Welcome.
Staff.
Services Offered.
Fees.
Programming and Philosophy.
What to bring to kindergarten.
Healthy Eating at Kindergarten
Governing Council.
Parent Responsibilities.
Parent Participation.
Raising a concern or complaint
Health Care.
Health and Illness
First Aid.
Dental Care.
Child and Youth Health.
Mandatory Reporting.
Confidentiality.
Celebrations.
Communication
Clothing and Lost Property
Evacuation Policy
Sunsmart Policy
Bushfire Policy.
External Fire Plan
Site Behaviour Code.
Collecting Materials
School Transition Program.
Attendance Policy.
Site Behaviour Policy.
Welcome:

A very warm welcome is extended to you and your family from the staff and Governing Council of the Stirling East Kindergarten. This book has been prepared to answer some of the questions and queries you may have. We hope you will see the kindergarten as an extension of your home and that you’ll share with us in the development of your child through the preschool years. Our aim is to provide quality education for your child.

Staff:

Director:            Catriona Catt
Teacher:            Angela Garrett
Diane McCarthy

Early Childhood Worker:  Vonny Mahlburg

Support & Bilingual staff work at the kindergarten when required.

Services Offered:

Sessional Kindergarten: Children are able to attend up to 15 hours per week during the year prior to them beginning school. Children may attend 2 full day sessions Monday to Thursday and one half day session. Sessions are negotiated with the Director taking in to account the needs of the child, family and the vacancies at the centre.

Playgroup: Operates from the kindergarten on Friday mornings 9.15 to 11.15 am and is run by kindergarten staff. The playgroup cost per family is $5.00 per week.

Literacy Kits: We have a collection of literacy kits for children to borrow. Each kit contains a picture book and adjuncts that support the story. Literacy kits are a wonderful way of developing children’s interest in books.

Special Services: Stirling East Kindergarten is part of the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) Through the department we have access to a team of specialists in the area of child development, education and welfare. Included in this team are speech therapists, psychologists, social workers and special education advisers. Should you have any concerns regarding your child’s progress or feel you would like access to a member of our specialist team, please talk with the Director.
Fees:

Fees are set by Governing Council and reviewed annually. The fees contribute significantly to meet the running costs of the centre e.g., telephone, cleaning, electricity, Educational equipment, painting and craft equipment, upgrading and maintenance of equipment.

Kindergarten fees 2014-

- $180 per term (15 hours)
- $165 per term (12 hours)

Fees will vary if your child attends less than 15 hours per week per term. Fees and fundraising money contributes to a major part of the kindergarten income. The kindergarten does receive assistance from the State Government—staff salaries, term allocation of funding and other financial assistance through the Centre Asset Management Plan.

Parents can pay kindergarten fees via the internet which is the preferred method of payment. All monies paid into the kindergarten need to put into a labelled envelope and posted into the fee box on the sign in desk. Please make sure you tender the correct money. The treasurer collects and receipts all money. Any bank fees incurred by the kindergarten as a result of a dishonour cheque will be pasted onto parents.

Programming and Philosophy:

We believe that quality Early Childhood practice allows children to engage in learning at various levels & at their own pace.

Our safe, caring environment enables us to provide a challenging, enriching program of experiences where children are allowed to develop & learn through play, according to their individual needs. Play provides opportunities for children to learn as they discover, create, improvise & imagine. When children play with other children they create social groups, test out ideas, challenge each others thinking & build new understandings.

We provide a supportive environment where children can ask questions, solve problems & engage in critical thinking.

Environments that support learning are vibrant & flexible spaces that are responsive to the interests & abilities of each child. (Early Years Learning Framework-EYLF).

A focus at Stirling East Kindergarten the continuing development of our natural outdoor play environment, a partnership between children, parents, staff & local community. Our belief is that play spaces in natural environments invite open ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking, exploration, discovery & connection with nature. Children’s interactions with nature are thought to be crucial to their mental & physical well-being. (Ruben 1998). What we explore as children in the natural environment is carried within us throughout life. (Every Child 2004)

We believe children learn best when there are strong links between their home, kindergarten and community. We strive to build these connections and understandings through good communication, sharing and a cycle of continual review and improvement.

We use the national curriculum “The Early Years Learning Framework” and the stated Learning Outcomes are:

- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- Children have a strong sense of identity.
- Children are confident and involved learners.
- Children are effective communicators.

