



# 2020 PARENT HANDBOOK

**St John the Baptist (Sandringham)  
Kindergarten Incorporated**

ABN 63705269770 INC No. A0011125T

In partnership with  
All Souls Anglican Church (Sandringham)

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## **Welcome**

The families and staff of St John's Kindergarten would like to welcome and thank you for choosing our kinder to nurture and educate your child in 2020.

We are a community run kinder and look forward to getting to know you and your family during your time at St Johns.

## **Our Philosophy**

### Our Place

In 1954 All Souls Anglican Church in Sandringham established a Church and Kindergarten in D'Arcy Avenue named St John the Baptist. In 1971 the congregation merged with All Souls and the Kindergarten continued to use the D'Arcy Avenue building.

### Our Beliefs

At St. John's we believe that learning is dynamic, complex and holistic. We aim to create a safe, happy environment, where each child and family has a strong sense of belonging. We aim to enhance children's learning, development, engagement, initiative, self-worth, and identity.

We believe it takes a community to raise a child. We value families and view families as children's first educators. They are a pivotal part of the program. When educators and families work together children benefit.

We acknowledge children are competent, capable and have **agency**. They actively construct their own learning through engagement, inquiry, playing with tools and intentional teaching.

### Our Commitment

We have a commitment to act in the best interests of the children, families, staff and local and global communities. We recognise children as active citizens participating and belonging to many different groups, cultures, families, beliefs, strengths and abilities. We are committed to respecting these differences and celebrating them. We provide a challenging, stimulating and secure environment where children learn through play, experimentation and through their interactions with others.

At St. John's Kindergarten we advocate for the profession, through mentoring, seeking research and building professional relationships.

## Our Goals and Aspirations

We strive to be at the forefront of the Early Childhood Education sector, continually setting the benchmark higher. We aim for excellence through innovative teaching techniques.

## Our Intentions for Action

At St. John's we believe in long-life learning. We engage in professional development which includes contemporary theory and practice. We act by ensuring, effective communication with staff and families, professional reflection, critical pedagogy and self-study, networking and collaborating with other professionals, as well as gaining awareness through memberships such as Early Childhood Australia and Early Learning Association.

## Pioneering Change – introducing Multi Age

At St. John's we are committed to offering our children the best opportunities for learning and social development. As funding changes to allow for 3 year old kindergarten funding in 2022, the St. John's committee believe it is in the best interest of our children and families to trial a multi age group during our 3 yr old session. This allows for children from both 3 and 4 year old groups to participate during this time.

The benefits of multi –age work for all children:

- Play is often more complex as older children extend younger children's ideas or younger children follow the ideas suggested and contribute to the play.
- Children's language development is fostered as older children role model for younger children and surround them with language of different levels and complexity. They are able to modify their language, behaviours and expectations based on the ages and understandings of the other children. In turn they become adept at 'reading' younger children's non-verbal cues and respond accordingly.
- Older children have the opportunity to serve as mentors and to take leadership roles
- Older children model more sophisticated approaches to problem solving, and younger children are able to accomplish tasks they could not do without the assistance of older children. This dynamic increases the older child's level of independence and competence.
- Children build co-operative learning skills, e.g. sharing, turn-taking, listening, mentoring, negotiating, considering alternative points of view, mediating and resolving conflict in social situations

Please see our multi- age attachment for information.

## **Day to Day Management**

The Kindergarten management is composed of:

- Committee of Management composed of parents
- Education Staff
- Educational Advisor
- Liaising with All Souls Anglican Church and Bayside Council

## **Our Staff**

### **Andrea Simons, Nominated Supervisor and 3 & 4yr old Teacher**

Andrea is the Three-Year-Old and Four-Year-Old Kindergarten teacher and has been with the Kinder since 2010. She holds a Bachelor degree in Early Childhood Education and has experience in a range of early childhood settings (both long-day-care and Kindergarten) and also Primary schools. Andrea believes that the early years in a child's life are the most important in their education, putting focus on wellbeing, social skills and independence. Andrea runs an emergent curriculum based on the children's interest and needs which can be both child directed or teacher directed.

### **Janet Stamp, 4yr old Teacher**

Completing her Diploma in Teaching (Early Childhood), Janet has worked with children in a variety of settings, such as schools, kindergartens and occasional care. Janet's musical talents combine with her passion and knowledge to create a wonderful platform for the children at SJK to develop their music and literacy skills. Janet loves to witness students having fun whilst engaged in her singing and music groups.

