



Queensland
Government



2024

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE PARENT HANDBOOK

Early Learning Centre

KEY STAFF

Principal: Mr Bevan Little
Head of Primary: Mrs Michelle Brownsey
Head of Early Learning Centre and Educational Leader:
Mrs Jalaa Manning

CENTRE CONTACT DETAILS

Street Address: 17 Ambrose Way North Mackay Qld 4740
Postal Address: PO Box 3215 North Mackay Qld 4740
Phone: (07) 4963 1100
Email: mcc@mccmky.qld.edu.au (General enquiries)
Website: www.mccmky.qld.edu.au

HOURS OF OPERATION

Long Day Care 7:30 am – 5:30 pm (min 3 days per week)
including school holidays
Part time Kindy 8:20am – 2:50pm
(school terms only)

MCC Early Learning Centre is a Registered Child Care Provider with an Approved Kindergarten Program. We are licensed as a Long Day Care Centre and as a Kindergarten. As such, we operate two separate programs; Long Day Care with an Approved Kindergarten Program (min 3 days/week) and Part time Kindy. The Kindergarten learning program for both options prepares children for Prep the following year and runs from 8:20am to 2:50pm during the school term. The Long Day Care Centre is open 7:30am to 5:30pm including school holidays. The Kindergarten is open 8:20am to 2:50pm.

The MCC Early Learning Centre offers parents the option of having their child attend the Long Day Care Kindy program 5 days a week and during school holidays **OR** Part time Kindy program 5 days a fortnight. Children enrolled in the Part time 5 day fortnight program will attend classes three days one week, and two days the next week (Mondays, Tuesdays and alternate Wednesdays **OR** Thursdays, Fridays and alternate Wednesdays) during the school term.

You will be notified which class your child is allocated to. Although every effort is made to allocate to parents the days requested, priority must be given to those parents whose work commitments cannot be changed. It may be necessary therefore to ask parents with other priorities to change days.

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE PROGRAM

Long Day Care with an Approved Kindergarten Program (min 3 days a week) during the school term and a care program during school holidays.
An alternative program of a Part time Kindy 5 days a fortnight during the school term. Approved Kindy Program hours for both options is between 8:20am and 2:50pm.

LICENSE

MCC Early Learning Centre is licensed under the Education and Care Services National Law (National Law).
The MCC Early Learning Centre is licensed to take 66 children each day in three groups.

OWNER AND MANAGEMENT

Mackay Christian College and Mackay Christian College Early Learning Centre are owned by Mackay Christian Colleges Ltd.

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Disclaimer: All information contained in this handbook is accurate and current to the best knowledge of the staff who compiled it and is subject to change at the discretion of the Head of Early Learning or the Principal. Any changes will be notified through the College App and/or via correspondence to parents/carers.

PHILOSOPHY

Mackay Christian College Early Learning Centre believes that every child is a unique creation of God. All children have God given gifts and talents but not every child is the same. Our purpose is to help every child to 'become all God wants them to be.' We hope to foster an environment where children can feel relaxed, happy and comfortable in a fun environment that they have created and with a program they have helped design. We believe that children are capable of knowing truth about themselves and their world and they enjoy engaging in life and learning through meaningful play. We understand that they are complex, whole beings made in the image of God, subject to many influences and in need of guidance and support. They are individually gifted by God for His purposes and designed to function in, and contribute to, an interdependent community.

Our goals are:

- To support each child in their discovery of the Person of Jesus Christ, God's Son.
- To inspire each child's love of learning through play and through supporting their social awareness, emotional maturity, cultural ethnicity & background, communication skills, critical learning, physical development and spiritual growth.
- To present a physical environment that is aesthetically pleasing, safe and stimulating.
- To encourage good health, nutrition and hygiene practices for children, staff and families.
- To encourage our staff to grow in their professional journey as positive role models and facilitators through seeking and implementing up-to-date research and theories.
- For all children to be inspired, develop curiosity and investigate the world through play.
- To encourage all children to be the best they can be and celebrate their own uniqueness, the uniqueness of others and their achievements.
- To allow individuals to plan their learning and develop at their own natural pace.
- To create trusting, collaborative partnerships between children, staff and families.
- To promote equity, inclusion & diversity in children and staff and to incorporate this throughout the program.
- To provide a program, including routines that maximises each child's learning.

Firm Foundations

We aim to create a nourishing MCC Early Learning Centre that is rich in culture and where the curriculum is enhanced with a variety of information. Everyone is part of the teaching and learning process and acts as coach, aiding children to investigate and not settle for the first answer. We believe this enables children to learn and grow to the best of their potential. At MCC Early Learning Centre, we believe we are beginning their journey in faith and education. Our hope is that with confidence the children will continue their schooling, healthy in mind, body and spirit; secure that their ideas and thinking are valued. Such a strong foundation provides our children with the opportunity for the growth of a love for learning which will assist them in their life-long education.

The MCC Early Learning Centre is a happy, relaxed environment where learning experiences contribute to each child's understanding of themselves, others and the created world. Godly attitudes and values will be encouraged. We aim to provide children with a place where they feel valued. A place where their talents and interests are developed in a fun and relaxing environment. A place where they can be inspired to develop curiosity and investigate the world around them. The MCC Early Learning Centre harnesses the ethos of the College while providing quality child care in a Christian environment.

CURRICULUM

The Mackay Christian College Early Learning Centre Programming Model was born out of the Emergent Curriculum Model and it incorporates its fundamental principles. Therefore the curriculum is constantly evolving and aimed at engaging children in activities that are relevant to their experiences. It has been carefully developed to align with the Queensland Kindergarten Learning Guidelines and the Early Years Learning Framework, and so encompasses a skillful balance of spontaneous and intentional learning opportunities. This framework recognises children as competent individuals and gives credit for the things they can do while supporting them in areas where they are still developing. The curriculum nurtures the child through an investigative approach. It is well resourced, giving children access and freedom to a variety of materials and investigative tools.

