash their hands:

- On arrival
- Before and after eating or touching food
- After toileting
- After blowing their nose and wiping tears and dribbles
- Open sores must be covered

# CURRICULUM

## Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) has been developed to ensure your child receives quality education programs in their early childhood setting. This is a vital time for them to learn and develop. Research and ongoing documentation of children's development informs us that the preschool years lay the foundation for success in future learning.

The framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life. To access this framework, go to:

<http://www.deewr.gov.au/Earlychildhood/Programs/EarlyChildhoodEducation/Pages/default.aspx>

The EYLF is a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to five years. They will use the Framework in partnership with families, the children's first and most influential educators, to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of *belonging, being and becoming*.

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they belong because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- **Being** is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be' – time to play, try new things and have fun.
- **Becoming** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

## Participation in preschool activities

Families are encouraged to share their special skills, interests and diverse family cultures with the preschool.

Families are encouraged to participate in social activities to enable families to meet each other and form a sense of belonging to the school.

Families can help in the following ways

- Sharing knowledge and expertise of craft, cooking, music, storytelling, job skills, etc.
- Participating in the daily program
- Attending excursions
- Working bees in the garden etc.
- Joining the Namadgi School Parent and Citizens Association
- Becoming involved with policy development
- Assisting to set up learning experiences and in the creation of resources

## Excursions

Excursions are part of the educational program at Namadgi Preschool. We go on regular local walks to explore the environment. When other excursions are arranged or children use any form of transport, parents will be advised in advance and asked to give permission, in writing, for the child to participate.

## **Child Welfare**

At Namadgi School we value everyone as an individual and acknowledge we all have the special qualities that make us who we are. It is important that students are treated with respect and we value the uniqueness each child brings to the school. We provide a supportive, welcoming and culturally inclusive educational environment where students feel safe and happy. The preschool has an 'Interactions with children' policy that outlines the strategies for building relationships and ensuring children's wellbeing.

## **Communication with educators**

Our school recognises the importance of a positive parent/educator relationship. We encourage:

- Sharing knowledge to enhance the growth and development of your child
- Developing positive relationships with families that are based on mutual trust and open communication
- Developing a sense of belonging to the preschool for the children, parents and educators

Namadgi preschool uses the digital communication and documentation tool SeeSaw. SeeSaw is a secure online learning and development program in which families can share ideas, knowledge of the child, and aspirations with educators.

Important notices are placed on SeeSaw and the windows or noticeboards outside the classrooms. School newsletters are produced fortnightly and are emailed to your nominated email address with information about what is happening in the school.

Parent interviews are held prior to the commencement of preschool and throughout the year. You can arrange a meeting with the teacher any time throughout the year.

Teachers appreciate the opportunity to talk with parents and carers both informally and in formal situations. This ensures valuable insights and understandings can be appreciated about a child's individual development journey. We encourage families to communicate freely with educators so that minor problems do not become major ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask for an appointment to meet with the educator. Open communication and mutual cooperation are keys to a successful education.

Every child has a "home pocket" in which we will place your child's work and notices. These pockets are outside the classroom and should be cleared at the end of every session.

## **Transition**

Your child is a member of the Namadgi School community. By enrolling your child into our preschool unit your child will automatically be enrolled into kindergarten in our school. To ensure the transition from preschool to kindergarten is successful we have implemented a transition program for our children. This involves activities throughout the year with more formalised transition activities during term 4.

For more information about this topic please follow the link to this website for some handy hints:

Starting School – a guide for parents

[https://www.education.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1028543/Starting-School-Guide-For-Parents-2018-2019\\_WEB.pdf](https://www.education.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1028543/Starting-School-Guide-For-Parents-2018-2019_WEB.pdf)

## **ADMINISTRATION / GOVERNANCE**

### **Medical conditions and management**

If your child has a medical condition it is a requirement that a medical action plan be completed and returned to the school prior to commencement. If required, educators will collaboratively complete a medical conditions risk minimisation and communication plan to minimise medical incidents in the preschool setting.