### **Rose Bisognin, 4yr old Educator**

Rose completed the Certificate III in Children's Services. Before commencing in 2014 at St. John's, Rose worked as an aide in a Kindergarten for a child with additional needs. She worked with guidance from the Kindergarten teacher, the child's family and professional service providers, using a variety of educational therapy methods. Rose feels that being part of this child's journey was a humbling experience. Rose thoroughly enjoys working with kindergarten age children and admires the diversity of their skills and abilities. She enjoys guiding them to become involved in their learning journey and feels truly privileged to be part of their world.

### **Jenny Traeger-Haig, Lunchtime Educator**

Jenny has a diploma in Children's Services and has been the educator in a three-year old group for the past five years. She has worked as an integration aide at school and been involved in the early childhood sector for ten years. She has a strong interest in sustainability and enjoys helping the children to learn about the environment in which we live. She loves being part of a kindergarten community.

### **Liz O'Donnel 3yr old Educator**

Liz is the 3-year-old group Educator, and holds a Certificate III in Children's Services. She is passionate about working in the Early Childhood environment, to have the opportunity to inspire a love of learning and to make a real difference to the lives of children. She is extremely committed to providing best quality care and education to the children and believes that play is important in a child's life. She believes that every child has the right to a quality education, to ensure that they have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

### **Committee Involvement**

The kindergarten relies on parents of children enrolled at St. John's Kindergarten to maintain a community balance to the management structure. Joining the Committee is a great opportunity to be more involved with your child's kindergarten experience and give to a community project you are passionate about- your child's education! It is also an excellent way to network with other kindergarten families who share a common goal. A new Committee for the following year is elected at the AGM held in November and details about the role of each Committee member are outlined and distributed to new families each year.

\* Please read separate booklet outlining the roles of each Committee member.

### **How St. John's Is Funded**

There are four main sources of finance for the Kindergarten:

1. Government subsidy for 4 Year Old Group
2. Parent paid fees & levies - 3 Year Old and 4 Year Old Groups (see below)
3. Social/fundraising activities during the kindergarten year
4. Grants from Bayside City Council and other organisations

### **Payment of Fees:**

You will be invoiced by our bookkeeper. Invoices will be sent directly to your nominated email address. Fees are to be paid prior to commencement each term.

***Fees must be paid directly to St Johns Kindergarten. Details to be supplied on your invoice. Staff and committee members do not accept fee payments at the kinder.***

### **Victorian School Term Dates 2020**

Term 1 – 28 January to 27 March  
Term 2 – 14 April to 26 June  
Term 3 – 13 July to 18 September  
Term 4 – 5 October to 18 December

### **Victorian Public Holidays:**

Labour Day – Monday 9<sup>th</sup> March  
Good Friday – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> April  
Easter Monday – Monday 13<sup>th</sup> April  
Anzac Day – Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> April  
Queen's Birthday – Monday 8<sup>th</sup> June  
Melbourne Cup Day – Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November

### **Other non-attendance days**

Two Professional Development days are held throughout the year in which the service is closed.

- **Monday November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2020** will be the date for one of these days the other date will be communicated in due course.

Non-teaching curriculum days will also be held: Set-up day, first day of term one and pack-up day, last day of term four. Parents are encouraged to help with pack-up day

*\*\*Note: All public holiday dates are accurate at the time of publishing, but may be subject to change\*\**

### **Educational Program**

St John's Kindergarten provides a play-based emergent curriculum focussed on children's developmental growth; their current interests and cultural backgrounds. Both the 3 Year Old and 4 Year Old programs have a balance between structured and spontaneous, child initiated and adult supported learning experiences in which children may use a range of equipment and materials, both indoors and outdoors. Educators guide behaviour by example, using positive reinforcement and encouragement to help build children's self-

confidence, self-esteem, independence and sense of responsibility. Staff also help children acquire school readiness and life skills, including social skills, language skills, physical skills and respect for themselves, other people, their environment and equipment.

We believe co-operation and understanding between teaching staff and parents helps to promote family involvement in the kindergarten and we welcome and value parental participation in the kindergarten program. Educational programs are written and implemented following the learning outcomes of the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) and the National Quality Standards (NQS). More information can be found at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning) for the VEYLDF and [www.deewr.gov.au](http://www.deewr.gov.au) and clicking on Early Childhood for the NQS.

