



Penguins School of Early Learning

Parents Handbook

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WHAT TO BRING

What to Bring For Your Child

We aim to ensure your child is settled, happy and comfortable throughout the day. To assist us in this we ask you to send the following, making sure to name all items of clothing so they can be promptly returned to you should they be misplaced.

For Infants

You will be provided with a labelled basket for all your child's belongings which we ask you to bring every day, if this does not suit you may substitute it for a bag. We recommend sending along a few changes of named clothing, enough nappies for at least 6 changes during the day (you can bring in bulk amounts of nappies for us to store), any relevant creams (e.g. for nappy rash), and bottles (prepared with water and a formula dispenser with pre-measured amounts).

We will provide you with an individual communication book for your child. Your child's primary caregiver will use this to keep you updated about your child's day including, what they ate, when they slept and nappy changes throughout the day. This book also provides you with the opportunity to write information down to share with us such as individual routines, introduction of solid foods, special milestones and any day-today messages.

For Toddlers

From our Fantail room onwards, please provide a named school bag for your child, along with nappies if appropriate, or numerous changes of named clothing for children who are embarking on the process of toilet training. It is helpful if the school bag is able to be identified by your child and can be opened easily.

For Pre-Schoolers

Please provide a named school bag that can be opened and closed by your child independently, along with named changes of clothing that your child is able to undress/dress themselves in, which includes footwear and jackets.

Seasonal Extras

As seasons change throughout the year the items that you may like to provide for your child will also vary. In winter we suggest bringing a pair of gumboots for them to wear while they're enjoying the great outdoors, a warm hat and jacket can also be useful in winter for helping to keep children as comfortable as possible.

In summer children love nothing more than to play in lots of water-based experiences. We suggest providing a rash suit for your child to wear on such occasions so we can keep children's use of spare clothing to a minimum as well as protecting them from the sun's harsh rays. An extra hat is also useful as we require children to wear a hat while engaged in activities, such as under the sprinkler. We also ask if parents can please bring in a towel and wet bag.

Sleeping and Rest Time

All children have the opportunity to sleep or rest during the day according to their individual routines. Each child is allocated a cot or stretcher bed, and linen. Linen is laundered weekly and is stored separately in a labelled bag, reserved just for your child. It is not compulsory for your child to sleep or rest, so please discuss your child's needs and your preferences with us during orientation time.





GETTING STARTED

Getting to Know Us

Attending an early childhood service for the first time is a big step for both you and your child. You may feel apprehensive or unsure of the best way to get started. Rest assured, this is perfectly normal and we're here to help you through the process.

Orientation time ensures you visit before your child's first day with us. Please use this time to get to know us and to share all the unique things that will help us meet the needs of your child. During your visits talk with teachers and other children. Let your child see you relaxed and enjoying the new environment. Orientation will help to make you both feel more ready for the new routine when it's time for your child to stay on their own.

Saying Goodbye

Your child may be upset when saying goodbye in the early days of their attendance. Each child is different and will settle in their own time as they become familiar with their new surroundings. Our teachers are very understanding of your child's anxiety and they are there to support and comfort your child as they get to know us better.

It's important that you always make a point of saying goodbye to your child before you go and to resist the temptation of sneaking away quietly when you see your child distracted. Having the opportunity to say goodbye reinforces the new routine for your child and enables them to learn more quickly that you will soon return to pick them up. Leaving without saying goodbye can cause undue distress and your child may learn to distrust both you and the teachers.

It's a good idea to develop a 'drop off' routine with your child. Choose something together that your child enjoys doing, such as reading a book or completing a puzzle, and tell them that you're going to do this one activity with them each morning before saying goodbye. Give your child a hug goodbye, aim to then leave swiftly and with the reassurance that you will see them at the end of the day.

Signing in Each Day

A sign in and out sheet will be provided for you to record the times you are dropping off and picking up your child each day. It is important to take a moment to complete this task as it is used to verify our attendance records and to check that all children have been evacuated in the event of an emergency. Please note that only a person aged 17 or over is legally able to sign for or collect your child. This is a Ministry required document, so we ask that only adults sign your child in and out.

