



Acacia Avenue Preschool Information Booklet | 2026

Acknowledgement of Country

Acacia Avenue Preschool proudly acknowledges the Bunurong People of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this land, and we pay our respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.



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Statement of Commitment to Child Safety

Acacia Avenue Preschool:

- is committed to the rights of all children to feel safe, and be safe at all times, including:
 - promoting the cultural safety of Aboriginal children;
 - promoting the cultural safety of children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds;
 - promoting the safety of children with a disability; and
 - providing a child safe environment where children and young people are safe, feel safe, and their voices are heard about decisions that affect their lives.
- values, respects and cares for children;
- fosters opportunities for each child to participate, express their views and to learn and develop;
- always acts in the best interests of each child and has zero tolerance of child abuse;
- takes all reasonable steps to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times, whilst also promoting their learning and development;
- actively manages the risks of abuse or harm to each child, including fulfilling our duty of care and legal obligations to protect children and prevent any reasonable, foreseeable risk of injury or harm; and
- continuously improves the way our service identifies risks of and responds to child abuse, and encourages reporting and improved responses to allegations of abuse.

Every person involved in Acacia Avenue Preschool has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role they play individually and collectively to ensure that the wellbeing and safety of all children and young people is at the forefront of all they do and every decision they make.

Acacia Avenue Preschool is a Child Safe Organisation, and we implement all aspects of the 11 Standards. Further information can be found at: <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/child-safe-standards/being-a-child-safe-organisation/>

Please also refer to our [Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy](#).

Standard 1

Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued

Standard 2

Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture

Standard 3

Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously

Standard 4

Families and communities are informed and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing

Standard 5

Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice

Standard 6

People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice

Standard 7

Processes for complaints and concerns are child-focused

Standard 8

Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training

Standard 9

Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed

Standard 10

Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved

Standard 11

Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people

Meet Our Educators

Our team of passionate educators brings warmth, experience, and dedication to their work every day. We value open communication and strong relationships with families to support each child's journey.

Our Teaching Team



Deb



Leanne



Yolande



Vidooshi



Jodie



Emma



Sien



Sam



Lalin

1. Term Dates and Timetable: 2026

Term 1: Tuesday, 27 January to Thursday, 2 April
 Term 2: Monday, 20 April to Friday, 26 June
 Term 3: Monday, 13 July to Friday, 18 September
 Term 4: Monday, 5 October to Friday, 18 December

	Green Group	Red Group	Blue Group
Monday	9:30am to 2:30pm		
Tuesday		8:30am to 4:00pm	
Wednesday	9:30am to 2:30pm	8:30am to 4:00pm	
Thursday			8:30am to 4:00pm
Friday	9:30am to 2:30pm		8:30am to 4:00pm

Term 1, 2026 | Orientation and Settling-in Sessions

Regular session timetable commences Term 1, Week 3 (9 - 13 Feb)

WEEK 1: Orientation Week 27 - 30 Jan		
Red Group	Wed, 28-Jan	Drop-in session (child + parent/guardian)
Blue Group	Thurs, 29-Jan	
Green Group	Fri, 30-Jan	
WEEK 2: Settling In Sessions 3 - 6 Feb		
Red Group	Tues, 3-Feb	Normal timetable: 8:30am to 4:00pm
	Wed, 4-Feb	
Blue Group	Thurs, 5-Feb	
	Fri, 6-Feb	
Green Group	Wed, 4-Feb	9:30am to 12:30pm (child only)
	Fri, 6-Feb	

Public Holidays and Child-free Days

Term 1		
Child-free day	Tues, 27-Jan	Educator's set-up day
Child-free day	Mon, 2-Feb	Educator's administration day
Child-free day	Mon, 23-Feb	Staff First Aid / Child Protection Training
Public Holiday	Mon, 9-Mar	Labour Day
Public Holiday	Fri, 3-Apr	Good Friday
Term 2		
Public Holiday	25-Apr	Anzac Day
Public Holiday	8-Jun	King's Birthday
Term 3		
n/a		
Term 4		
Public Holiday	Tues, 3-Nov	Melbourne Cup
Child-free day	Fri, 18-Dec	Pack-up day for educators

2. About Our Kindergarten

A Warm Welcome

We are delighted to welcome you and your child to our kindergarten community. This is a special time in your child's life, and we are honoured to be part of their early learning journey. At our kindergarten, we nurture a safe, inclusive, and engaging environment where children feel valued, confident, and inspired to explore the world around them. This creates a great start for their journey into formal education.

Every child who attends Acacia Avenue Preschool is provided with a variety of learning opportunities and the educators ensure their time at the preschool is a positive experience.

