

# PARENT HANDBOOK

Steps towards a bright future



Our Parent Handbook provides important information you need to know to ensure the best possible start to quality education and care at Stride Early Learning.

We encourage you to explore this guide and reach out with any questions. Our team is here to support you and ensure a smooth transition into our community.

We have an open-door policy and you and your family are welcome to visit our Service at any time.



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# OUR PHILOSOPHY

At Stride Early Learning, we create a welcoming and inclusive space where children, families and educators come together to nurture curiosity, build strong connections, and celebrate learning with joy and respect.

# CHILDREN

Every child deserves to:

- Feel safe, secure and respected in a supportive learning environment
- Express themselves through play and creativity
- Be valued for who they are, with pride in their unique talents
- Enjoy a balanced program that nurtures their growth in all areas
- Experience joy, fun and laughter every day.

# PARENTS AND FAMILIES

We believe in working closely with families. Parents and caregivers have the right to:

- Share input into their child's care and learning experience
- Feel welcomed and always respected
- Be informed about their child's progress and achievements
- Access resources that support them in their parenting journey
- Be part of a community that values care, respect and joy.

# SIAFF

Our staff are crucial to the success of our Service. They have the right to:

- Work in a supportive and respectful environment
- Take pride in their role and the impact they have on children
- Have opportunities for growth and development
- Be part of a positive, joyful work culture.

# THE COMMUNITY

We believe our Service is connected to the broader community. The community has the right to:

- · High-quality care and services
- Strong relationships between local schools, health services and our Service
- Community support that promotes care, pride and joy.

We are committed to creating a welcoming space where families, staff and the community work together with care, respect and joy.

# OUR COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

At Stride Early Learning, we prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all children in our care. We create a secure environment that minimises risks of abuse, harm and neglect, ensuring children are protected while being educated and cared for by our skilled staff.

We adhere to the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations and the Reportable Conduct Scheme to prevent and respond to allegations of abuse. Our staff are Mandatory Reporters under the Children and Community Services Act 2004 (Western Australia) and receive ongoing child protection training to ensure they are up to date with current requirements and best practices.

All staff undergo thorough recruitment processes and hold valid Working with Children Checks. We are committed to the highest standards of child safety, ensuring every child feels secure, valued and protected. Any concerns are taken seriously and addressed promptly by our leadership team.

Our Service is a tobacco, drug and alcohol-free environment in line with the Education and Care National Law and Regulations. Smoking or vaping is prohibited on our premises. We also follow the National Model Code and Guidelines for taking images or videos of children as outlined by ACECQA.

# OUR CODE OF CONDUCT

The Code of Conduct sets the standards for all employees at Stride Early Learning, ensuring adherence to the ethical responsibilities outlined in the Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics. Our values equality, respect, integrity and responsibility—quide our work and interactions with children, families and colleagues.

## **Employee Expectations**

- Uphold professional conduct, treating all individuals with respect and maintaining confidentiality.
- Ensure a safe, child-focused environment and report any concerns regarding child protection.
- Follow workplace standards, including dress code, hygiene and appropriate use of social media.

## **Leadership and Accountability**

Management will provide support and clear communication. Breaches of the code may lead to disciplinary actions, including warnings or dismissal for serious violations.

# OUR EDUCATORS

Our team of passionate, skilled educators are dedicated to providing high-quality early childhood education and care. We prioritise the rights, safety and wellbeing of all children, respecting their diverse backgrounds and individual needs.

We create an inclusive, culturally safe environment that encourages participation and supports families. Our educators continually assess and improve our curriculum to meet children's educational and wellbeing needs, guided by experienced professionals.

We consider each child's learning style, abilities and family context when planning programs and respect the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. All staff are supported in their professional development and hold valid Working with Children Checks and necessary first aid qualifications.

# NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

Our Service adheres to the Australian Government's National Quality Framework (NQF), which includes the Education and Care Services National Law, National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and a comprehensive assessment and rating system. Our educational program is based on the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

We regularly assess our practices against the National Quality Standard and work towards continuous improvement through our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP helps us identify strengths in our care and set goals for further enhancement. Families are encouraged to provide feedback and suggestions.