During your child’s time at kindergarten, staff will observe and note his/her progress and plan for their future development. A formal interview will be offered to parents in their child’s second term of full-time kindergarten, to discuss their child’s progress. In addition informal conversations will be used to share specific information. In the fourth term of kindergarten each child will have a summative report written on their progress and achievements at kindergarten. This report is given to the child’s school, parent and kept as part of the kindergarten records.
Each kindergarten child has a Learning Journal which children use to record their learning and staff add learning stories, art work, photos and other works related to your child’s year at kindergarten. Parents are very welcome to look through their child’s book. These books are to stay at kindergarten and will be sent home to share with families during the term holidays. Each child will be presented with their book/s at the end of the year.

Our fortnightly program is displayed inside the kindergarten and parents are very welcome to read it. We welcome any ideas or resources which you may wish to contribute to our educational program.

**What to bring to kindergarten:**

- All children are asked to bring a clearly named bag to put their belongings in and a named broad brimmed or legionnaire hat.
- A named water drink bottle each day.
- A piece of fruit or nutritious snack—cheese, dried fruit, carrot, celery are appropriate.
  
  Stirling East kindergarten is a **Nut Free zone** so please don’t pack anything that does or may contain nuts. We have children attending this kindergarten with severe allergies to nuts.

- When staying for lunch, children will need to bring a nutritious lunch in a named lunch box as well as snacks for morning and afternoon fruit time. Lunch boxes need to go into the wire basket in the children’s locker area. Morning and afternoon snacks are kept in the children’s bags.

- The kindergarten supplies filtered water for children to fill up their drink bottles.

- Staff discourage children from bringing toys from home to kindergarten— they can easily be lost or broken.

- Parents may want to pack a spare set of clothes in case of accidents at kindergarten.

**Healthy Eating at Kindergarten**

The SA Government has distributed the “Right Bite Easy Guide” to help preschools and schools promote healthy eating and we are required to implement this at our kindergarten. Food and drink have been classified according to their nutritional value:

- **Green Group Foods**— choose plenty.
- **Amber Group Foods**— select carefully.
- **Red Group Foods**— select occasionally.

All kindergarten activities (fundraising, cooking activities with the children, family BBQ nights etc.) that include food will now have to follow this guide.

**Governing Council**

Stirling East Kindergarten is affiliated with the Department of Education and Child Development (DECD) and managed by parents serving on the Governing Council. Members are elected at the Annual General Meeting held in February, and meetings are held monthly, usually at night. All parents/carers are welcome to attend.

The Governing Council is responsible for:

- The financial management of the kindergarten. This involves budgeting, maintenance and upgrade of equipment, fundraising.
- Informing the parent body of all related issues, to enable discussion and endorsement.
- Assisting with the implementation of the program within the kindergarten.
- Maintaining accurate records.

The Governing Council is accountable to DECD, and needs to adhere to all departmental policies.
Parents Responsibilities

Please wait with your child if you arrive before session time, as staff will be busy preparing planned activities. For your child’s safety, please come into the kindergarten with them and make sure staff are aware of your arrival. Children are to be signed in and out DAILY by the parent.

Please make sure that your child is delivered and collected at the appropriate times. If you are unavoidably delayed, please telephone as soon as possible so that your child can be reassured. Should you arrange for somebody other than yourself to collect your child, it is necessary that both child and staff are told. Parents will also need to write the name of the person picking up your child on the sign in sheet.

If you change your address, your family situation, or change your mind about which school your child will attend, please let the staff know as soon as possible.

Parent Participation

Please feel welcome to stay, or drop in at the kindergarten anytime during the session. If you have time, stay with your child and share an activity for a few minutes when you arrive. Please come and read a story to the children occasionally. Just come a little before the session ends, and bring a favourite story or we will supply a book. Children tend to settle into kindergarten more quickly when they see their parents and teachers interacting happily.

If you have any talents or hobbies (playing a musical instrument, spinning, weaving etc) please tell us so you can share it with the children. Please tell us of significant events at home that may affect your child’s behaviour and feel free to ask for privacy if matters are confidential.

Raising a Concern or Complaint

We all expect quality and expert care and teaching for your child in order that they achieve their potential. Working together will give us the best chance of solving a problem that may arise during your child’s time at kindergarten.