Commencing kindergarten is an important step and you each have a vital role to play in your child's education. We welcome your interaction and support and hope that the information contained in this booklet will assist you in taking an active role in your child's kindergarten experience.

Our Philosophy and Values

We are committed to:

- Celebrating each child's individuality and strengths
- Partnering with families to support learning and wellbeing
- Creating a culture of belonging, safety, and growth

Children

We advocate, respect and promote children's rights.

We believe that each child is a competent and capable learner with the right to be respected as a unique individual.

Children are supported in developing a sense of well-being to be and become confident, secure and thoughtful members of our learning community.

Each child is an integral part of our community and the connections between the children, their families and the wider community is recognised, celebrated, strengthened and promoted.

Families

We develop respectful and collaborative relationships with all families so they feel valued and engaged in shared decision making to support their child's learning.

We strive to promote our families' values of kindness, respect, honesty and inclusivity.

We strive to advocate for families from diverse and complex family situations to access community services, resources, programs and to work within the child protection laws and responsibilities.

Curriculum

We facilitate each child's learning through a play-based approach that incorporates their physical, social, emotional, cognitive and emotional well-being.

We facilitate learning opportunities that reflect on children's ideas, interests, and personal experiences to encourage the development of their skills in becoming enthusiastic learners.

Learning spaces are designed and set-up thoughtfully to scaffold children's learning, presenting opportunities for sustained shared thinking and collaborative learning.

Our outdoor learning environment encourages an appreciation and connection with nature and environmental care and awareness.

Educators

Create and maintain safe environments where children have the right to feel nurtured, respected while being provided the time and opportunity to develop their sense of identity.

Engage in critical reflection and ongoing professional learning to review the quality of teaching and learning strategies and are committed to continuous improvement.

Be life-long learners alongside children, families and colleagues.

Demonstrate intentional teaching practices that are thoughtful and purposeful in building the children's foundations for successful learning.

Advocate early childhood education and the provision of high-quality education and care. We maintain a culture of ethical practice and in pursuit of social justice and equity.

Use the practice principles of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework and the National Quality Standards.

Community

We strive to create a connected community where every member of the Preschool feels respected, included and valued.

We endeavour to demonstrate respect for all cultures of the Preschool community while acknowledging our First Nation People, we seek to collaborate with leaders and cultural groups in the community to increase our knowledge and understanding.

We demonstrate a commitment to promoting the value and contribution of our Preschool within the wider community.

Committee of Management

Engage with all stakeholders to ensure the guiding principles and values of the Preschool, and its daily operations are ethical and responsible while setting clear directions for the effective operation of a quality service.

We maintain a positive working relationship between educators and the Committee of Management through open and ongoing communication, where a culture of respect creates an environment of trust and collaboration.

Curriculum and Learning Approach

Our educational approach is guided by the **Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)**. We believe children learn best through play, inquiry, and meaningful relationships to support their development across the five **VEYLDF** learning and development outcomes: identity, community, wellbeing, learning, and communication.

The Acacia programs are very much child-centred, developmentally appropriate and based largely on “learning through play”. Your child will be given lots of opportunities to interact with other children, participate in creative activities such as art, music, movement and enjoy enriching language experiences through stories, poetry and group discussions.

Planning each group’s program happens progressively and is customised each year after observing the children as individuals and as a group. Every group of children is different, and therefore the program may alter slightly each year, depending on the needs and interests of the group. We take pride in curating activities and programs that respond to the unique and evolving interests of each group of children that comes through the kindergarten.

We value curiosity, kindness, resilience, and respect—and we support children in developing these qualities every day.

EARLY YEARS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTCOMES

OUTCOME 1: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF IDENTITY

OUTCOME 2: CHILDREN ARE CONNECTED WITH AND CONTRIBUTE TO THEIR WORLD

OUTCOME 3: CHILDREN HAVE A STRONG SENSE OF WELLBEING

OUTCOME 4: CHILDREN ARE CONFIDENT AND INVOLVED LEARNERS

OUTCOME 5: CHILDREN ARE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATORS

Acacia's Core Program

Every child enrolled in our funded 3YO or 4YO group receives access to a rich, play-based program at no cost to families.

The core program includes:

- ✓ A qualified early childhood teacher leading each group
- ✓ A thoughtfully planned play-based learning curriculum, aligned with the *Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework*
- ✓ A strong focus on children's interests, strengths, and wellbeing
- ✓ Opportunities for social, emotional, physical, language and cognitive development
- ✓ A mix of indoor and outdoor learning experiences that encourage curiosity, independence, creativity, and collaboration
- ✓ Daily access to our natural outdoor play space, fostering a connection with nature and environmental care
- ✓ Group times, music, stories, imaginative play, construction, sensory play, and more

We design learning spaces and experiences to reflect children's ideas, support sustained thinking, and nurture a love of learning.