For more information about the NQF, visit ACECQA's website.

## **Regulatory Authority**

Our Service is regulated by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) and the state licensing department in Western Australia. For contact details of the regulatory authority, please see below:

#### **Western Australia:**

Department of Communities Boorloo Campus Level 7, 130 Stirling Street Perth WA 6000

**Phone:** (08) 6277 3889 **Freecall:** 1800 199 383

Email: ECRU@communities.wa.gov.au

# EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM & DOCUMENTATION OF LEARNING/PORTFOLIOS

Our program is designed to meet each child's individual needs, abilities and interests, using a play-based approach aligned with the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) V2.0. We work with families to ensure each child's knowledge, culture and interests shape their learning experience.

Children take responsibility for their learning by making choices in activities and routines. Our educators use conversations, play and intentional teaching to foster independence and support development.

## **Documentation of Learning**

Educators document each child's learning through a personal, confidential online portfolio, which may include profiles, goals, observations, work samples and transition statements. These portfolios are used for evaluation, planning and to reflect each child's individuality. Portfolios are shared during parent/educator meetings and are available for review throughout the year.

# COMMUNICATION

We value partnering with you and your family to support your child's development. We encourage communication with your child's educators about their needs and experiences. If mornings and afternoons are busy, please arrange a meeting time with the nominated supervisor.

We believe in open, meaningful communication and keep you connected to your child's daily experiences through **Xplor** and **Playground**, where you can receive real-time updates, photos and insights into their learning journey. We also communicate through various additional methods, including:

- Newsletters
- Phone calls
- Emails
- Face-to-face
- Formal meetings.

# ENROLMENT INFORMATION

Before your child begins at our Service, you will need to complete an enrolment form and provide required documentation.

#### **Enrolment Form**

Enrolments can be completed online via **Xplor**. If you need assistance, please contact our Service or administration staff. The following documentation is required:

- A copy of your child's birth certificate or identity documents
- Certified copies of any court orders, parenting orders, or parenting plans
- An immunisation history statement from the Australian Immunisation Register, confirming your child is up to date with vaccinations or on a recognised catch-up schedule, or has a medical exemption
- CCS reference numbers
- Any medical plans.

To ensure a smooth enrolment process, we kindly ask that the details on your enrolment form match your child's official documents.

## **Family Law and Access**

Please inform management of any parenting court orders or agreements. Certified copies of court orders, parenting plans or orders must be provided during enrolment and updated if circumstances change. Children will only be released to the custodial parent/guardian or with written consent. Without a court order, we cannot stop a parent from collecting their child. Personal information in child-related documents will only be shared with written consent, which can be withdrawn at any time. All custody-related documents are securely stored according to our Record Keeping Policy.

#### **Inclusion of All Children**

If your child has a disability, please discuss their needs with our nominated supervisor before enrolment. We provide an inclusive environment for all children and encourage ongoing communication with families to ensure equitable access to education and care. If your child has an NDIS plan, we may seek consent to contact relevant services or therapists for continuity of learning. Additional support may also be available through the Inclusion Support Program (ISP).

#### **Authorised Nominees**

You will need to list authorised nominees on your child's enrolment form. These individuals have permission to collect your child, consent to medical treatment, approve transportation in an emergency or give consent for excursions. Please keep enrolment information up to date, including contact details, health information and any changes to family circumstances or parenting orders.

#### **Authorisations**

The enrolment form will ask for authorisations for medical treatment, emergency transportation, application of sunscreen and the administration of emergency medication (e.g., Ventolin or EpiPen®). Parents must provide contact details for anyone authorised to arrange transportation for your child, including for excursions.

## **Excursions/Regular Outings**

Excursions are a valuable part of early education, offering children diverse learning experiences and helping them understand the world around them. We conduct thorough risk assessments to minimise any potential risks for all excursions or regular outings. Parents will receive information in advance and written consent is required for each child to participate. Authorisation for regular transportation and outings is renewed annually or when transport details change. Please refer to our Safe Transportation Policy for more information.