Birthdays

Children get very excited about their birthdays and we enjoy the opportunity to celebrate with them on their special day. You are welcome to provide a cake if you wish or another alternative such as cupcakes. An ingredient list is required, this can be emailed to reception or brought in on the day with the cake (enquiries@penguinsearlylearning.co.nz). Please limit the birthday treats to one choice and help us spread the message of healthy eating habits and allergy awareness to the children. Please ensure this is nut free.

Christmas

A highlight of the Penguin's annual calendar is our Christmas Party. All children, parents and extended family members are welcome to attend. Santa makes an appearance and brings gifts for the children. Christmas is also a time for us to remember those less fortunate than ourselves and to share with the children the gift of giving. Each year, you and your children will be able to select a food item or gift of your choosing to donate to our nominated charity. The gifts are left under our Christmas tree in reception and we will ensure they are delivered in time for Christmas.

Hygiene

Our building is fitted with a hospital grade air filtration system continually bringing fresh air in. We also have gas central heating to maintain warmth in winter. A colour coded cleaning system has been implemented which ensures a high degree of hygiene is maintained as well as eliminating cross contamination between play and bathroom areas. Commercial cleaning services have been engaged to thoroughly clean the centre after close of business daily.

STARTING TO LEARN

The New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum

We are committed to implementing the New Zealand Early Childhood Curriculum; Te Whāriki. The curriculum has been envisaged as a mat (Whāriki being the Maori word for mat), weaving together all the important elements of a child's world, including four guiding principles; empowerment, holistic development, family & community, and relationships. Interwoven are the 5 strands; Well-Being, Belonging, Contribution, Communication and Exploration, which are the essential areas of learning and development. These principles and strands together lay the foundation for the curriculum and each strand has several goals for children.

This framework encourages us as educators to view the child as an already capable and competent learner, trusting they are able to explore and navigate their environment with purpose, setting their own tasks and working industriously to achieve their desired outcomes. Our role is to become the facilitator's, helping to build connecting links between the different environments in your child's world.

Te Whāriki also emphasises the role of social and cultural elements, and the building and maintaining of reciprocal relationships between the adults in a child's life.

Our Curriculum

Here at Penguins your child will be immersed in an environment that will enrich all areas of their development and provide them with every opportunity to engage in purposeful and meaningful experiences. We believe in supporting all children to develop the skills, knowledge and learning dispositions to succeed in any environment. The curriculum in each of our individualised areas caters for the unique needs of our littlest penguins to our largest, and empowers all children to grow and succeed.

Our Curriculum in Action

We believe in the provision of an emergent, play based curriculum that will embrace your child's interests and talents, as well as creating opportunities for them to work in small groups co-operatively. Your child will have time to investigate, research, use trial and error, explore with all their senses and formulate theories about the world around them. They will be immersed in 'hands on' experiences which will support learning in a holistic way. You will see our teachers noticing, recognising and responding to your child's individual interests and pathways of exploration. They will create an environment both indoors and out to reflect these interests, and provide provocation to further encourage the children to explore.

Starting out....

Infants explore with their senses and our infant rooms are ready to provide your baby or toddler with experiences to enrich their world, including messy play, feeding themselves, touching different textures, warm water play and moving freely at their own pace within their room.

We recognise that toddlers often strive to assert themselves as individuals and as such need an environment that allows them to practise their growing self-help skills, such as toileting themselves, dishing up their own meals, wiping their own faces, dressing themselves and learning to work with other children who are just as determined as they are!

The teachers work closely with your child engaging them in areas of interest, and to help provoke curiosity and further exploration of an interest, your child will have the opportunity to take part in out of centre excursions. Rest assured that safety is foremost in our mind and your child will be recognisable at all times in our specialised high visibility vests. Often to help make these excursions possible we ask for parent/family support so if you would love to be part of an excursion experience let your child's teachers know at the time.





HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health

Very young children are often the most susceptible members of our communities when it comes to contracting illnesses. Their immune systems are still developing which is why we appreciate your support in keeping your child at home when they are unwell.

We have implemented practices to ensure the risk of exposure to infection is kept to a minimum wherever possible, including cleaning systems, fresh air filtered through the centre at all times

Illnesses

Young children can develop symptoms and become unwell very quickly and illness can be passed from child to child easily. Please be prepared to make alternative arrangements for your child's care if they need to be excluded from attending the centre due to being unwell.