Best practice facilities, resources and development opportunities

Acacia Avenue Preschool sets itself apart from other sessional kindergartens with our commitment to best practice facilities, high quality resources and equipment, and an extended range of development opportunities through our carefully selected incursions each year.

These valuable extensions to the Core Program are made possible through our range of fundraising activities, grants, and community & family contributions throughout the year.

If you have any questions about Free Kinder, fundraising activities or goals, or the types of extra activities or resources planned for the coming year, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Committee of Management

Our kindergarten is a **not-for-profit, community-managed service**, which means it is overseen by a **Committee of Management** made up of volunteer parents and carers.

The Committee plays a vital role in:

- Supporting the overall running of the kindergarten
- Working closely with staff to ensure we meet our goals and obligations
- Overseeing governance, policies, finances, and funding
- Helping plan events and fundraising activities

Joining the Committee is a fantastic way to get involved, meet other families, and help shape your child's early learning environment. You don't need special experience—just a willingness to contribute and a bit of time.

Roles and Meetings

There are a variety of roles available each year, including President, Treasurer, Secretary, Fundraising Coordinator, Grants Coordinator, Enrolments Coordinator, Policies Coordinator, and General Members. The Committee meets monthly in the evening on the last Wednesday of the month during the school term, and meetings are friendly and welcoming.

If you'd like to find out more or express interest, please chat to an educator or look out for information at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Your involvement makes a big difference—and we truly value your support!

3. The Victorian Government's Free Kinder initiative

Our kindergarten participates in the **Free Kinder** initiative supported by the Victorian Government. This means that eligible children enrolled in a funded Three-Year-Old (3YO) or 4-Year-Old (4YO) kindergarten program can enjoy our **Core Program** at no cost to families.

- The Free Kinder initiative provides up to 15 hours per week of free 3YO and 15 hours per week of free 4YO kindergarten for eligible children at a sessional kindergarten.
- Children must turn 3 by April 30 to enrol in a 3YO program and must have turned 3 to attend sessions. *I.e., a child may miss some Term 1 dates if they have not yet turned 3.*
- Children must turn 4 by April 30 to enrol in a 4YO kinder program.

Important information about the 4YO enrolment process

- Enrolment registrations are managed centrally through the [City of Kingston's Central Registration System](#).
- You will need to submit an application for 4YO kinder through the Central Registration System, even if your child has attended the 3YO kinder program at Acacia.
- ***New allocation criteria for enrolments has been added for 2026 which considers continuity for a child attending 3YO kinder who wishes to attend a 4YO kinder program at the same service.***
- Applications open from 1 May annually for the following year's enrolments.

Accessing a second (repeat) year of Free Kinder (4YO)

- [A second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten](#) may be considered when a child shows delays in learning and development outcome areas in the [Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework](#), and when:
 - the kindergarten program is deemed to be the most appropriate learning program
 - the child will achieve better outcomes at kindergarten than if they go to school.
- The Acacia educators will discuss your child's progress throughout the year and further information will be provided at the appropriate times. You can always contact the kindergarten for further information or if you have questions.
- From 2026, children meeting the eligibility requirements can access [an additional year of funded 3YO Kindergarten](#) or an additional year of funded Pre-Prep, but not both. Further information will be made available in due course.

Victoria is changing "4-Year-Old Kindergarten" to "Pre-Prep"

- Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will transition to a 30-hour per week ['Pre-Prep' program](#) of play-based learning by 2036 across Victoria at standalone (sessional) kindergartens and long day care centres.

- From 2026 you will start to see 'Pre-Prep' programs offered in Kingston City Council and across the state which are a minimum 16 hours per week and available to eligible children from priority cohorts.
- Visit the Government's website to view the [roll-out schedule](#) and [determine whether your child may be eligible](#).
- As a result of the progressive roll-out, until 2034 when Pre-Prep is rolled out state-wide, you will continue to hear both "*Four-Year-Old Kindergarten*" and "*Pre-Prep*" terms being used. Rest assured, the content of the programs are the same, however enrolment is based on eligibility requirements/criteria.

4. Supporting Acacia Avenue Preschool through Fundraising and Family Contributions

Acacia Avenue Preschool welcomes and encourages family support throughout the year. As a not-for-profit organisation, donations and fundraising play a vital role in the successful delivery of our programs and the daily running of the kindergarten.

Why are donations and fundraising so important?

The Government's Free Kinder funding covers the core aspects of our program, but it doesn't stretch to all the extras that make our kinder so special. Through fundraising, grants, and initiatives like *The Giving Tree*, we're able to provide the additional high-quality resources and experiences that set Acacia apart.