#### **Photographs/Social Media/Promotion**

As part of our enrolment process, we request permission to take photographs and videos of your child during activities and excursions. These images may be used for observations, programming and shared via our Service app "Playground". We follow the National Model Code for taking images, using approved devices and ensuring strict protocols for storage. We ask families not to take photos or videos of children at the Service and to respect privacy guidelines. Staff are also encouraged to refrain from joining family social media groups.

## Medical Conditions - Allergies, Asthma, Diabetes or Epilepsy

It is important that we are informed of any medical conditions such as allergies, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or anaphylaxis risks, including potential triggers. Parents must list any medical conditions on the enrolment form and provide an action plan (such as an ASCIA Asthma or Anaphylaxis Action Plan) completed by a GP. This must be submitted before your child begins at the Service. You will work with our nominated supervisor to create a risk minimisation and communication plan. Any prescribed medication your child requires must be provided daily. Please ensure that your child's medical management plan is updated every 12 months or whenever there is a change in their treatment.

# FEES, REBATES AND ATTENDANCE

#### **Fees**

Fees are due two weeks in advance via Debit Success or Pay Now.

#### **Statement of Fees**

A statement will be emailed weekly or fortnightly. Please check for accuracy and contact the supervisor for discrepancies. Access account details through Xplor and ensure your CCS entitlements are up to date.

#### **Payment of Fees**

Complete a Direct Debit form upon enrolment. Fees will be deducted weekly or fortnightly via EFT. Additional charges apply for failed transactions due to insufficient funds.

## **Childcare Subsidy (CCS)**

Families must provide the correct CRNs and birthdates for CCS. Apply for CCS through myGov and CCS will be paid directly to the Service, reducing fees. Families pay the "gap fee." Notify Centrelink of any changes within 14 days. For CCS concerns, contact the administration staff or the Department of Education on 1800 664 231.

## **Complying Written Agreement (CWA)**

The CWA outlines childcare arrangements and fees. CCS is applied after approval via myGov.

#### **Absence**

Notify the Service promptly if your child will be absent. CCS covers up to 42 days of absence per year, with full fees after that. Additional absences may be approved with documentation.

Absences can be checked via your Centrelink account or Express Plus Families app. Public holidays are considered absences and CCS is not paid for the first or last day of enrolment, unless otherwise specified by the supervisor.

## Fees in Arrears/Financial Support

We understand that unexpected circumstances can arise. If you experience any financial difficulties, please speak with our team so we can explore available support options, including payment plans or additional subsidies. We reserve the right to suspend or withdraw your child's enrolment as outlined in our Debt Collection Policy.

If you are experiencing financial hardship, please contact the nominated supervisor or director. Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) may be available, and we can discuss payment plans to prevent fees from going into arrears.

## Withdrawal From Care/Reduced Enrolments Days

We require two weeks written notice to withdraw and/or reduce enrolment days for your child/ren from any permanent booking. Please see the nominated supervisor to obtain the required form to complete. Children are not able to attract CCS for any days after the last day your child physically attends our Service. There are some circumstances where CCS can be paid after the last day your child physically attends with an approved reason.

# **Service Closing Time and Late Collection Fees**

Our Service and program close at 6:00pm. In line with National Regulations, we cannot have children in the Service after this time. A late fee of \$1.50 per minute, per child, will be charged for collections after 6:00pm and added to your next account. This fee is strictly enforced, as two staff members are required to stay until all children are collected.

If we are unable to reach a parent or authorised nominee within an hour of closing, we may contact the authorities to take responsibility for your child.

# OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A copy of our policies and procedures is available at the Service. We expect both staff and families to follow these policies at all times to ensure compliance with National Law and Regulations.

Educators cannot make exceptions to these policies unless authorised by the nominated supervisor or management due to serious or exceptional circumstances.

We regularly review our policies and encourage input from both staff and families to ensure they meet the needs of our community and comply with regulations. Your feedback helps us improve our Service and may lead to updates or changes to our policies.