### Outline of Curriculum

Developmental skills and learning dispositions are integrated into the activities and experiences in which the children participate, allowing the program to foster the development of the whole child.

- Identity – Children develop a sense of self; security; resilience; agency; autonomy; and care, empathy and respect for others.
- Community – Children develop a sense of belonging; participation; fairness; respect for diversity; social responsibility; and respect and care for the environment.
- Wellbeing – Children develop their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing; and take increasing responsibility and independence for their own health, self-care and physical wellbeing.
- Learning – Children develop their learning dispositions: curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflection; and develop their learning skills and processes: problem solving, questioning, experimenting, theorising, researching and investigating.
- Communication – Children develop skills and understandings to become more effective communicators verbally and non-verbally; develop literacy and numeracy concepts; and explore a variety of ways for self and group expression.

The curriculum offers the children a broad range of experiences and activities to support their needs and interests, as individuals and as a group. When children show interest in one area the teacher will adapt the program to reflect the children's enthusiasm and participation, creating learning opportunities that support developmental areas and work toward the EYLF outcomes.

The children's learning is assessed through individual observations, work samples, photographs and portfolio documentation. Your child's teacher is available to discuss any area of your child's development, whether a formal meeting is required or a quick chat after the session or simply by assessing your child's Storypark account. Email is another helpful way of communicating, please feel free to email your child/children's teacher and they will respond as soon as practicable.

### Programming documentation

St. John's uses Storypark, a secure, private online space to ensure your child receives the best support possible and that you are involved and up-to-date with your child's educational journey.

Storypark provides each child with an online community which their parent/guardian own and control.

Storypark helps educators, children and families:

- improve understanding of each child's interests and abilities
- deepen relationships and strengthen communication
- share videos, photos and text capturing children's learning and development
- create a portfolio of your child's learning that travels with your child and can be accessed by you forever
- reinforce experiences and deepen children's learning
- capture family culture and heritage
- involve the children in their portfolio
- interact quickly and effectively through iPhone, Android and tablets
- create smooth transitions when your child moves from one educator or learning centre to another.

You can choose to add your own stories or leave comments and feedback for children and our teaching team. You can also choose to share these stories with family members if you wish. We hope that you will invite your extended family so that the children have an authentic audience who are genuinely interested in their learning anywhere around the world.

We have considered the aspects of cybersafety and made sure our teaching team have the knowledge and skills to ensure we are cybersafe. Storypark takes security very seriously. Storypark is not open for anyone to read, it is a password-protected private space for you, your child's teachers and your family. Content that we add will only be shared with our teachers and the family members you choose to invite. No personal information is shared with any third party.

Your Kinder Teacher will invite you to StoryPark when you commence.

## Our Outdoor Discovery Programme

The advantages of outside and nature play for children has been well researched. We are very privileged to be located behind the George Street Reserve. St. John's Kindergarten takes advantage of this bush playground and uses it to deliver some of our program. This is a very exciting venture, as only a few kindergartens in Melbourne have a Bush-Kinder program. Some of the well documented benefits of Bush-Kinder (also known as 'Forest schools' and 'Nature kindergartens') programs are:

- When children play in natural environments, their play is more diverse with imaginative and creative play that fosters language and collaborative skills (Moore & Wong 1997, Taylor, et al. 1998, Fjortoft 2000, Warden 2012)
- Exposure to natural environments improves children's cognitive development by improving their awareness, reasoning and observational skills (Pyle 2002, Warden 2012)
- Spending time in nature has been shown to reduce stress and benefit treatment of numerous health conditions (Kahn 1999, Warden 2012)
- Nature buffers the impact of life's stresses on children and helps them deal with adversity. The greater the amount of nature exposure, the greater the benefits (Wells & Evens 2003, Warden 2012)

What do we do during outdoor discovery?

The great thing about nature, is you never know where it will take you. It might include: animal, plant and seed classification, climbing, sensory play, hunting, wondering, questioning, counting, discovering about life and life cycles, learning about the community, measuring, looking a quantity, volume, collection, sense of wonder, imagination, environmental studies... the sky's the limit! This also opens the door to new possibilities in the class room, such as researching our findings, using nature 'scraps' in our craft, drawing, writing and telling stories about outdoor adventures.