The children are actively involved in activities that include:

- Projects and activities which support early literacy and numeracy skills
- Discussion and planning about learning through mind mapping
- Spontaneous experiences
- In-depth investigations of topics in which they have shown interest
- Complex reasoning tasks and situations
- Working together in partnership and self-selection opportunities

Our architecturally designed MCC Early Learning Centre supports the curriculum by providing:

- Dramatic play and construction areas
- Science and nature discovery areas
- Art and creative studios
- Outdoors environment including natural and purpose-built equipment
- Library and quiet areas
- Eating areas

Important Partnerships

Our Early Childhood teachers and children work in partnership as researchers seeking out answers to questions and supporting investigation. In a sense, the child becomes the architect or designer of their own learning while the teacher is their recorder of information and aid in choosing what path to take. This partnership has meaningful outcomes for the child and develops the teacher professionally. This is a direct result of children learning as they are doing, through exploration, creative thinking, inquiry, opportunity, investigation and repetition. Our parents are an important part of the curriculum and also partner in the learning process. Parents can offer valuable information on real life experiences they have had with their child that can then be integrated into the program. This creates strong bonds within the MCC Early Learning Centre and acts as a further resource for exploring ideas and interests.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

General

Parents are to deliver their child directly to the Early Learning Centre where the staff will be there to greet them and help them settle into their new classroom. Punctuality is important in delivering and collecting your child. It is important that parents and their children arrive together and promptly for Early Learning Centre sessions. Please do not leave your child unattended while waiting for the doors to open.

Part-time Kindy

The MCC Early Learning Centre doors open for Part time Kindy at 8:20am. Pick up time for Part time Kindy is 2:50pm. At the close of the sessions, we ask that you wait outside until the doors are opened. The children will be seated in a group before adults arrive, which creates a much safer exit strategy for them.

Long Day Care

The Long Day Care opens at 7:30am and closes at 5:30pm. During the school holiday program, the doors may be locked for security reasons. Please alert staff of your presence by using the doorbell.

Attendance

If your child is absent or is going to be absent, please contact the Early Childhood teacher either by sending an email to away@mccmky.qld.edu.au or your child's teacher. Alternatively, you can leave a message on the 24 hour absentee hotline on 4963 1199. No child will be allowed to leave the MCC Early Learning Centre grounds without the parent's written permission. Parents are most welcome to be part of the Early Learning Centre day. When you bring your child to the MCC Early Learning Centre please feel free to stay and spend some time with them.

Signing in and out

Each day, parents are required to sign their child in at the Early Learning Centre. The child must also be signed out, giving the actual time collected. Staff must be informed of the child's departure. The child is to be signed in and out, and accompanied to and from their room by an authorised person 16+ years. These records are used for attendance checks and it is a legal requirement that they are completed correctly and on a daily basis. These attendance records are used during an emergency evacuation to ensure all children are accounted for and safe. Absent days must also be signed. Unfamiliar carers (even those whom are authorised) will be asked to provide photo identification upon arrival.

Early pick up

If you plan to collect your child earlier in the day, please notify us upon drop off.

Late pick up

If you are late to collect your child in the afternoon, please call ahead so that we can reassure your child that you are on your way. If this has not happened, the child's emergency contact persons will be asked to collect the child. In the event that neither parents nor emergency contact persons can be reached half an hour after closing time, the local Police department will be informed.

Persons authorised to collect children

No child will be allowed to leave the Early Learning Centre without parental permission / an authorised person of 16+ years. For this purpose we request parents to authorise persons who may collect their child in case of sickness or in the event they are unable to do this themselves. Parents are expected to keep the collection permissions list up-to-date at all times. Only the persons nominated by parents will be authorised to collect a child. Current photo ID will be required.

What you do when you arrive

Help your Early Learning child to become independent by asking them to perform these routine tasks. Always encourage your child's little steps of success:

- Place lunchbox and morning tea in the fridge
- Place water bottle in the designated area
- Place sheets in the designated area
- Place bag in their locker
- Apply sunscreen to your child (if you have not done this before arriving at the Early Learning Centre)
- Sign the Attendance Register via the foyer iPad
- REMEMBER TO SAY GOODBYE – This is an important aspect of a successful transition

What you do when it's time to leave

- Please wait outside until the doors are open (Part-time Kindy)
- Be punctual
- Remember to sign the Attendance Register via the foyer iPad

WHAT TO BRING AND WEAR

All children will need:

- Backpack or Mackay Christian College bag (named with identifiable tag)
- Healthy morning tea and lunch in a lunch box (named) that your child can open by themselves (no cooler bags)
- Fruit snack in a labelled container
- Water bottle with a lid over the mouthpiece (named)
- Spare change of clothes including underwear (named and in a material bag)
- Raincoat with a hood (named)
- Pair of gumboots (named)
- Small cushion for resting (named)
- 2 cot size sheets both flat not fitted (named)
- Small bag to hold both cushion and sheets (named)
- Small light blanket for winter (named)
- USB memory stick minimum 4 GB for collection of child's photos at the Early Learning Centre (named)

Sheets contained in a child's own sheet bag will need to stay at the MCC Early Learning Centre for the days of attendance and placed in the storage facility until rest time. Sheets should be taken home each week for laundering and then returned to the MCC Early Learning Centre the following week.

Early Learning Centre Uniform

It is compulsory for all Early Learning Centre children to wear the Primary Sports Uniform on a daily basis. Early Learning Centre children are not required to wear the formal day uniform. An MCC Legionnaires peaked hat is required. Children must wear closed in shoes/joggers with Velcro straps instead of shoelaces. NO THONGS or SANDALS ALLOWED.

The uniform gives the Early Learning Centre child a sense of belonging to the program. For security reasons, a uniform identifies a student immediately. The uniform eliminates the 'clothing competition' between children and is sun safe. The Early Learning Centre Uniform is the same as the Prep Sports Uniform. Support of Mackay Christian College's Uniform Policy is a condition of enrolment. Children may be sent home if their uniform is incorrect. Parents are asked to email or make an appointment with the Head of Early Learning to discuss any problems with meeting uniform standards.

All uniform items are available from the School Locker online www.theschoollocker.com.au at King's Park campus.