## **Family Conduct Guidelines**

We are committed to addressing complaints with fairness, respect and transparency, ensuring a culture free from discrimination and harassment. Complaints are handled in line with our code of ethics and Service philosophy, aiming for prompt and effective resolutions that foster positive relationships among parents, educators and staff.

Our Family Conduct Guidelines align with our Enrolment, Complaints, Privacy and Confidentiality Policies, and the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. Breaching these guidelines may lead to enrolment termination following evaluation by the nominated supervisor or approved provider.

We encourage open, respectful communication and recommend scheduling discussions outside of the learning environment to ensure thoughtful decision-making. All parties are expected to show respect and threatening behaviour may lead to police involvement.

To maintain confidentiality, families and staff must protect personal information and avoid sharing sensitive details on social media. For complaints, please contact your child's educator or submit a 'Complaints/Grievance Form' via email. Management will uphold confidentiality unless required to report to the regulatory authority.

#### **Orientation**

Starting at a new Early Learning Centre is a big step and we are here to support your family every step of the way. Our orientation sessions help your child feel comfortable, explore their new environment and build connections with their educators and peers. We encourage each child to visit with a family member before their first official day. This gives you and your child the chance to familiarise yourselves with our program, the layout of the room and where to store belongings. It also allows you to share additional information with educators to help us support your child's transition and settling-in process. The nominated supervisor will contact you to arrange convenient visit times.

If your child is hesitant to attend, please speak with their assigned educator to develop strategies that will ease the transition. You are welcome to take photos of your child in the environment to share with them at home. Some children may also enjoy borrowing a book from our library to read at home and return during the next visit.

## **Arrival and Departure**

Please sign your child in upon arrival and out upon departure, noting the date and times. This is a legal requirement for attendance records, which may be needed in an emergency. Children will only be released to a parent, guardian or authorised nominee listed on the enrolment form. If someone else is collecting your child, please provide written authorisation. Staff may ask for photo ID to confirm the identity of the person picking up your child.

#### The First Day/Week

Starting at a new Service can be challenging for both children and parents. Separation anxiety is normal and our educators will provide reassurance and support. We'll keep you updated with calls and photos to ease the transition.

#### **Saying Goodbye**

A consistent routine helps create a calm start to the day. Being organised and avoiding a rush is key. If your child becomes upset, we'll contact you right away.

## **Spare Clothing**

Accidents can happen, please pack a complete change of clothes for your child to keep in their bag.

#### **Drink Bottle**

A labelled drink bottle with water is required daily. Children can refill their bottles throughout the day, promoting school readiness. While we provide cups, having their own bottle is helpful.

#### **Sun Hat**

A sun hat (broad-brimmed or legionnaire) must be worn every day for outdoor play to protect your child from the sun. Please ensure it is included in their bag daily, regardless of the weather.

#### **Meals**

At our Service, we promote healthy eating and provide nutritious, delicious meals daily. We offer a balanced menu including breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and supper, all aligned with the Australian Dietary Guidelines. Our qualified cook carefully plans and prepares the meals to meet the dietary needs of all children.

We accommodate special dietary requirements, allergies and medical conditions. Please inform the nominated supervisor about your child's specific needs to ensure we can cater to them appropriately.

## **Breastfeeding**

We are a breastfeeding-friendly Service and welcome mothers to attend during the day to breastfeed or express milk. A private, clean and quiet space is available for breastfeeding.

Mothers who are breastfeeding or expressing milk should discuss our policies on storage and handling with the nominated supervisor or responsible person.

For families who are formula feeding, please consult with the nominated supervisor regarding the preparation and storage of formula. We encourage regular communication to ensure your infant's needs are met as they grow.

Please refer to our Nutrition Policy for further details.

## **Clothing**

Please dress your child in comfortable, easy-to-wash clothes that allow them to move freely and independently. Suitable shoes include joggers and sandals, while thongs, slippers, are not recommended. Clothing should be easy for children to remove on their own, avoiding items like long dresses, overalls or belts that may be difficult for bathroom use. T-shirts must have sleeves and broadbrimmed hats are essential for sun safety.