If your child displays any of the following signs it is imperative that they remain at home until they have been clear of any symptoms for at least 24-48 hours:

- > A high or low temperature
- > Vomiting or Diarrhoea
- > An unidentified rash or spots
- > Conjunctivitis

Please refer to our Illness Policy, or the Ministry of Health schedule in reception, for more detailed information support in keeping your child at home when they are unwell.

We have implemented practices to ensure the risk of exposure to infection is kept to a minimum wherever possible, including cleaning systems, fresh air filtered through the centre at all times.

Medicines

We have developed rigorous processes for storing medications out of reach of children and to ensure that your child's privacy is protected at all times. Should any medication need to be administered to your child you will need to fill in our medicine register so their ongoing well-being and that of others can be monitored closely.

Children who have pre-existing conditions such as asthma can also be sensitively catered for. Details required will be recorded on a long-term medication form and this will be reviewed with parents at three monthly intervals to ensure best practices for your child remain in place.

Penguins School of Early Learning is a Pamol-free environment. Should your child need this or other Paracetamol or Ibuprofen based medications to get through the day they will need to stay at home until fit and able to cope with the day under their own steam. For greater detail refer to our Medicine / Illness policies.

Immunisations

In order to ensure the ongoing well-being of all children we are required to collect information

regarding children's immunisation status. You will need to provide a copy of your child's immunisation certificate on enrolment and to then bring it in as updated thereafter.

Emergency Contacts

You will need to provide Penguins with the name and contact details of at least one person who can be contacted in the event of an emergency should we be unable to reach parents themselves. Persons designated with authority for collecting your child from the centre can be amended as necessary at any time. This will need to be done in advance as your child will not be released to any person without your prior approval.

Emergency Evacuations

Penguins School of Early Learning is prepared should an emergency situation arise. Evacuations for fire and other emergencies are practised regularly and supplies are on hand to be able to care for children until they can be collected by their families. Civil Defence headquarters have been notified of the centre and its location and we would receive priority attention.

Sun Smart Play

As the warmer weather approaches each year Penguins becomes a 'Sun Smart Play' environment. Children are required to cover up with sunscreen, clothing and hats and to play in the shade wherever possible. Each child will be provided with their very own 'Penguins Hat' when they start which covers their ears, face, neck and shoulders. Children are required to have their first application of sunscreen at home before they arrive each day and we will provide sunscreen (Ultra Protect50+) for further application throughout the day. If your child is aged under 2 or has an allergy to this brand of sunblock, please feel free to send in a labelled brand of your own choice.

A QUICK GUIDE

Privacy

Facebook – the centre has a Facebook page where we post photos and information regarding what is happening in the centre. Should you wish your child not to feature, please make this very clear on enrolment. Please read the Cybersafety information governing our Facebook page that is provided to you on enrolment.

Privacy officer – The Centre Manager is the Privacy Officer in the centre and you are able to make a request under the Official Information Act to view all information held by the centre regarding your child and family.

Third party contact – from time to time parents request phone numbers or address information for other parents. We are not permitted to pass this information directly to you, however we can pass your details on to them or contact them on your behalf.

Photography – you are welcome to take photographs on special occasions such as birthdays, celebrations, during centre events or at Christmas. You are also welcome to take photographs of your child in our reception area. All other photography must be approved by a teacher and must not feature any other children or teachers without consent.

Communication

Centre Manager – Ashleigh White is responsible for the management of the centre day to day, including enrolment and transition, managing staff, parent concerns, compliance and regulation, policy & procedure, and the curriculum we provide.
ashleigh.white@penguinsearlylearning.co.nz

Operations Manager – Katie Millar is centre support and is available to help you with any queries regarding enrolment, our curriculum, child development and any concerns you have regarding your child or the teaching staff.
katie.millar@penguinsearlylearning.co.nz

Office Manager – Carole is available for any enquiries regarding your child's account, enrolment information, WINZ, and to request changes to enrolled days, and to request casual days.
enquiries@penguinsearlylearning.co.nz

Concerns – If you are concerned about any aspect of your child's care and education, please speak to the Team Leader in the room in the first instance. If you feel that your concern or query is not resolved, then please speak with our Operations Manager or Centre Manager who are happy to help. Our complaints procedure is displayed in the entrance foyer for your information.