Our funding from the Department of Education primarily covers staff wages and some of the basic, everyday costs of operating the kinder. However, it doesn't stretch to everything that helps make Acacia such a warm, engaging and well-equipped learning environment.



In addition, while the City of Kingston owns our building, the kinder is responsible for its maintenance. This means we cover the costs of cleaning, gardening, and general upkeep.

To enrich our program, we also offer extras like special incursions, and provide each child with their own hat each year. These special touches, along with quality resources and learning materials, are only possible through the generosity and support of our families.

Fundraising

Our Fundraising Team arranges a variety of fundraising activities and events throughout the year which support the kindergarten to deliver incursions, resources, and equipment which extend the Core Program, and support the increasing costs associated with the day to day administration and maintenance of our kinder.

In 2025 the Fundraising Team has organised so many wonderful opportunities, including for example:

- Family Pizza Night (March)
- Crazy Hair Day (March)
- Easter Raffle (April)
- Pyjama Day (May)
- Mother's Day Morning Tea & Jewellery Workshop (May)
- Bunnings Bake Sale (June)
- Bogan Bingo Night Out (Aug)
- Father's Day Mini Golf (September)
- Bunnings BBQ (Oct)

The Giving Tree

Originally started by the Committee of Management in 2017 during a period of low enrolments and reduced funding, *The Giving Tree* has become a valued way for Acacia families to support the kindergarten community in practical, meaningful ways.

We invite families to contribute — if you're able — to help us provide some of the everyday essentials that support our preschoolers' learning, play, and everyday comfort. Picking up one or two of these items during your regular shop is a small gesture that makes a big difference. It helps us stretch our Department funding further—putting more resources directly into activities and equipment for the children.

Deposit donations

In 2025, Acacia introduced a refundable \$100 deposit to secure children's enrolments at the kindergarten. Families are given the opportunity to receive their deposit back or donate it to the kinder, and an overwhelming majority of families kindly donated their deposit. This goes a long way to ensuring Acacia continues to be able to offer the quality facilities, resources, and extra opportunities that have been challenging to deliver in a tight economic environment in recent years.

Parent involvement in the classroom

We warmly welcome families into our preschool community and invite parents, carers or grandparents to help during sessions once the children have settled in. Parent help usually begins in **Term 2 or 3**, depending on how each group is going. Once we feel the children are ready and would benefit from having extra adults in the room, we'll let families know and share a roster. You will be required to have a current Working With Children Check to provide support in the classroom.

Helping during a session is a great way to be involved, see your child in action, and support our educators—your time is always appreciated! More information about becoming a Parent Helper can be found at **Appendix 4**.

How you can help

There are many ways to contribute—whether that's through fundraising events, donating your enrolment deposit, volunteering for a working bee, or contributing necessary items through **The Giving Tree** initiative. Families are welcome to be involved in many aspects of kindergarten life—whether by sharing a story or skill, helping with excursions, or attending special events. Your participation is always appreciated!

We are so grateful for every contribution, big or small, and deeply value the ongoing support of our Acacia community.

5. Health, Safety & Wellbeing

Your child's health and wellbeing are our top priority. We follow clear guidelines to ensure a safe and nurturing environment for everyone.

Immunisation

Under the [No Jab, No Play](#) legislation, we require a current Immunisation History Statement from Medicare before your child starts. This ensures a safe environment for all children.

Allergies, Asthma and Medical Conditions

If your child has a medical condition, allergy, or requires medication (e.g. EpiPen, asthma inhaler), you'll need to provide:

- A current medical management/action plan
- Any required medication (clearly labelled and in-date)
- An individual risk minimisation plan, developed with staff

We are a **nut-aware** environment. Please avoid sending food with nuts or nut products.

Sick Policy & Exclusion Periods

If your child is sick, the best place for them is at home so they can rest and recover. Even if they want to come, please don't leave the decision up to them—children who have been unwell overnight are often too tired for a busy day at kinder. If your child just isn't acting like themselves, it's often a sign they need a quiet day at home.

If your child becomes unwell during the day, we'll make sure they're comfortable and contact you (or your emergency contact) to collect them as soon as possible.

To help keep everyone healthy, please keep your child at home if they have:

- A cough, cold, or sore throat
- Influenza or a fever
- Vomiting or diarrhoea
- Eye infections or cold sores
- Infected sores, ringworm, or head lice
- Any other contagious illness (including COVID-19)

We'll keep families informed via our communication board if there are any contagious illnesses in the kindy groups.