#### **Toys**

We provide a wide range of appropriate toys and ask that children refrain from bringing toys from home to avoid loss, breakage or disappointment.

#### **Behaviour Guidance**

We support children in developing confidence, kindness and self-regulation through positive guidance, role modelling and an environment that fosters respect and emotional wellbeing. Our Behaviour Guidance Policy ensures consistency across the Service. For more details, refer to our Policy manual.

#### **Rest and Sleep**

Rest times are tailored to each child's needs, with cots and soft music provided. Children may bring a security item for comfort. Quiet activities are available for children who do not sleep. We provide daily updates on your child's rest time.

## **Sustainability**

We are committed to sustainability, teaching children to care for the environment through daily practices such as recycling, conserving energy and water and discussing social justice. Our aim is to equip children with the knowledge and skills to contribute to a sustainable future.

## **Birthdays**

We love celebrating birthdays with your child! To ensure a safe and hygienic celebration, no outside treats or cakes are allowed. We kindly request that any birthday celebrations be discussed with educators prior to the event. This helps us monitor food allergies and ensure the safety of all children and staff.

## **Sun Safety**

We follow the National SunSmart Early Childhood Program to ensure children's health and safety. We monitor UV levels daily and schedule outdoor play when safe. Hats, appropriate clothing and SPF50+ sunscreen are required for all outdoor activities. We ask that children arrive with sunscreen already applied. Educators model sun safety and encourage children to reapply sunscreen throughout the day.

## **Parent Participation and Feedback**

We value family involvement and encourage you to contribute to your child's program, share skills and provide feedback. Our Dealing with Complaints Policy is available for your reference, and our policies are accessible at any time.

## **Family Involvement**

We welcome parents/families to share hobbies, occupations and cultural experiences to enrich the program. Children love hearing about your work or learning from your skills and we also encourage reading visits from grandparents.

## **Special Events**

We organise special events throughout the year, including celebrations and information sessions. Parent input is encouraged and we communicate details in advance.

## **Community Information**

Check our community notice board regularly for updates, menus and relevant programs. Staff can also provide information on early intervention, Child Care Subsidy and more.

#### **Health and Hygiene**

We have strong hygiene practices to ensure a safe environment. All children and visitors must wash their hands or use hand sanitiser upon arrival. Educators teach proper handwashing and regularly clean high-touch areas to reduce infection spread.

## When Should I Not Send My Child to the Service?

Please keep your child at home if they are unwell or have an infectious disease to prevent the spread of illness. We follow the National Health and Medical Research Council's guidelines to maintain a healthy environment. Our Infectious Diseases policy is available for review.

If your child becomes ill at the Service, we will contact you or an authorised nominee to collect them within 30 minutes. An Injury, Incident, Trauma, and Illness Record will be provided for you to sign.

Children should not attend if:

- They have had paracetamol for a fever in the last 24 hours
- They are on antibiotics (must stay home for the first 24 hours)
- They have had diarrhoea or vomiting (must be symptom-free for 24 hours)
- A medical clearance may be required for certain illnesses.

#### **Immunisation**

The Public Health Act requires an Immunisation History Statement for enrolment. This must show that your child's immunisations are up to date according to the National Immunisation Program. In case of an outbreak, we will notify families and we are legally required to report vaccine-preventable diseases to the Public Health Unit.

#### **Medication**

If your child requires medication at our Service, you must complete an Administration of Medication Record and provide the medication directly to an educator for safe storage.

#### **Medications Must Be:**

- Prescribed by a registered medical practitioner with instructions
- In the original packaging, clearly labelled with your child's name
- Within the expiry date.

For ongoing needs like asthma inhalers, EpiPens or insulin, please ensure the required medication is brought daily or that we have adequate supplies. You or an authorised person must sign the Administration of Medication Form at the end of the day.

## **Incidents, Injury or Trauma**

While we strive to minimise accidents, children may experience minor injuries during play. Our educators are first aid, CPR and asthma/anaphylaxis trained.