- MCC Primary Sports Polo Shirt with embroidered MCC logo
- MCC Primary Sports Shorts midnight navy blue with embroidered MCC logo
- MCC Legionnaire Hat midnight navy blue with MCC logo. Hats must be worn for all outdoor activities
- Track shoes with Velcro straps instead of shoelaces. (NO THONGS, SANDALS allowed)
- MCC Sports Socks preferred or short white socks visible above shoes

Optional uniform items for winter:

- MCC Jacket zip front microfibre or MCC Primary fleecy jacket, midnight navy blue with embroidered MCC logo.
- MCC Track pants microfibre midnight navy blue with embroidered MCC logo or plain navy blue track pants may be worn over the sports shorts

Hair

Hair should be well groomed to not fall across the eyes. The emphasis is placed on neat and tidy presentation.

Boy's hair must be cut above the collar and neatly groomed at all times. Some minor variation in length will be tolerated if hair is neatly groomed. Generally hair should be evenly layered. Long hair may be allowed if kept neat and tidy, cut or tied out of the student's face and not touching the collar. This is ultimately at the discretion of the Head of Early Learning. No 'razor cuts' or severe variations in hair levels are allowed. Where 'blades' are used to trim hair no cut below a number 3 blade is acceptable.

Girl's hair must be cut in a moderate style and be neatly groomed at all times. Shoulder length and longer hair should be tied back using ribbon or hair ties. They must fit comfortably under the child's hat.

FEES AND FINANCES

Free Kindy for 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year

The Qld Government funds 15 hours per week, 40 weeks per year of free Kindy for all eligible Kindy-age children who attend a government-approved free Kindergarten program in a sessional Kindergarten or Long Day Care service.

Eligible Kindy-age – Children aged at least 4 years of age by 30 June in the year they attend Kindy.

If your child attends MCC Long Day Care, you will receive a subsidy for 600 hours and additional care is paid for separately. This additional care may be covered in part by the Australian Government Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

If your child attends MCC Part time Kindy (sessional Kindy), you will receive a subsidy for 600 hours and there may be a minimal out of pocket fee if the Centre's allocated Kindy days exceed the 600-hour benchmark / requirement for the year.

LONG DAY CARE

MCC Long Day Care is billed at \$90 per day. Full fees are payable for absences due to family holidays, illness or days when the MCC Early Learning Centre is closed for statutory holidays. Prior to Mackay Christian College term breaks (April - Easter, June/July, September, and December - Christmas), parents will be emailed an Application for Leave Form. Submission of this form allows you to access up to 2 weeks holiday leave (pro-rata basis for part-time attendance) at the discounted rate of 50%. Full fees apply for any additional days not in attendance. A form must be completed and returned for each separate period of leave to ensure access to Child Care Subsidy. A minimum of 48 hours' notice of cancellation in writing is required.

Please note, leave of over 6 weeks may result in your CCS enrolment being ceased by Centrelink. In the event that this happens you will need to re-enrol. This leave forms part of your 42 days allowable absences. Confirmation of your leave will be sent via email.

Long Day Care Billing

Fees are billed fortnightly and statements sent to families via email and are due within the next fortnight. Please check your statement to ensure you are receiving the correct CCS and inform the Early Learning Centre Admin Assistant of any problems. Preferred payment method is by Direct Debit. Direct Debit forms are available from Reception, MCC website or email accounts@mccmky.qld.edu.au. You may also pay by cash, credit card or EFTPOS at Primary Reception.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) (only applies to Long Day Care)

MCC Early Learning Centre is a Child Care Subsidy approved service. This means that families are able to access the Child Care Subsidy depending on eligibility requirements. To access more information regarding eligibility please follow this [link](#).

PART TIME KINDY

MCC Part time Kindy is free due to Kindy Saver funding. There may be a very minimal out-of-pocket fee if the Early Learning Centre's allocated Kindy days slightly exceed the 600 hour benchmark / requirements per year.

Overdue Fees

If fees remain outstanding you will be contacted by the Accounts Department and if the issue continues, your child's attendance may be withdrawn and legal action may be taken. At any stage in the month you can request a statement of your account. One month's notice must be given in writing prior to your child being withdrawn from the MCC Early Learning Centre. If such notice is not given fees will be charged for the month after the child is withdrawn.

Deposit

A deposit of \$150 is required at the time of application to secure a possible place for your child and will be used as your registration fee. This is to be paid before applications can be processed. If your application is unsuccessful, the full deposit of \$150 will be refunded to you. However, if you choose to withdraw your application, this deposit is non-refundable.

Late Fees

Pick up time for Early Learning Centre Part time Kindy children is 2:50pm and the Part time Kindy closes at 3:00pm. Early Learning Centre Long Day Care is open from 7:30 am to 5:30 pm. Regulations state that at least two staff must be at the Early Learning Centre while there are children on-site. If children are collected after closing time, late fees are charged at the rate of \$1.00 per minute to cover the payment of overtime for the two staff members.

MCC Early Learning Centre late pick-ups can be upsetting for your child and potentially stressful for staff. It is important that parents phone the Early Learning Centre if they are going to be late. If there is an emergency and you are unable to collect your child on time, please contact the Early Learning Centre.

HEALTH AND MEDICAL

When your child is ill

In the event of a child becoming ill at the MCC Early Learning Centre, an authorised member of staff will contact parents to request that the child be collected and taken home as soon as possible. The MCC Early Learning Centre does not have the facilities to care for sick children and will contact parents if:

- their child's temperature is 38°C or higher
- their child has diarrhoea
- their child has vomited
- their child is generally not coping with the day's activities
- their child is not their usual self

No child can attend the MCC Early Learning Centre until vomiting and diarrhoea has ceased for 24 hours. When antibiotics have been prescribed, children need to have been taking them for 24 hours before returning to the Centre. If your child has a temperature (38°C or above) they are to be kept home for a minimum of 24 hours without fever. If in doubt, the family doctor should be contacted. Policies and procedures are developed based on the recommendations of the Staying Healthy in Childcare publication distributed by The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC).

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life threatening allergic reaction. The reaction can develop within minutes of exposure to the allergen. An increasing number of children experience a severe reaction when they eat or have contact with nuts and other allergens. The MCC Early Learning Centre is committed to provide a safe and healthy environment for all children and especially the well-being of children at risk of anaphylaxis. Our staff are educated in dealing with these situations on an annual basis and all staff are aware of which children are at risk.