When you consider the Early Learning Framework our Outdoor Discovery program covers all outcomes, practices and principles.

### Community of Learners

St. John's also partakes in community events and cultural days such as Chinese New Year, Christmas and tree week. Incursions and excursions are funded by your excursion levy and are part of the educational program.

### Assessment and Rating

During 2015 St. John's was assessed by Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) under the National Quality Standard (NQS) which

promotes continuous quality improvement. St. John's Kindergarten was rated as 'Exceeding National Quality Standard'

See more at:

<http://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/assessments>

### Birthdays and Cultural Celebrations

We welcome treats to celebrate your families' cultural traditions such as birthdays and religious events. As a community we welcome all cultural, religious and national days and love celebrating these occasions. If you wish your child to not partake in certain festivities please advise staff.

### Getting involved

With your signed consent, lists of all the families' contact details (phone number & email address) are circulated in Term 1, by your class representative, and then again if new families join throughout the year. This allows you to make contact with your children's friends outside Kinder hours. If your contact details change, please advise your teacher ASAP, who will advise the class rep. We organise social activities such as morning teas, family events at Kinder, film nights, and child free nights out at local restaurants etc. We also need your help in running these and other Kinder activities. Parent Duty, being on the Committee and attending fundraising events is a great way of meeting other Kinder families.

### Parent Help / Stay and Play

At St. John's we really value parent contribution in our learning program. We encourage parents, grandparents and guardians to become involved in the day-to-day program. This might be through a special skill, such as yoga, playing a musical instrument, speaking a language other than English or gardening. You may also like to interact with the program and children by putting your name on the Kindergarten Duty Roster and come to play with the children or simply (yet-pivotally) do dishes and wipe tables. Younger siblings are welcome to come with you when on duty at the kindergarten. Please remember it is your responsibility to supervise younger siblings as the Kinder activities are unsuitable for very young children.

Parents will be asked to put their name on the Outdoor Discovery roster during terms 2 and 3 which will involve spending 1 ½ hours with us in the reserve.

Aside from the parent duty there are other ways to contribute out-of-hours which will help to keep our Kinder running smoothly e.g. becoming a Committee member; mending equipment; minor maintenance; watering the garden; covering books; laundry; office help etc.

## Healthy Eating Policy

Our Kindergarten promotes healthy eating, and encourages children to drink plenty of water and eat regular meals and healthy snacks.

Please ensure your child has a lunchbox and large bottle of water. Please pack snacks and lunches in packs that are easy for your child to open and close. An ice brick or frozen gel in the lunch box will help to keep your child's food cool and safe.

For example: Fruits and berries (tip: allow your child to pick the section for the week) Veggies- carrot (grated, sticks, purple, baby), celery, cherry tomatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, corn cob. Other ideas- olives, falafels, can of beans, tuna, hard-boiled egg, rice cakes, cheese, whole-grain crackers, low-sugar yoghurt. Wholemeal/multigrain sandwich or wrap with filling- ham, cheese, vegemite, left overs, carrot, egg, pickles, left over rice, pasta, roast veggies/meats.

There are cooking and food experiences during the year. These experiences will be supervised closely by staff and planned in conjunction with the parents of any child who may have food allergies or sensitivities.

## **Starting Kinder**

Each child will react differently to the commencement of kindergarten. Some children will bound through the doors, eager to begin and others may be slow to warm up or suffer some form of separation anxiety. Please see [http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/separation\\_anxiety.html](http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/separation_anxiety.html) for more information.

Some helpful steps to begin with:

- Be positive about kindergarten. Talk to your child about how much fun it will be at Kinder- friends, games, climbing, singing... when you feel anxious, your child might feel it too.
- Set clear and simple expectations and answer any questions honestly. When it's time for the parent to leave, have a cuddle and say goodbye- please don't, 'disappear' leaving the child with the sense of abandonment. Stick to the agreed plan. If you have explained to your child "I will take you inside, give you a cuddle and a kiss and say good bye" then please don't confuse your child by giving them 15 kisses and saying 16 goodbyes. Let them know when you will be picking them up "After, afternoon tea and group time".