### **Immunisation**

The ACT Health Directorate advises that all children attending school in the ACT should be immunised against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and HIB (Haemophilus influenza type b). We would also ask that you check your child's present immunisation status to see whether it is complete for his/her age. ACT Public Health regulations require schools to request proof of up-to-date immunisation when enrolling. Failure to provide this may result in your child being excluded from school should an outbreak of an infectious disease occur. A copy of exclusion periods for students with infectious diseases is available. Parents are asked to adhere closely to these requirements unless medical advice to the contrary is provided in writing.

### **Illness and Accidents**

It is important that sick children are kept at home for their own comfort as well as the comfort of other children and educators. If a child becomes ill or is injured at school appropriate first aid will be given and if necessary, parents will be notified and asked to take their child home. If emergency treatment is required parents will be notified immediately and the child will be transferred by ambulance to hospital. In such cases ambulance services and treatments are free. All students who have an ongoing condition (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) must have a treatment plan completed by parents and their GP and kept on file at the school. Medical Plan proformas are available from the Administration office or from preschool. Please note that your child cannot start at preschool till these forms are completed.

**Exclusion periods** for infectious diseases are stated in the ACT Immunisation Requirements Booklet.

If a child is to take any medicine while at school, an Authority to Administer Medication form, providing written dosage instructions, must be completed and medicine must be left with staff. Information on a child's health status e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, should be given on enrolment or on diagnosis.

Please note NO over the counter medicines can be administered without written approval from a doctor.

## **Head lice**

Head lice are extremely contagious but easily eradicated. Children with either eggs or live lice will be excluded from school until treatment is undertaken. Please report any cases of head lice to the School Office.

It is recommended that you check your child's hair regularly as early detection will minimise the problem. Follow these steps for preventative checks:

- Comb inexpensive hair conditioner on to dry, brushed (detangled) hair. This makes it difficult for lice to grip the hair or move around
- Wipe the conditioner from the comb onto a paper towel or tissue and check for lice and eggs
- If lice or eggs are found, the child should be treated

Additional information is available from a chemist.

## **Contribution to decision making**

Families are welcome to contribute to the decision-making procedures of the school through the School Board or P&C Association.

## **School Board**

Each government school in the ACT is administered by a school board whose membership comprise the school principal, two elected staff members, three elected members of the parent body and a nominee of the ACT Education and Training Directorate. Elected members normally serve for a two-year period.

The Board is the policy-making body of the school. Its major functions are to:

- Determine the educational policies to be implemented at the School
- Assess, from time to time, the needs of the School in relation to the provision of buildings and facilities, equipment, funds and teachers and other staff, and make recommendations to the Executive Director (of the Education Directorate) with respect to the meeting of those needs
- Determine the purposes for which the funds made available for the School are to be expended
- Make recommendations to the Executive Director in respect of the use of the buildings, facilities and equipment of the School for purposes other than school purposes
- Develop relationships between the School and the community and between the School and community organisations
- Make recommendations to the Executive Director on matters relating to the School

Responsibility for the implementation of policies established by the Board rests with the Principal and the staff.

## **Parents and Citizens Association**

The P&C plays an important role within the School. Meetings are held twice a term and are advertised in the school newsletter and Facebook page. All parents are encouraged to attend the meetings. As well as its more official activities, the P&C provides an informal meeting ground for parents and families and serves as a fundraising function for the school.

## **National Quality Framework**

National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (NQF) was introduced across Australia in 2012. Its aim is to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care.

As part of this Framework the preschool is involved in a continuous process of self-evaluation against 7 quality areas in the National Quality Standards. From this evaluation a Quality Improvement Plan is developed and followed. Parent input is important to evaluate the preschool from different perspectives. Your input can influence the direction the preschool takes.

Namadgi preschool is rated at meeting the National Quality Standards, this is a testament to the quality of our staff and education program. In 2018 the preschool was rated as meeting or exceeding in all seven of the Quality Learning Areas. Our Quality Improvement Plan is available for families upon request and identifies goals and opportunities to achieve exceeding in all of the National Quality Standards at our next assessment. We look forward to working with our parent and school community to achieve this outcome.