This link has all infectious diseases and their minimum exclusion period:

<https://www.health.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/files/collections/research-andreports/m/minimum-period-excl-primary-schools-children-services-infect-diseases-doc.docx>

SunSmart Policy

We follow **SunSmart guidelines**. In Terms 1 and 4, children must wear a broad-brimmed hat and sunscreen when playing outside, which Acacia provides to each child. Sunscreen should be applied prior to arriving at kindy, and will be reapplied following lunch. Please let us know if your child has a sensitivity or requires a particular brand.

Child Safety and Supervision

We are committed to the **Child Safe Standards** and creating a culture where children feel safe, respected, and heard. All staff hold current Working with Children Checks and first aid training, and we follow rigorous supervision policies at all times.

Healthy Eating

We encourage healthy eating habits as part of our daily program. Food is an important part of wellbeing, and we talk with children about “everyday” foods (which help us grow and feel great) and “sometimes” foods (which are for special occasions). As children grow, they begin taking more responsibility for their own wellbeing. Packing and discussing healthy food choices supports children’s independence, helps them tune into hunger cues, and builds lifelong habits for good nutrition and self-care.

Toilet Training

Children are encouraged to be toilet trained before starting, but we understand every child develops at their own pace. If your child is still learning, please speak with us—we’ll work with you to support them gently and respectfully.

Further helpful information is available at:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/Preschoolers/health-daily-care/toileting/toilet-training-guide>

6. Daily life at kindy: from drop-off to pick-up

Starting kindergarten is a big step—for children and families! Here's how to help your child get off to a great start.

A Typical Day at Acacia

While each day is slightly different, a typical day may include:

- Morning welcome and group time
- Indoor and outdoor play-based learning
- Snack and lunch breaks
- Music, movement, and story sessions
- Quiet rest time or mindfulness
- Reflection and home time

Drop-off procedures and transitioning into the classroom

Signing-in

Families are required to sign their child in and out each day using our attendance system, ensuring that any other adult collecting their child must be registered with the kindergarten.

Encouraging independence and a positive transition to the classroom environment

You may wait outside the classroom in the kindy foyer until the educators commence the session. As the Kindergarten does not offer extended care, educators are only legally able to take the children in from the commencement of the session. We request that parents/guardians stay with the child until the session commences.

We encourage each child's independence by requesting that they put their own snack and lunch box on the trolley outside the classroom and take their bag and other belongings to their locker after saying goodbye. Some children settle easily, while others take time. Both are normal! You can help by:

- Talking positively about kindergarten
- Establishing a consistent goodbye routine
- Trusting educators to support your child after drop-off
- Being patient—it gets easier!

Pick-up procedures

Signing-out

Families are required to sign their child out each day using our attendance system. If someone other than a parent or regular carer is picking up your child, they must be listed as an authorised person and may be asked to show ID. Please contact the kindergarten by email to list additional authorised people: acacia.ave.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au. When signing in, please indicate who will be collecting your child at the end of the session.

Transitioning out of the classroom

Children finish the day with 'group mat time' in the classroom. The educators will watch parents and caregivers arrive and will call each child out individually. This is an important process for the children's safety.

We request that adults remain outside the room as we encourage the children to collect their bags and belongings independently before joining their parent/guardian. Learning this transition process can take some time, so during Term 1 you are welcome to assist your child at their locker.

Often they'll be excited to show you their latest art and craft project!

Auditory Memory Program

Children will be encouraged to tell you of important items that they need to bring to preschool. Through this we aim to encourage the children's memory and communication skills, as well as independence and responsibility.

The item to bring will be on the communication board and ClassDojo, but please wait to see if your child remembers! Prompting is appropriate e.g., do you need to bring something to kindy tomorrow?

The post-kindy crash!

It's normal for kindergarten aged children to be tired at the end of the day due to the many physical, mental and emotional demands of kindergarten.

Kindergarten involves a lot of activity - play, learning, and social interaction, which can be tiring! Children's brains are working hard to process new information and develop new skills, and it's not surprising that many children experience a physical, emotional (and sometimes behavioural!) crash at the end of the day.

Supporting your child by allowing for some downtime, encouraging healthy eating and helping them get a good sleep overnight will ease this transition.

Late pick-ups

We understand that emergencies happen, but regular late pick-ups can be stressful for children. Please contact us by texting or calling **9583 8133** or **0490 848 262** as soon as you are aware that you are running late, and ensure alternative arrangements are in place when needed.

Absences

If your child is unable to attend on a particular day, please send a message to **0490 848 262** noting the child's name and group, and the date that they will not be attending.

7. Clothing, backpack essentials, snacks & lunch

Please make sure all belongings are clearly labelled, including clothes, personal items, backpack, snack & lunchboxes! Lost property will be available for collection in the foyer.