At times it may be necessary for us to operate as a nut, egg or other allergen-free Centre as children with severe allergies may be present. Parents will be advised if this occurs and would be expected to comply with the Early Learning Centre's requests not to include any of these foods in the child's lunchbox at that time. Anaphylaxis Management Plans should be updated each year and the relevant medication, EpiPen or antihistamine should be kept in the First Aid Cupboard in the MCC Early Learning Centre. A detailed Anaphylaxis Policy is provided in our Policies and Procedures Manual.

Contagious conditions/diseases

Please notify the MCC Early Learning Centre immediately if your child has been exposed to any communicable diseases eg. German measles, so that we can notify other parents. The MCC Early Learning Centre will post notices of illness in the rooms where cases have been reported.

The MCC Early Learning Centre appreciates the value of a safe and healthy environment for children. We ask parents to take their child home from the MCC Early Learning Centre immediately when it is known they have a contagious condition until the contagious period has passed.

These conditions include:

- Chicken pox
- Conjunctivitis
- Cough and cold viruses
- COVID-19
- Diarrhoea
- German measles
- Hand, foot and mouth disease
- Head lice
- Measles
- Mumps
- Nausea
- Ringworm
- School sores
- Slapped cheek syndrome
- Whooping cough

Please ensure that you do not send your child back to the MCC Early Learning Centre prematurely and that they have made a full recovery before returning. The MCC Early Learning Centre reserves the right to insist on a doctor's letter stating a child is well enough to attend and is no longer contagious to other children.

Please refer to the National Health and Medical Research Council website for access to the publication Staying Healthy – Preventing infectious diseases in early education and care services, for details on childhood illnesses, compulsory and recommended exclusion periods.

Emergency Medication

If a child has a serious medical condition that requires emergency treatment eg. EpiPen, antihistamine, or asthma puffer it is the parent's responsibility to supply this medication so we can provide adequate care for their child.

Head lice

Please do not send your child to the MCC Early Learning Centre if they have head lice or head lice eggs. Head lice must be treated and children are not to return to the Centre until after treatment has occurred and all lice and eggs are removed from their hair. Head lice is an issue that requires a proactive approach and all families are encouraged to check their children daily, treat quickly and notify the MCC Early Learning Centre of an outbreak. Communication with the Centre is very important so the appropriate action of alerting others to check their own children can be carried out. The presence of head lice is not a sign of dirty hair or bad hygiene. In fact, head lice prefer a clean environment. If a child is found to have head lice, the parents will be contacted and asked to collect their child from the MCC Early Learning Centre.

Impetigo (School sores)

Impetigo is characterised by collections of small, crusting blisters that usually form on the face or limbs. The condition looks unsightly, but it isn't dangerous and doesn't cause any lasting damage to the skin. However, it is highly contagious. A child with a case of impetigo should be kept home from the Early Learning Centre until the sores are fully healed. The child may return earlier if appropriate treatment has begun, the exposed sores are fully covered with a waterproof dressing, and the child has a doctor's certificate/clearance letter. Impetigo is more common during warmer months.

Immunisation

Parents must supply a record of their child's immunisation upon enrolment. Children must be immunised or have exemption documentation to attend the MCC Early Learning Centre. Children who are not immunised can be enrolled by the MCC Early Learning Centre but must be withdrawn for the exclusion period if a vaccine-preventable disease is confirmed within the Centre eg. a case of measles. The exclusion table adopted by the MCC Early Learning Centre is that recommended by the National Health and Medical Research Council and is displayed in the Centre.

Medical information

All children must have up-to-date medical information lodged at the MCC Early Learning Centre. Please let the Early Learning Centre know if any new situations arise as the year progresses so that records can be kept up-to-date at all times. Current telephone contact numbers and emergency contacts are vitally important.

Medication authorisation

Staff are not able to administer a dose of paracetamol if children have a high fever. When a child has a fever and they are showing signs of being unwell the parent/carer will be notified. The child should be collected from the Early Learning Centre as soon as possible. If parents are requesting staff to administer paracetamol throughout the day, we believe the child is not well enough to attend.

Medication

State and Territorial Governments protect the health and safety of the community from the injurious effects of medicinal drugs by a range of acts and regulations which include lists of drugs and poisons. These are categorised as follows:

- Schedule 2 (S2) Pharmacy Medicine (Pharmacy only sale)
- Schedule 3 (S3) Pharmacist Only Medicine (Supervision of sale by pharmacist)
- Schedule 4 (S4) Restricted Drugs (Prescription Only Medicine)
- Schedule 8 (S8) Controlled Drugs (Prescription Only Medicine)

Paracetamol and other analgesics are S2 medications. These and all other medications, both prescription and over-the-counter drugs, can't be administered to children by staff without authorisation. The parent must make a written request to the Head Early Learning on an Administration of Medication form available from the Centre. All prescription medication must be in a container labelled by a health care professional or pharmacist filling a medical prescription.

The following details need to be provided:

- Name of the child
- Name of medication
- Start and finish dates
- Time medication needs to be administered
- Method of administration
- Dosage
- Expiry date
- Name of doctor prescribing the medication
- Special arrangements eg. storage requirements

The same procedures apply to over-the-counter medications. The MCC Early Learning Centre will not accept any medication which is not labelled in this way. The medication must be delivered to the Early Childhood Teacher before the start of session each day. The Early Childhood Teacher will record each day that they have received the medication which will be placed in the kitchen fridge if required/prescribed. A copy of the Medication Request Form will be sent to the child's room stating the time that the child is to be administered their medication. The teacher will record that the medication has been administered to the child by an authorised member of staff and witnessed by an additional staff member as per the Medication Request Form. Parent helpers, children & visitors are not permitted to administer any prescribed medication.

FOOD AND NUTRITION

At MCC Early Learning Centre, we want to ensure that all children who attend have food and drink that is safe, nutritious and culturally diverse. Good nutrition is vital to growth and development of young children and the foods we provide them often become the basis for lifelong food choices. The Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents recommend that children eat a wide variety of nutritious foods each day and that care is taken with children's food so that it is served to young children safely and hygienically.

Nutritional tips

Children eat different amounts of food according to their growth patterns. For smaller appetites, pack smaller serves - cut sandwiches into quarters and chop up fruit so that there is still time to play.