Arrival / Departure

Carpark safety – there is a 5km speed limit in our carpark and you need to remain vigilant in ensuring you can back out without injuring someone or another vehicle.

Disabled parks - Our disabled car parks are not there for drop off and pick up, they are there to be used by those who genuinely need them.

Carpark Supervision - Please make sure that your child is escorted into the centre, either being carried, or their hand is held by you as soon as you exit your vehicle or the exit gates from the centre, this also applies to older siblings.

Entry/exit gate – this is a safety gate adjoining the carpark. It is vitally important that only adults open this gate, and that children that are not accompanied by an adult are not let through. This is for the safety of all of the children here at Penguins. We also respectfully ask that children do not swing on this gate.

Child restraints – NZ land transport safety law requires all children up to the age of 7 to be restrained in an approved child restraint.

This applies to leaving our carpark. You will be spoken to and we are required by law to report you should we see this law being ignored.

Family details – Children may only go home with authorised contacts on your child's enrolment form. Please keep this updated and give us advanced warning should someone new be arriving to collect them. On an occasion where someone that is not listed parents can call and give permission

Contact details – make sure to keep these updated should you move address, changes phone numbers (work, mobile or home), change email or have a new emergency contact.

Late collection of children - any time after our closing time of 5:30pm is considered late and there is a fee charged. Please read our Fee policy for further information.

Fee Payment

Please make sure to read the Fee Policy provided on enrolment.

Holidays - Please notify us when your child is going to be away on holiday, as additional fees apply in some cases.

Attendance – on enrolment with us you are agreeing to attend for 6 hours or more per day, and to attend all the days you are enrolled for at least half of each calendar month. If this will be an issue for you, please speak to us as soon as possible or further charges will be applied to your account to recover lost government funding.

WINZ – you are responsible for informing WINZ of any changes regarding your personal circumstances, full fees are payable should you not renew your WINZ information when asked to do so.

Health & Well-Being

Outdoor play – This happens all year round (weather permitting). To support this, please ensure that you provide enough appropriate clothing. Remember that viruses, bacteria and being stuck indoors for extended periods of time with a group of other people is more likely to cause ill health, than fresh air and exercise ever will!

Sun safety – We provide sunblock throughout the day during daylight savings and when we feel it is required outside of this time. Please sunblock your child on their face, arms, legs and other exposed areas, such as shoulders, prior to their arrival at Penguins. If your child is allergic to our sunblock or requires a specific brand, please send a named bottle along for us to re-apply.

Illness – please read and understand the policy you were given on enrolment. We are here to care for and educate healthy children. Your family or extended family, doctors and nurses are the best care for your child when they are unwell. The expectation is that you will arrive promptly to collect your child should you be contacted. Our priority is the health and well-being of all our children. Please make sure to read our Illness policy.

Absent - Please phone in and let us know if your child is away sick. If it is due to an illness that is contagious, we display health alert notices for the benefit of all our families.

Smoking - No smoking is permitted in the centre itself, or anywhere on the premises. This is a requirement of NZ Law.

Food and Nutrition

Nut Free – Due to severe allergies our centre is nut free. We ask that no nuts are brought onto the premises.

Additional food - Please do not send along extra food or drink. If your child enters the centre with food or drink, this must be consumed in reception before entering the classroom. Breakfast - this is provided and is available until 8:00am

Birthdays/Graduations - These are special. You can choose to send in a cake/cupcakes or a healthy alternative. For all cakes/cupcakes we need a list of ingredients and they must be completely nut free. Please discuss an appropriate date and time for these to be brought into the centre as there may be other events occurring within the classroom.

Allergies/Intolerances – these are catered for in our meal preparation, and we ask you to fill out a Health Booklet which provides us with the details we need. For infants please let us know when you have/or are ready to introduce new foods. We review this information every 3 months to ensure it is current.

Food preferences – these are not specifically catered for as catering for identified allergies/intolerances are our priority, but we are happy to provide a plain alternative.

Transition Visits

These are a requirement of enrolment with us as they help establish relationships between the teachers, yourself and your child, as well as some familiarity with routines. You are required to remain either in the classroom or reception for these visits, until their first official day with us.



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