We also recognise that at times things may go wrong or you may feel that your expectations for your child are not being met.

About complaints or concerns-
This information maybe helpful in explaining what a complaint is-
A complaint maybe made by a parent if they think that the kindergarten has, for example
♦ Done something wrong.
♦ Failed to do something it should have done.
♦ Acted unfairly or impolitely.

Your concern or complaint maybe about:
♦ The type, level or quality of services.
♦ The behaviour & decisions of staff.
♦ A policy, procedure or practice.

Sometimes a complaint is about something we have to do because of State or Federal law. In such cases we are able to talk to you about the matter & help you understand the requirement & why they exist.

The steps to follow-
1. Talk to kindergarten staff member involved, then to the Director. If you are still not happy.
2. Contact the – DECD Office Mount Barker  83914705

Contact DECD Education Complaint Unit www.decd.sa.gov.au/parentcomplaint or email DECD.parentcomplaint@sa.gov.au or freecall number 1800677435.
Health Care:

It is now a requirement that children attending kindergarten requiring medication to be administered by staff (even once off) **MUST** have a form completed and signed. All medication **MUST** be given to the staff to be safely stored away from children.

Any child who may require hospitalisation due to a known illness or condition **MUST** have a **HEALTH CARE PLAN** done on enrolment to ensure everyone’s responsibilities are clearly defined. See the Director if you have any further queries.

**Health and Illness**-
The risk of infection is high in kindergartens but it can be reduced by appropriate use of preventive measures. Staff promote and support children to use the following measures-
- washing hands with soap and water before eating,
- after using the toilet;
- blowing their own nose and placing used tissues in the bin before washing hands, covering mouth with arm (not hand) when coughing to help stop the spread.

Throughout the year it is very common to have regular colds, coughs and other minor ailments. Parents need to be mindful about the spread of illnesses to other children and staff and it wise to consider keeping your child home so they can recover.

Children will be excluded from kindergarten if they have a contagious or infectious illness or show any of the following symptoms:
- Severe, persistent or prolonged cough.
- Conjunctivitis
- Unusual rash or spots.
- Feverish appearance/ high temperature.
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea.
- Mucous discharge from the nose, thick, green.
- Illness which is infectious or contagious.

For the health and safety of the other children, families and staff if your child shows any of the above symptoms within a 24 hour period prior to attending kindergarten please keep your child home. If your child develops these symptoms while at kindergarten the staff will notify parents to collect their child.

Please notify staff if your child is sick, especially if they are suffering from an illness that can be transmitted to other children or could affect a pregnant mother.

Kindergarten is not the place for a sick child, home is.
First Aid:

At times children have accidents at kindergarten. Staff have an up to date first aid certificate and they take great care when dealing with your child. When an incident occurs during the session the staff will place a red first aid note into your parent pocket informing you to see the staff member responsible for your child’s care.

Dental Care:

The School Dental Service is available to children aged from birth up until 18 at public dental clinics throughout South Australia. Dental care is provided by teams of dentists, dental therapists and dental assistants.

The School Dental Service is available to children aged from birth up until 18 at public dental clinics and is free.

The dental clinic is situated on Dumas Street, Mount Barker. Phone 83910858

Child and Youth Health:

The Child and Youth Health Service conducts health screenings throughout the year for children prior to school entry. The screening focuses on hearing and vision prior to starting school and any other concerns you may have. Parents will be notified for an appointment.

Mandatory Reporting:

As teachers and carers of children we are legally obliged to report any suspicious or incidence of child abuse (physical or emotional).

Confidentiality:

Parental information (eg. address, phone numbers etc.) is only given out upon written or verbal consent from the party concerned. Kindergarten staff respect confidentiality of all matters pertaining to the child and family.

Celebrations:

Celebrations are an important part of our communities, families and therefore children's lives. They promote a sense of belonging and positive self esteem and can be celebrated in a variety of ways. The staff endeavour to celebrate each child’s birthday at kindergarten by singing “Happy Birthday”, however we do ask parents to remind us so that we do include the celebration during the day.

Communication

Staff use email to send newsletters and other relevant notices to parents. Please ensure you check your emails frequently. Hard copies can be printed if you do not have access to an email service.
Clothing and Lost Property:

We would prefer that children **do not** come to kindergarten wearing thongs, slip on shoes, long dresses or high heels. These items of clothing can cause accidents while climbing or running.