- Calcium is lacking in many children's diet-provide a calcium-rich food like cheese, yoghurt everyday in lunches
- Fruit has more fibre and fewer calories than fruit juice. Make fruit a daily lunch box item
- Use only small amounts of oil, margarine and butter
- Offer water to drink instead of juice
- Have plenty of fruit and vegetables available
- Choose snack foods based on breads, fruit, vegetables and dairy foods that are filling and nutritious.

No nut products, including Peanut Butter, Nutella or muesli bars containing nuts are to be sent in lunch boxes if we have a child enrolled with a nut allergy.

Great ideas for the Lunch box

- All kinds of fresh fruit (bananas, apples, strawberries etc)
- Crackers with spreads
- Fruit muffins or fruit loaf
- Small tub of yoghurt
- Cherry tomatoes, carrot and celery sticks
- Cheese
- Sandwiches made from wholemeal / whole grain bread
- Cold meat with salad
- Boiled eggs with salad
- Rice cakes and rice biscuits
- Tuna with salad dressing: add chopped celery or lettuce
- Rice salad with shredded lean meat or chicken
- Sultanas or dried fruit
- Meat and chicken
- Tuna or salmon with salad
- Baked beans
- Wraps with meat and salad
- Homemade muffin pizza
- Rissoles, meatballs or kebabs
- Homemade savoury muffins
- Sushi rice roll
- Chicken drumstick
- Quiche
- Rice pudding

Parents are to provide children with a variety of nutritional foods from the five food groups. This consists of breads, cereal, rice, pasta, grains, vegetables, legumes, fruit, yoghurt, cheese, milk and/or alternatives, lean meat, fish, poultry. Links to web sites with great lunch box ideas: www.taste.com.au/recipes/collections/kids+healthy+lunch+box+ideas and www.healthy-kids.com.au/10-great-lunch-box-ideas. The exception applies only to birthdays or special cooking activities within the MCC Early Learning Centre. Parents are free to provide cupcakes or similar for their child's birthday (please refer to Birthday Cakes in General Information). 'Sometimes Foods' are to be kept for consumption at home. We are dedicated to the promotion of healthy eating and physical activity, therefore strictly no 'sometimes foods' will be given to children whilst in our care.

Examples of 'Sometimes Foods' include:

- Artificially flavoured and coloured fruit snacks
- Chocolate and confectionary
- Pastry-based foods such as pies, sausage rolls, pasties
- Fried foods
- Fast food and take-away food
- Highly processed fruit snacks (resembling lollies)
- Sweet biscuits, cakes, cream buns, donuts, chips and high-fat savoury biscuits
- High sugar-content, artificially coloured and flavoured puddings - these are often sold in the guise of yoghurt
- Soft drinks, cordial, sports drinks, flavoured milk and flavoured mineral water

SAFETY

Emergency Contact Persons

In the event of illness or emergency, initial contact will always be made to a parent/caregiver. Only the persons nominated by parents will be authorised to collect a child, and will be required to provide photo identification to staff on arrival at the MCC Early Learning Centre.

Changes to contact details

Please notify the MCC Early Learning Centre immediately if there are any changes in your address, phone numbers, or emergency contact persons. A Database Update Form is available from the Junior or Senior Reception.

Minor accident reports

Any accident or injury which occurs to a child during care at MCC Early Learning Centre will be documented on an Accident/Incident Report Form. Staff will inform parents/caregivers of any accident/injury either by phone or at collection time and parents/caregivers will be required to sign the form to acknowledge that they have been informed of an accident or injury to their child. In the event of a child's injury involving a bump to the head or teeth the parent will be contacted by telephone immediately to allow the parent/caregiver to assess the situation in consultation with staff.

Court orders and shared custody arrangements

If there are Family Law Court orders, restraining orders, shared custody arrangements or parenting plans pertaining to the child, the MCC Early Learning Centre must be supplied with current copies of such orders and parents are expected to keep the Centre informed of any changes to orders or agreements. Failure to provide current orders may result in cancellation of care.

Child Protection policy

MCC Early Learning Centre recognises that protecting children from harm and the risk of harm is fundamental to maximising their personal and academic potential. For this reason the welfare and best interests of the children within the Centre will always be of primary consideration. We expect children to show respect to staff and volunteers and to comply with safe practices. We expect all employees to ensure that their behaviour towards, and relationships with children reflect proper Christian moral and lawful standards of care for children. The MCC Early Learning Centre will respond diligently to a report of suspected or actual harm or risk of harm to a child.

Queensland legislation defines harm as: Any detrimental effect of a significant nature on the child's physical, psychological or emotional well-being. It is immaterial how the harm is caused.

Harm can be caused by:

- Physical, psychological or emotional abuse or neglect
- Sexual abuse or exploitation
- Domestic or family violence

Mackay Christian College has a comprehensive Child Protection Policy which covers the actions to be taken if a member of staff or a parent of the MCC Early Learning Centre becomes aware or reasonably suspects that harm has been done to a child of the MCC Early Learning Centre by other staff, people outside the Early Learning Centre or by other children. A copy of the Mackay Christian College Child Protection Policy can be downloaded from the College website.

Evacuation and Lockdown Drills

Evacuation and Lockdown drills are held regularly and we ask all people in the MCC Early Learning Centre at these times to join in the drill with the children and staff members. Evacuation procedures are outlined in all rooms with diagrams and steps to follow. In the case of an emergency, the MCC Early Learning Centre will follow the evacuation procedures and relocate the children to a safe place. Parents will be notified as soon as possible to collect their children if needed.

Security

To enable the MCC Early Learning Centre to maintain the highest standards of security we ask parents to ensure gates and doors are closed behind them and not to allow children to push any button releases in the MCC Early Learning Centre. We would ask that parents encourage their children to walk and not run in the MCC Early Learning Centre hallways, and to stay with parents while walking to and from their classrooms.

Car Park procedures

As the MCC Early Learning Centre shares the car park with Mackay Christian College Junior School, parents of the MCC Early Learning Centre should be aware of the peak congestion periods between 8:15 - 8:45am and 2:45 - 3:15pm. If using the MCC Early Learning Centre only, parents should endeavour to park in the MCC Early Learning Centre parking zone located at the far end of the Short Term Parking area at Junior Reception. These 4 bays are REVERSE - 10 minute parking only. If parents wish to stay with their child after signing them in or need to see staff for a meeting, please use the appropriate Short or Long Term Parking areas with access from the main roundabout. Please hold your child's hand in the car park, teach your child to use the footpath to the MCC Early Learning Centre (not the road), and be a good role model.