Clothing

Children should wear comfortable, weather-appropriate clothes that allow for active and messy play and which are easy for them to independently take on and off for toileting or in cooler weather (e.g., coats).

In summer, please ensure good skin coverage, like t-shirts, rather than singlets/singlet dresses. The SunSmart policy requires that children wear clothes that cover their shoulders. Dresses, particularly long dresses, often make climbing difficult and hazardous - shorts/leggings are a practical option.

Acacia provides a SunSmart hat for each child attending which is kept in each classroom.

As part of our fundraising, a selection of Acacia Avenue Preschool uniform items are available to purchase - these will be on display in the foyer in Term 1 along with order forms. Uniforms are not mandatory.

Shoes

Closed-toe shoes with non-slip soles are ideal. Thongs and open sandals are not suitable for safety reasons.

Backpack essentials

- **Named backpack**
- **Healthy snack and lunch** (nut-free)
- **Weather-appropriate clothing** (layers are great!)
- **Spare change of clothes** (accidents and messy play can require a quick change of outfit!)
 - Include underwear, socks, pants/leggings, and top. If your child is toilet training, please pack additional changes of clothes and pullups if needed.

Additional items for 3YO Green Group

- **Comfort softie for rest time** (3YO Green Group, Term 1)

Additional items for 4YO Red/Blue Group

- **Library bag** (made by 4YO groups in Term 1 for the Preschool Borrowing Library which commences in Term 2)
- **Show & Share** (commences Term 3)

Whilst Acacia provides each child with their own hat and drinking cup for use during the day, we suggest that a water bottle and hat be added to backpacks for before and after kindy activities.

Snacks & Lunch

We encourage healthy eating habits as part of our daily program. Food is an important part of wellbeing, and we talk with children about “everyday” foods (which help us grow and feel great) and “sometimes” foods (which are for special occasions).

3YO Green Group: Snack and lunch (separate containers)

4YO Red and Blue Groups: Snack and lunch (separate containers) and a piece of fruit

We request that snacks and lunch comprise “everyday” foods only, and “sometimes” foods are not included.

✗ Please do **not** include:

- Nuts, sesame seeds, muesli bars
- Lollies, chocolate, chocolate biscuits or cakes
- Chips, popcorn, foods with sprinkles or choc chips

Tips for a great kindy snack and lunchbox

Keep it simple – Familiar, easy-to-eat foods are best. Save new foods for home.

Pack an ice pack – We can’t refrigerate or heat food, so keep things cool and fresh.

Easy to open – Use containers your child can open independently (great for confidence!).

Small portions, big variety – A few small options are often more appealing than one big serve.

Provide a fork or spoon if required – Make sure they have what they need.

If you’re sending homemade items, please include a note listing the ingredients.

For safety and to minimise choking hazards, all tomatoes and grapes should be cut in half lengthwise, and **no popcorn** is permitted.

8. Celebrations and Special Events

We love to celebrate important events and cultural traditions together! Special events, particularly those in which parents participate, are seen as vital in promoting the children's social and emotional development and are also an opportunity for parents to have quality time with their child in an environment special to their child.

Cultural events

Our program reflects and celebrates the **diverse cultures** of our community. Families are encouraged to share traditions, languages, and special days. Our kindergarten year has commenced recently with a '**Living Culture Smoking Ceremony**' which families are invited to share with the children. The children start each day by saying an acknowledgement of country. This has been a connecting moment for the children to establish their own appreciation and connection to the land and First Nations people.

Special celebrations

Every year we arrange a special celebration for Mother's Day and Father's Day which allow the children to celebrate some of the special people in their lives, and acknowledge various special days such as Harmony Week with a variety of storytelling, activities, art and music.

Birthdays

We love celebrating the **children's birthdays** during group time! We sing them 'happy birthday' with our special pretend 'birthday cake' and they blow out the candle. Families may send a **small treat or non-food item** (e.g. stickers, bubbles, balloons) to share—these will be sent home in lunchboxes.

Excursions

Sometimes an excursion may be planned to broaden the children's exposure to their world and development opportunities. Parent participation is required to maintain appropriate supervision ratios. Acacia will provide detailed information to families in advance of any planned excursion, including parent permission forms. We welcome ideas for suitable excursions from families!

9. Communication with Families

We value open and honest communication with families and have a variety of ways we share information and connect with families throughout the year.

Classroom updates

Acacia uses **ClassDojo** to record student and classroom updates, share photos, and provide a space for parents to stay engaged with their child's learning journey. It's simple, secure and provides a window into your child's learning journey at the Preschool.

We would like all families to join us by signing up for a parent account on ClassDojo. You can use it on any device: it's a simple, free mobile app for iOS and Android, and can also be accessed from your computer at [classdojo.com](https://www.classdojo.com). We will send you a form to complete and link via email at the beginning of the year to get you started.