Getting “dirty” is part of kindergarten business so **please** dress your child accordingly. Children’s play and hence their development, can be effected by concerns related to getting “dirty”.

Clothes need to be easy for children to manage when going to the toilet. As we encourage independence, children need to be able to manage **their own clothes**. Parents are encouraged to pack a spare set of clothes in their child’s bag encase of accidents. Please name all clothing, particularly hats and sandals.

Lost Property Box:
All articles of clothing that has been misplaced maybe found in the lost property box, which is located near the front door.

Evacuation Policy:

**Action—** Director, & staff & user groups.

**Warning Signal:** 3 sharp blows on whistle (whistles next to wall telephone by the sink in main room, and double wooden door).

**Sounded by:** Person noticing emergency.

**Individual Staff Responsibilities.**

**Director:** Check building/playspace.

Contact police/ambulance/fire 000

If necessary, and safe to do so, initiate search action.

**Teacher:** Take whistle, roll book, first aid and asthma kits (kits are on shelf by phone. Main kit has gate key in it)

Notify Director immediately if children are missing.

**ECW:** help check inside play areas/toilets/locker area and help move children outside.

Children, staff and visitors to gather on play platform and then proceed to lawn area next door (11 Snows Road) through gate.

Call roll. Wait until safe to return to building on advise of emergency personnel.

**BE AWARE:** listen to children, acknowledge their fears and be reassuring. Stay as calm as possible.
Stirling East Kindergarten External Fire Plan:

External Fire Plan—Notified of Impending Fire.

Action-

DIRECTOR- Sound alarm to gather children and staff into small withdrawal room and possibly toilet area if needed. Advise District office of situation, numbers at site. Check against roll book that everyone is gathered and commence search if needed.

TEACHER & ECW- Close all doors and windows. Turn off air conditioners. Fill buckets with water. Gather food, water, radio, torches, fire extinguisher, water packs, blankets from bushfire kit and first aid kits.

As fire passes-
1. Keep all calm and reassure children.
2. Remain as a group seated in the withdrawal room & toilet area.
3. Stay in building until fire front passes. Staff to put out any spot fires & administer any first aid.

After front has passed-
1. Check for & extinguish spot fires inside or impacting on the building.
2. Assess the safety of the area inside & outside the kindergarten and conduct a visual check.
3. Make an assessment & if necessary make preparations for extended care of children & staff.
4. All staff to remain on duty to supervise children for extended period of time.
5. Assess the state of children’s physical & emotional well-being. Reassure and continue to administer first aid, if needed.
6. Evacuate the kindergarten if necessary and liaise with emergency personnel to a safer location if needed. Leave location information at site for families so they can be reunited.
7. Record names of children and persons collecting them as they leave the site in the roll book.
8. In the coming days conduct staff debrief reviewing effectiveness of staff instruction & procedure. Seek support for children & staff from councillors & social workers. Have fire fighting equipment checked & readied again for use. Replenish first aid supplies and bushfire kit.
Collecting Materials:

Sending along materials for children’s activities such as-

Empty boxes   wrapping paper   greeting cards
Corks         wood off cuts     cotton reels
Shells        gum nuts         magazines
Margarine containers paper old envelopes.

Items not for collecting are toilet rolls, match boxes and cigarette boxes.

School Transition Program:

With our feeder schools we have set up transition programs designed to make transition from kindergarten to Junior Primary a gradual and positive experience for child and family.

You are asked to enrol your child at the school of your choice at least 6 months before your child turns five. Please let the kindergarten staff know if you change your mind regarding your child’s school.

For further information and enrolling procedures please contact the following schools.

- Aldgate Primary School ph– 8339 2377.
- Bridgewater Primary School ph– 8339 1600.
- Crafers Primary School ph– 8339 1073.
- Heathfield Primary School ph– 8339 1924.
- Mylor Primary School ph– 8388 5345.
- Scott Creek Primary School ph-8388 2251.
- Stirling East Primary School ph– 83391420.
- Upper Sturt Primary School ph– 9339 2640.

We hope you and your family will enjoy your time at Stirling East Kindergarten. Please feel free to discuss your child’s progress with the staff at anytime.