## What to wear

You should send your child in comfortable play clothes, which will stand up to a considerable amount of wear and tear. Play is an essential part of development and your child is bound to get dirty, as he or she becomes engrossed in work.

Although smocks are provided and children are expected to wear them, they will not always come home as clean as you sent them! Be aware that dresses and crocs can be a safety hazard in negotiating outdoor play equipment. A broad brimmed sun hat, already applied sunscreen and that covers shoulders is required in terms 1 and 4 (summer) and a warm coat for winter months. Ensure your child wears well-fitting shoes or sandals for walking, climbing and playing. Crocs, thongs and long dresses hamper climbing.

If desired a St Johns clothing (shirt, sun hat, etc) can be purchased through EDUTHEADS. Details of this are attached.

### What to bring

A large bag (space for art work)

Lunch box- (we encourage nude food i.e. food without plastic wrap) which includes a morning snack of fruit and veggies.

A piece of fruit to share for afternoon tea.

Drink bottle

Sun smart Hat (compulsory terms 1 and 4)

Coat and perhaps gumboots for term two and three

Comforter (if needed)

Extra set of clothes (and more if your child is learning to toilet themselves)

### **3 Year old Specific Information**

**The 3 yr old group operates on Fridays from 8:30-3pm**

**Please note there will be two orientation sessions at the beginning of Term One where attendance time will be shortened. Session times are included in your enrolment pack.**

### Outline of 3-Year-Old Program

The 3-Year-Old Group focuses on social interactions, encouraging independence, and self-help skills and above all provides time for exploring and learning through play. Occasionally we have special visitors and incursions during the session along with triweekly bush kinder in terms 2 and 3. All children's learning will be shared through Storypark (web based portal). Educators will also keep a collection of some of the children's artwork in portfolios that will be given to families at the end of the year.

### **4 Year Old specific information**

4 year old Kinder days will fall under one of the following combinations

**MONDAY-TUESDAY ('A' group) or**

**MONDAY-THURSDAY ('B' group) or  
TUESDAY-THURSDAY ('C' group)**

These groups will be allocated according to a random preferential draw.  
Each 4 Year Old Kinder day has a **maximum of 22 children**.  
Start time is **8.30am** and finish time is **4.00pm**.

Rest in the three and four year old programs

Rest is especially important for children as it directly impacts mental and physical development.

There's no one-size-fits-all answer regarding how much sleep children need. It all depends on the age, the child, and the sleep total during a 24-hour period. This is why our program reflects the individual needs of the child. There will be opportunities throughout the day for quiet, solitary space as well as a dedicated block of approximately an hour each session for rest/quiet/sleep. Children will have the opportunity to sleep; however, this time will also cater for the non-sleepers. With the blinds drawn, calm music or nature sounds, aromatherapy candles, teacher-lead or individual child 'reading', meditation, yoga, audiobooks and educational screened programs, the children can recharge for the afternoon part of the program. Please bring any comforter for your child to use at these times. Each child needs a named pillowcase and a towel to keep at kinder for the first half of the year. We will use these for rest time.

Parent/Teacher meetings and School Transition Learning and Development Statements

For the 4 year- old group, there will be formal parent teacher meetings in Term Three. If you ever have concerns or need to share information with teaching staff you are encouraged to make a time when suits.

In Term 4 your teacher will make available to you your child's transition statement. The Service and Child details will be filled in by the Early Childhood Educator and sections relating to the family will be filled in by parents/guardians.

Transition statements are:

- A 'snapshot' of your child's strengths, interests and background
- Give your child a smoother, more positive transition to school
- Cannot be sent to schools without your signed consent

Your teacher will provide more information later in the year or information can be found at: [www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/earlylearning/transitionschool).

Complaints, Queries and Feedback

If, at any time throughout the year, you would like to discuss your child or the Kindergarten program, please approach your child's teacher to make a suitable

time to talk. You are also welcome to discuss any concerns with the kindergarten committee, our kindergarten advisor or Children's Services Advisor at DET.

Your feedback helps us to continuously improve the kindergarten, so please keep in regular contact with your child's teachers- they are here to help!

### Policies

Please make yourself aware of SJK policies that be found in the SJK foyer.

### Numbers you may need:

- St John's Kindergarten – 9598 7874
- Email: Sandringham.st.john.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au
- Bayside Council – 9599 4444
- DET Southern Region – 9096 9595