General information

The Committee of Management and kindergarten send updates **by email** to families, including the **Acacia Newsletter** which is sent twice per term. These provide lots of great information about events, fundraising, and general information about the kindergarten. Educators will also provide direct communication periodically by text message.

You will be sent a 'Communication Consent Form' twice per year to provide email and mobile phone contact details for any parent, guardian or carer which you would like included in these contact lists.

There are also information and noticeboards in the kindergarten foyer.

One-on-one discussions

We value open and honest communication with families. No concern is too big or too small—we're here to support you and your child. We welcome regular conversations with families at drop-off and pick-up.

If you'd like a longer or more private chat, we recommend arranging a time outside of drop-off and pick-up, as those moments can be busy. You're welcome to contact us by text, phone, or email—whatever works best for you. We want to hear about any concerns, questions, or celebrations you have.

While we hold formal parent-teacher meetings mid-year, regular communication throughout the year helps us understand and support your child in the best way possible.

Get in touch with us by email or phone:

acacia.ave.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au | 9583 8133 or 0490 848 262

Compliments / Complaints

We would like you to feel you can approach us if you have any concerns to bring to our attention. The teacher can be seen after a session, or an appointment made for a time that suits you. Confidentiality is at all times respected.

Any matters that you would like to bring to the attention of the Committee of Management should be directed to a committee member.

A formal grievance procedure is included in the Preschool's constitution. Copies are available from the Preschool on request by any parent.

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development can also be contacted to raise any concerns you may have. You should request to speak to the Preschool adviser for this region.

Department of Education and Training South Eastern Victoria Region Office

Phone: 1300 338 738

Email: sevr@edumail.vic.gov.au

10. Policies and Procedures

Our current policies are available on the Acacia website <https://acaciaavepreschool.org.au/> and are listed at **Appendix 3**. The Committee of Management oversees the periodic review and update of policies to ensure they reflect best practice and regulatory requirements.

11. Transition to School

We support each child's transition to primary school through a range of experiences in the second half of the year during the 4YO program. These may include:

- Group discussions and stories about school
- Visits to local schools
- Developing self-help and social skills
- Sharing transition learning summaries with schools (with parent consent)

We also support families by providing information and opportunities to meet with local school representatives.

We look forward to a wonderful year together!

Appendix 1: Supporting your child through the transition to kindy

We understand that starting preschool can be a big step—for both children and parents. Rest assured, we will do everything we can to support your child’s wellbeing and help them feel safe, settled, and cared for. Many children adjust quickly, while others may take a little longer—and that’s completely normal. Here are a few simple suggestions to help ease the transition:

1. Build in Rest

Preschool can be exciting and exhausting! Try not to schedule too many activities after kinder. A little downtime helps your child recharge and process their day.

2. Spend Time Together

Tired children often need extra connection. If you can spend a little one-on-one time chatting about their day, it can help them feel more relaxed and confident at preschool.

3. Don’t Worry About What They Bring Home

Not every day will result in artwork or craft to take home—and that’s okay. Children are busy learning through dramatic play, sensory exploration, building, and more. The process is what matters most, not the finished product.

4. Arrive and Leave on Time

Being on time helps children feel part of the group and settle into routines. Arriving late can make it harder for them to join in, and being picked up late—especially when others have already gone—can cause unnecessary worry.

Please text or call us if you're running late for pick-up.

Note: Acacia Avenue Preschool is a sessional program and does not offer extended hours.

5. Keep Us in the Loop

Small changes at home can have a big impact on children’s mood and behaviour. Please let us know if there’s anything that might affect your child (e.g. changes in routine, illness, a disrupted night, travel, or family changes). All information is treated with care and confidentiality.

6. Support Independence

Encourage your child to carry their own bag, unpack their snack or lunch, and take responsibility for small tasks like remembering their library bag. These little things help build confidence and independence.

Appendix 2: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What happens if we're running late for drop-off or pick-up?

Life happens! If you're running late, just call the kindergarten to let us know. For pick-up, if you're unavoidably delayed, staff will care for your child until you arrive or an authorised adult collects them.

Can my child bring toys from home?

We know children sometimes want to bring a special toy—but we recommend keeping toys at home to avoid loss or breakage. Educators may occasionally invite children to bring items to share for news or special days.

What if my child doesn't want to stay at drop-off?

It's normal for some children to take time to settle. Our educators are experienced in supporting children through separation anxiety and will work with you to find a gentle approach that works. A consistent goodbye routine really helps.

How messy do they really get?

Very! That's how we know they've had a great day. We encourage hands-on, play-based learning, which means mud, paint, water, and glue. Clothes should be practical and not too precious.