Motorists are also requested to observe the following:

- Please use the 10 minute drop-off parking zone
- There is no parking permitted in the Stop, Drop and Go zone of Mackay Christian College Junior School
- Encourage children to embark and disembark from vehicles as quickly as possible
- Practice a routine with your children – bags in the boot first and then passengers on board
- Adhere to the 10 kph speed limit within the College grounds
- Give way to pedestrians
- Remember that small children do not have good peripheral vision and all children can sometimes do silly and unpredictable things when crossing roads
- Do not park in the spaces provided for people with disability unless an appropriate sticker is displayed
- Refrain from parking in any other designated spaces
- Be considerate to all other drivers
- Be respectful to volunteers and staff who are controlling traffic conditions and the safety of the children
- Take extreme care while driving in the College grounds
- Don't leave siblings / small children in the car

HYGIENE

Hand washing

To minimise cross infection at the Centre, several procedures are followed including regular hand washing. Staff wash their hands before and after attending a sick child or changing soiled clothing. Toys and equipment are disinfected regularly.

To reduce the spread of infection and germs, staff and children wash their hands:

- Before handling food
- Before giving medication
- After removing gloves
- After cleaning up blood, faeces or vomit
- After handling garbage
- After coming in from outside play
- Before eating
- After going to the toilet
- After wiping a nose, either a child's or their own
- Before going home

Toileting

Due to the nature of the Early Learning Centre it is the expectation that all children enrolled in the Early Learning Centre program will be completely day time toilet trained. It is also expected that all children will be toilet independent ie. can wipe their own bottom, put their own clothing back on etc.

Food safety

We are committed to keeping our staff up to date and compliant on all current Food Safety and Food Handling practices. The prevention of food-borne illness involves attention to hygiene, proper handling and preparation of food and care during food storage and distribution.

COMMUNICATION

At MCC Early Learning Centre, we believe that communication needs to take place between parents and staff throughout the day via staff/parent conversation, interaction, email and telephone conversations. We aim to develop trusting relationships with all families to enable us to work in partnership with you.

Meeting with Staff

An opportunity for our Staff to share information with parents is valued and from time to time the MCC Early Learning Centre may request an interview with parents for that purpose. Staff on duty are responsible for the safety and well-being of the children in their charge. Therefore, they are not available for lengthy consultations while overseeing their children. If you wish to speak at length, please advise the Head of Early Learning who will arrange supervision for the children and a quiet place for you to talk.

Communication with Parents

Our main communication is by email. You will receive regular emails updating you on what is happening at the Early Learning Centre as well as reminders of what is coming up. Let us know if you are unable to access the emails or open the attachments. The noticeboard at the entrance will have all up-to-date information. Information pockets are located outside the classroom for communication with parents. Regular checking of the contents of the pockets will ensure messages are received. Communication pockets will only be used by Early Learning Centre. Junk mail incl. private advertising of home-based businesses or party-plans will not be permitted. However, children's birthday invitations will be allowed.

Role of Parents

We actively encourage parents and caregivers to become involved with their child's education. Parents and caregivers are welcome to come into the MCC Early Learning Centre at any time to observe their child's play. As well as observing, parents often bring with them special skills such as diverse languages, cooking, carpentry, gardening, music, storytelling and so on, and these become a valuable part of the program. The Early Childhood Teacher may have particular areas of the curriculum in which they ask the parents to participate.

We value your participation and involvement in any of the following ways:

- Sharing languages from parents unique cultural background
- Sharing information and/or experiences from parents unique cultural background
- Sharing skills and interests in the education program
- Spending time reading stories and playing with your child
- Participating in special activities, excursions and celebrations
- Assisting the Staff with educational programs

Process for any concerns of parents, staff or carers

If you have any concerns, please make an appointment at the MCC Early Learning Centre indicating who you would like to speak with and the topic you wish to discuss. If your concern is about:

- Your child's progress or room activities, you should see the classroom teacher
- Concerns which are outside the child's room but affect your child, you should see the Head of Early Learning first and then as appropriate, the Head of Junior School
- Fees, you should speak to the Mackay Christian College Accounts Department
- Other matters including the staff, you should see the Head of Early Learning or the Head of Junior School

MCC Early Learning Centre Staff reserve the right NOT to hold an interview with a parent or caregiver who is emotionally distressed. At all times during the interview respect for one another is to be shown, or the interview will be terminated by staff. The MCC Early Learning Centre also reserves the right to have another staff member, who has some knowledge of the incident or who is involved in the subject of discussion, present at the interview.

Sharing home life

Events in the family life such as major illnesses, visits of grandparents and relatives, accident or death of relatives or pets, or moving house may be a cause of major concern or excitement for children and markedly affect their behaviour. It is important for the home and the MCC Early Learning Centre to share this information and we would appreciate parents informing Early Childhood teachers of any unusual happenings of this nature for the benefit and well-being of the children.

Younger siblings

Younger siblings are welcome visitors at Early Learning Centre but remain the parent's responsibility. To avoid accidents please monitor your younger child's whereabouts and behaviour at all times. Please do not allow babies to place toys, puzzles & books in their mouth. If your younger child is making loud noises or crying during a time of prayer or teaching, please remove them quietly from the classroom to allow the Early Learning children the opportunity to concentrate.

Open Door Policy

The MCC Early Learning Centre has an Open Door Policy and welcomes parents and caregivers to visit at any time. When children see a connection between their parents and Early Childhood teachers, it assists in making them feel safe and secure. If you have any skills, interests or knowledge that you would be willing to share with the Early Learning Centre, including things that may enhance the children's program, please let us know. Parents who wish to take advantage of the Open Door Policy need to be actively involved with their child. This is a great time to take advantage of the resources available and build an active interest in the classroom with your child.