## **Emergency Management**

The school has a policy on emergency evacuations and are required to practise evacuations procedures. All educators, visitors and children participate. The guidelines are displayed in classrooms.

## **Child Protection Practices**

All employees in schools are mandated to report any case of suspected child abuse. Failure to notify suspected physical and/or sexual abuse of children is a criminal offence.

## **Voluntary Contributions**

Public education is free. A school may offer or facilitate some specific optional items, activities and services for which parents may be asked to pay if they want their child to access them. Such activities may include excursions, class photos and incursions.

Schools do ask families to contribute to a voluntary contribution fund to contribute towards quality resources and learning opportunities for our children. Many purchases rely upon the commitment and generosity of our parent community.

## **Parent Support**

Parentlink [www.parentlink.act.gov.au](http://www.parentlink.act.gov.au) is a website which parents can use to access:

- Parents guides, including electronic order forms
- A directory of local parenting services
- Upcoming community events and parenting courses
- Further readings in relation to the parent guides
- Links to other useful website

## Changes to Details

Please keep educators and the school informed of any changes to address, home/work phone numbers, childcare arrangements, medical information and emergency contact phone numbers. Please contact the front office on 6142 0900 if you have any changes to your contact details.

## Book Pack

A book pack will be provided for students use for a small payment to the school. We will provide all stationery, and consumables for your child to use in the Preschool classroom.

## Parent/carers responsibilities

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Reading and complying with Namadgi Preschool policies and procedures (these can be found on the Namadgi School website or hard copies are available from the class teacher)
- Engaging in open communication with educators about their child
- Informing educators of events or incidents that may impact their child
- Informing educators of any concerns regarding their child's behaviour or the impact of others
- Signing and dating permission forms for excursions
- Late arrivals are recorded by the class teacher
- Ensuring an authorised nominee collects their child from preschool
- Providing written authorisation when children require medication to be administered by educators
- Ensuring other children who accompany them to preschool (i.e. siblings) are closely supervised and are the responsibility of the parent/carer
- Closely supervising their preschool children before the start of a session, and after a session
- Ensuring the educators are aware their child has arrived, and aware that their child has been collected
- Out of Hours or events being held, students must be supervised by their parents.
- If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the school and we will be happy to assist

## Volunteering

- **Working with Children and Young People** – Volunteers
- ACT Public schools' welcome volunteers and value the support they provide to schools, students and educational programs. As a volunteer, you must complete the included nomination form before your first visit to the school. You will also be required to complete a daily sign-in register on each occasion you enter the school at the front office
- The duty of care owed to students in ACT public schools requires that all persons working with students, including volunteers, promote a safe environment and a positive education climate. You are asked to comply with the Code of Conduct.
- To assist schools in providing a safe environment, you must consider before signing this document whether there is a need for you to possess and carry an ACT Working With Children registration card. The Working With Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011 requires volunteers who are engaged in a regulated activity on more than 3 days per month or 7 days per year and who make contact with students under the age of 18 years to register.

- If in doubt whether you are required to register with the Office of Regulatory Services, you should read the Directorate's Working With Vulnerable People guide Information for Volunteers *and Visitors in Schools*. Further information can also be obtained from the Office of Regulatory Services on 6207 3000.

## **Feedback**

We welcome feedback from our families, please talk to us at any time to discuss your child or the school. We will do our best to address any concerns you may have. You are also welcome to contact the executive teacher or Deputy Principal.

The Regulatory Authority contact details are,

### **Children's Education and Care Assurance (ACT Regulatory Authority)**

**ACT Education Directorate**

**GPO Box 158**

**CANBERRA ACT 2914**

**02 6207 1114**

**[CECA@act.gov.au](mailto:CECA@act.gov.au)**

### **Preschool operates under the National Law and National Regulations**

National Law:

<http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/national-law-and-regulations/national-law>

National Regulations:

<http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/national-law-and-regulations/national-regulations>

Preschool use Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia, to guide their education program:

<https://docs.education.gov.au/node/2632>

These links are also on our school website on the preschool tab:

<http://www.namadgi.act.edu.au>