Do you have rest or nap time?

We don't have a formal nap time, but children are encouraged to rest or enjoy quiet time when they need it—especially in the afternoons. Cushions, soft music, or mindfulness activities are often part of this routine.

Will my child make friends?

Yes! Social skills are a big part of kindergarten. Some children make friends quickly; others take more time. We support children in building respectful relationships, navigating group play, and developing confidence.

What happens if my child has a toileting accident?

No worries—it's common, even for older kids. We'll help your child clean up with kindness and discretion. Please pack spare clothes every day, just in case.

How do I stay in the loop with what's happening at kinder?

We share updates via [insert app/platform], email, and our noticeboard. Educators are also available for a quick chat at drop-off and pick-up, or you can book a time for a longer conversation.

Appendix 3: Acacia Avenue Preschool Policies

QUALITY AREA 1 – EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND PRACTICE

Educational Program

Inclusion and Equity Policy

QUALITY AREA 2 – CHILDREN’S HEALTH AND SAFETY

Acceptance and Refusal of Authorisations Policy

Food Safety Policy

Administration of First Aid

Hygiene Policy

Administration Of Medication Policy

Incident Injury Trauma Illness Policy

Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions Policy

In-Nature Program

Asthma Management Policy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy

Nutrition Oral Health and Active Play Policy

Dealing with Infectious Diseases Policy

Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy

Dealing with Medical Conditions Policy

Road Safety Education and Safe Transport Policy

Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

Safe Arrival of Children Policy

Diabetes Policy

Sleep and Rest Policy

Emergency and Evacuation Policy

Sun Protection Policy

Epilepsy and Seizures Policy

Supervision of Children Policy

e-Safety for Children Policy

Tobacco, E-Cigarettes, Alcohol and Other Drugs

Excursions and Service Events Policy

Policy

Family Violence Support Policy

Water Safety Policy

QUALITY AREA 3 – PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Environmental Sustainability Policy

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

QUALITY AREA 4 – STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS

Code of Conduct Policy

Participation of Volunteers and Students Policy

Determining Responsible Person Policy

Staffing Policy

QUALITY AREA 5 – RELATIONSHIPS WITH CHILDREN

Behaviour Support

Interaction with Children Policy

QUALITY AREA 6 – COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

Enrolment and Orientation – Free Kindergarten
Policy

Road Safety Education and Safe Transport Policy

QUALITY AREA 7 – GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Compliments and Complaints Policy

Privacy and Confidentiality Policy

Fees – Free Kindergarten

Staff Grievances and Dispute Resolution

Governance and Management of the Service
Policy

Staff Recruitment

Information and Communication Technology

Whistleblower Policy

Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Occupational Violence and Aggression Policy

Prevention of Harassment and Bullying Policy

Appendix 4: Parent Helpers

We greatly value the involvement of parents, grandparents and carers in our preschool program. Being a **Parent Helper** is a wonderful opportunity to spend time with your child in the preschool setting, meet their friends, get to know our educators, and share your own skills, culture, and knowledge with the children. For example, you might read a favourite picture book, sing a song in another language, or simply lend a helping hand during the session. Most importantly, parent helping gives you a chance to feel part of the preschool community and your child's learning journey.

Obtaining or Updating your Working With Children Check (WWCC)

To ensure the safety of all children and in line with our Participation of Students and Volunteers Policy, the Committee of Management requires that all parents, guardians and grandparents who participate in the Parent Helper program must hold a valid Volunteer Working with Children Check (WWCC).

The Volunteer WWCC is **free**, is valid for 5 years, and required at primary school level too. You can apply online at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au. If you already have a WWCC, please update your details to include **Acacia Avenue Preschool** here: [Update WWCC Details](#).

Checklist for Parent Helpers at Acacia Avenue Preschool

When you volunteer as a Parent Helper, our policies require that you:

- Sign in and out at the bottom of our visitor attendance book (for emergency purposes).
- Wash your hands when you arrive, and before/after eating (just as the children and staff do).
- Be **SunSmart** (broad-brimmed hat and sunscreen) during Term 4.
- Follow all applicable Acacia Avenue Preschool policies, including **Privacy and Confidentiality** and **Code of Conduct**, to respect all children and families. All policies are available online.

Important child safety policy reminders:

- **No mobile phones** are permitted in the education and play spaces at any time. These must be kept in the office or foyer at all times.
- Parent helpers are **not to enter the children's toilet/wash area under any circumstances**, including to assist your own child. If you wish to assist your child with toileting, you must take them to the bathroom facilities located in the foyer outside the office.

Copies of all preschool policies are available on our website or from educators on request.