BEHAVIOUR EDUCATION

The Bible reminds us that the purpose of discipline is to help each of us to grow in a loving, Christlike manner. This is an important part of our understanding of Christ. Discipline also protects and safeguards us physically, spiritually and emotionally so that we may grow into responsible servants of Christ, acting at all times in a God-honouring and upright manner (Hebrews 12:11 & Proverbs 12:28).

Rationale

Effective behaviour education is evident when there are positive relationships between teachers, children and parents. All staff recognise and respect the rights and responsibilities of others. The growth and development of a child is the prime responsibility of parents. At MCC Early Learning Centre we encourage accountability for behaviour in all children. Staff strive to work in partnership with parents to help children develop into mature, responsible, well-adjusted young people.

The Mackay Christian College Behaviour Education Policy is devoted to providing a unified and cohesive code of behaviour for the Early Childhood environment.

Goal

Staff aim to provide a positive, fair and consistent Junior Behaviour Education system and to assist all by documenting clear guidelines for children, parents and teachers to follow. The goal of our Junior Behaviour Education Process is to develop a safe, caring and secure environment where children accept responsibility for their own behaviour and respect the rights of others.

Parent/Adult Behaviour

The MCC Early Learning Centre expects all adults to behave in a reasonable and mature manner when in and around the MCC Early Learning Centre and on Mackay Christian College property. All adults need to be appropriately dressed ie. men should not enter the MCC Early Learning Centre without a shirt, women should be modestly dressed and footwear should be worn by all adults. Clothing should not display images which are inappropriate, degrading toward others or which may cause offence. Adults are expected to use non-offensive language at all times.

Termination of Enrolment

In the event a child's behaviour is having a detrimental effect on other children, staff or parents, the MCC Early Learning Centre reserves the right to limit the child's hours in care, suspend or terminate the child's enrolment at the Head of Learning Learning's and/or Principal's discretion.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Application for enrolment

An Enrolment Application Pack is available from the MCC website or the Mackay Christian College Junior or Senior School Reception. The enrolment process is as follows:

Step 1: Download or receive an MCC Early Learning Centre Enrolment Pack

Step 2: Complete the Early Learning Centre Enrolment Documentation (include proof of immunisation and proof of age)

Step 3: Submit your MCC Early Learning Centre Application and pay deposit

Step 4: Enrolment Officer contacts you

Further information about the process for enrolment into our MCC Early Learning Centre can be found on the College website. Once your application has been processed, you will be required to attend an interview with the Head of Early Learning Centre. If your child's enrolment is successful, an offer of placement will be made by the Enrolment Officer a short time after the interview.

Personal tours of the MCC Early Learning Centre will be available by appointment only. Tours will not be available without prior arrangement with the College.

Please note: Submission of the Enrolment Application and \$150 deposit does not guarantee placement in the Early Learning Centre.

Enrolment at Mackay Christian College

Placement at MCC Early Learning Centre does not guarantee enrolment in Mackay Christian College. Families wishing to enrol their children into Mackay Christian College in Prep – Year 12 should make a separate application for enrolment with the College. Enrolment policies and procedures for Mackay Christian College are outlined on the College website or in the College Enrolment Pack available from Junior or Senior Reception.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Items of interest

Your child may also bring items of interest eg. shells, insects, leaves, feathers or any other discovered items they may want to share with us. This promotes scientific inquiry and discovery learning. Please bring all items in a plastic (not glass) dish and place it in the Bring & Share basket in the morning. Remember to let your teacher know you have placed it there.

Scrap materials

As an extension of our valued Creative Arts program, we are continually in search of 'recycled goods'. We can use bottle tops, sewing materials, boxes of all shapes and sizes, ice cream containers, scraps of material, wrapping paper, cardboard, greeting cards, wood shavings, wood, old leaves, gum nuts, and many other interesting items. When in doubt, let us throw it out! PLEASE ENSURE ALL ITEMS ARE CLEAN AND FREE OF ITS ORIGINAL CONTENTS (eg. milk cartons are washed first)

Birthday cakes

If your child has a birthday during the school year and they would like to share this with their Early Learning Centre friends to celebrate the occasion, your child may bring along enough cupcakes for each child in their Early Learning Centre group either on their birthday or on a day close to it. Please ensure all cakes do not contain nuts, and please provide a list of ingredients to your child's teacher.

Lost property

All items belonging to your child should be named in order to reduce the problem of lost property. All named items that have been misplaced will be placed in your child's pocket.

Child-free preparation time

Mackay Christian College recognises the value of child-free time before and after the Early Learning Centre day. During this time the Early Childhood teacher prepares the environment, maintains the written program and administration of records, and attends meetings along with many other duties. This enhances the quality of Early Childhood Education at the MCC Early Learning Centre. For the benefit of everyone, we ask that you adhere to the MCC Early Learning Centre hours as closely as possible.

Shoes

Shoes are to be removed before playing in the outdoor environment. Please encourage your child to remove their shoes at the beginning of the session and place them in their locker. We encourage bare feet, as much of the equipment is designed to develop feet and leg muscles. Shoes can be a hazard when climbing and balancing. 'No Shoes' allows for the freedom of movement and sensory experiences. However, shoes must be worn when riding a balance bike.

No smoking environment

A No Smoking Policy is strictly applied in all areas of MCC Early Learning Centre, MCC campuses and car parks.

No toys

Children are not permitted to bring toys to the MCC Early Learning Centre as they could become lost or broken. The staff will not be responsible for lost toys that are brought to the MCC Early Learning Centre.

Sleep and Rest

The program must incorporate a balance of activities for children including opportunities for rest and relaxation. A rest time provides your child with an opportunity to sleep/unwind, a time to help them to learn to relax and a time of uninterrupted quiet. Establishing patterns of rest and relaxation, like good eating habits, are benefits which a child can carry into later life. The children spend an average of 1 hour on their beds & quiet activities are provided for those children that are still awake. If your child falls asleep, we will not wake them unless you specify that you would like them to sleep only a short time.

Photographs

Periodically, MCC Early Learning Centre staff will take photographs as a pictorial record of the educational programs and of children's participation in them. These photographs may be displayed for parents to view. Photos may also be used in media presentations, television advertisements and on the College website. All parents are required to complete the Publicity Permission section on the Early Learning Centre Enrolment Form.