For minor injuries, first aid will be provided and an Incident Record will be completed for you to sign. If your child sustains a head injury, you will be notified.

For serious incidents requiring urgent medical attention, an ambulance will be called and we will contact you. If needed, one of our staff will accompany your child in the ambulance. Ambulance cover is the responsibility of families. We will notify the regulatory authority of any serious incidents.

# SAFETY IN OUR SERVICE

## **Emergency and Evacuation Procedures**

We regularly assess risks and develop emergency management plans for various hazards. Emergency and evacuation drills are conducted throughout the year to ensure all children know how to respond in an emergency. These drills simulate situations such as fire, bushfire, lockdown or flood. By regulation, we practise these drills every three months.

Educators are trained to use fire extinguishers and emergency evacuation. Lockdown procedures are clearly displayed in each room, with exit points marked.

#### **Social Media**

We use social media to connect with families and share updates about our Service.

To ensure a safe online environment, our social media accounts are managed by the nominated supervisor with high privacy and security settings. We monitor content regularly, removing any offensive material and blocking users as needed.

Photographs of your child will only be posted with your written consent on the enrolment form. We respect privacy and do not share personal information online.

Stay connected with us at @strideearlylearning.

## **Privacy and Confidentiality**

We are committed to protecting the privacy of children, families and staff with policies in place to ensure confidentiality.

Personal information (e.g., addresses, phone numbers, email addresses) will not be shared without written consent from the individual. Families should not share personal data or images of other children, families or staff members from the Service.

Images from the Service should not be shared on social media or other platforms without prior consent. Staff are prohibited from sharing information about other children, families or staff without written permission. Additionally, families should not connect with staff on social media, except on the regulated Service's private Facebook page.

We collect information to plan programs for your child in partnership with you, but we do not disclose personal information without consent unless required by law (e.g., Child Information Sharing Schemes).

You can access or request copies of your child's information at any time. Our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy outlines how we comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and the Privacy Act 1988. We store all records securely, in line with National Regulations, and manage them according to legal requirements. For more details, please refer to our Record Keeping and Retention Policy.

Any privacy-related complaints will be handled promptly, as outlined in our Dealing with Complaints Policy.

Last update: February 2025



# A CULTURE OF CARE AND ACTION

At Stride Early Learning, your child's safety, wellbeing and happiness are our greatest priorities. We believe that creating a safe environment for children starts by creating a safe, trusted workplace for the people who care for them — our educators.

**Stride to Speak Up** is our values-led initiative that ensures every team member has a voice — and that voice leads to action. It gives our staff a clear, confidential way to speak up about anything that feels unsafe, unhelpful, or out of step with our culture.

This initiative is not a policy we keep in a drawer — it's something you'll see in every centre:

- Posters in our foyers and staff rooms
- A visible Speak Up Board showing how we act on feedback
- Centre Speak Up Representatives who help make sure every voice is heard

#### **Why This Matters to You**

Families today aren't just looking for the closest early learning centre — they're looking for a place they can trust.

Stride to Speak Up shows you that safety here isn't just assumed — it's protected, practised, and proven every day. If a staff member raises a concern, it's reviewed by the right people, and action is taken. If it affects your child directly, you will be informed via the appropriate channels and in line with our privacy policy.

This initiative helps us:

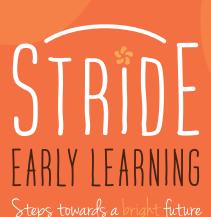
- Act early before small concerns become big problems
- Keep communication open between centres and families
- Build trust that's visible, not just promised

## Can Families Use the Speak Up System?

This system is designed for staff. However, if you raise a concern with your Centre Manager and it's appropriate, a team member may lodge your feedback through the same confidential platform on your behalf.

#### Want to know more?

- Ask your Centre Manager to show you the Speak Up Board
- Request a copy of our Stride to Speak Up Family Letter
- Or just have a conversation because your voice matters too



strideearlylearning.wa.edu.au