Volunteers/ Practicum Students

Occasionally, there will be new faces in the MCC Early Learning Centre when volunteers and practicum students visit to gain experience in the Early Education field. These will also include relief staff who will sometimes be present at the MCC Early Learning Centre. All visitors will be under the supervision of permanent staff members at all times. All parent volunteers and other volunteers will be required to officially register in the Visitors Sign-in book at the MCC Early Learning Centre where they will be issued with a temporary Visitor's Pass that must be openly displayed on them at all times. A Working with Children 'Blue Card' will be required by all volunteers and practicum students. Applications may be completed with assistance from office staff at the Senior School.

Sun protection

The outdoor program is an important part of the MCC Early Learning Centre and consideration of sun safety is paramount. Despite avoiding exposure to the sun in the hottest part of the day, children and staff are still required to wear sunscreen and a hat when outside. To assist in the skin care of our Early Learning Centre children it is compulsory for every child to wear a hat (MCC Legionnaire Hat midnight navy blue with MCC logo).

MCC is a SunSmart school and our policy is No Hat – No Play. Please ensure all hats are clearly named and are washed on a regular basis. This is to assist in maintaining hygiene & help prevent head lice. Parents are asked to apply sunscreen to their child every morning and staff will re-apply every 4 hours while in the sun. Parents are requested to sign the Permission to Apply Sunscreen authorisation found on the Enrolment Application. Please notify the Early Learning Centre staff if your child is allergic to any particular brand of sunscreen. The Early Learning Centre provides sunscreen SPF 50+.

Insect repellent

Insect repellent will be provided by the MCC Early Learning Centre and staff will apply this to your child as necessary. Parents are requested to sign the Permission to Apply Insect Repellent authorisation found on the Early Learning Centre Enrolment form. Please notify the MCC Early Learning Centre Staff if your child is allergic to any particular brand of insect repellent. Please note: ALL insect repellents will be kept safely out of the reach of the children.

TRANSITIONING INTO THE MCC EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

Children react to new experiences in many different ways. Here are a few suggestions that may help to promote your child's positive feelings toward attending the Early Learning Centre.

- Talk about starting at the Early Learning Centre as a sign of your child becoming older, a reward for growing up
- Encourage evidence of independence so your child feels proud about doing things for themselves
- Provide appropriate opportunities for your child to speak to other adults so that confidence and self-expression are developed
- Remember, this is just one of the many stages in your child's life – be positive and excited about this new stage. Children sense these emotions and will develop these feelings too
- Talk to your child about simple scenarios so that they have some strategies already eg. What do you do when you need to go to the toilet? Who could help you?
- Stay at the MCC Early Learning Centre until you and your child feel comfortable with the separation. Do not feel that you are expected to leave, but when you do want to go, please talk to a staff member so that your child can be supported if necessary
- Visit or phone as much as required. Regular, clear communication with your child's teacher is essential.

A CHILD'S THOUGHTS ON STARTING AT THE MCC EARLY LEARNING CENTRE

- Please plan the beginning of the day so that I don't have to be rushed or I may become worried or irritable
- Please don't push me inside the door and run. It makes me feel unhappy, as if you want to get rid of me. Come with me and look at all the interesting things I can do
- Please don't slip away without saying good-bye, or I will be afraid that you may leave me for good
- When you leave, tell me when you will be back and try hard to be on time, or I will worry
- Sometimes I spend a long time making something and I am proud of it. If you call it rubbish, the time seems wasted, but if you show you value it too, even to say I have been working hard on it, that makes me feel happy and successful and ready to tackle more difficult things
- Please come and visit me at the Early Learning Centre and I will feel proud to say to my friends, "That's my Mummy & Daddy" and then I know you really care about what I am doing
- Please don't discuss me when I am in earshot. I don't miss much and I worry about what I hear. I know the teacher will be happy to find somewhere private to talk to you
- When you come for me, please don't ask the teacher if I've been good. I try to be, but sometimes things go wrong and the teacher and I have worked it out and I don't want to be reminded of my mistakes
- What makes me feel good is if you show that you are really pleased with me and are ready to look if I have something to show you, as the process of making it was very important to me.

BUT MOST OF ALL, JUST LOVE ME!

REGULATIONS

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality, and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- National legislative framework
- National Quality Standards
- The National Quality Rating and Assessment Process
- The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

National Quality Rating & Assessment Process

Approved Services will be assessed and rated against each of the seven (7) Quality Areas of the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations. They will also be given an overall rating. The rating and assessment process aims to drive continuous quality improvement at services and provide families with better information for making choices about their children's education and care.

Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)

At the service level, a self-assessment process would be undertaken in consultation with stakeholders including educators, families and the community, against the National Quality Standard (NQS) and related regulations. Based on the identified strengths and areas for improvement, the service management (eg. the Nominated Supervisor, Educational Leader and/or Approved Provider) will develop a QIP which reflects the unique circumstances of the service & its community. The QIP must:

- be informed by a self-assessment against the NQS and related regulations
- identify strengths and areas for improvement
- include a statement of philosophy of the service
- be updated at least annually
- be available at the service at all times (for parents and Regulatory Authority)

Services will have one week to refresh their QIP after advice that the assessment and rating process has started.

Early Learning Centre Policies & Procedures

Our Early Learning Centre Parents are welcome to view Mackay Christian College Early Learning Centre Policies and Procedures upon request. Please speak to the Head of Early Learning.

OFFICE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE

This Child Care service is licensed by the Office for Early Childhood Education and Care, under the Education and Care Services National Law (Queensland) Act 2011 and Education and Care Service National Regulations (NSW) (2011 S1 653) and must comply with this Law and Regulations, including for example, the requirements relating to activities, experiences and programs, staff member's qualifications, numbers of staff and children.

The Office for Early Childhood Education and Care's Child Care Information Service contact number is 1800 637 711.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION and CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY (ACECQA)

One of ACECQA's many roles is to educate and inform the wider community about the importance of improving outcomes in children's education and care. ACECQA guides the implementation of the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care nationally and ensures consistency in delivery.

ACECQA Contact Details:

Address: Level 15/255 Elizabeth Street, Sydney NSW 2000, Telephone: 1300 422 327, Email: enquiries@acecqa.gov.au.

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