



CANBERRA CHRISTIAN  
ELC

LEARNING | NATURE | FUN

# CANBERRA CHRISTIAN ELC

PARENT HANDBOOK 2024



LEARNING | NATURE | FUN





## *Our Philosophy*

At Canberra Christian Early Learning Centre children, families and our Heavenly Father are at the heart of all we do. We believe parents and families are the first educators and staff are here to support them. Our philosophy of child-centered learning in a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment enhances children's holistic development and enables us to provide a faith nurturing environment that promotes educational excellence. Our guiding principle that children have rights, a strong voice and intrinsic value as members of a wider community, influence our teaching practices. We believe warm, responsive relationships are critical for a child's wellbeing and that "Play" is fundamental to individual children's learning. This allows for children to express their ideas and feelings and engage in exploration, imagination, experimentation and manipulation.

Our aim is to provide an environment which is warm, welcoming and supportive of all families. We believe that each child who enters our care is a unique individual bringing with them a range of skills, knowledge, beliefs, values and experiences. We value the diversity within our centre and foster the respect and caring of all people within our community.

We are committed to implementing the National Quality Framework, National Regulations and the National Quality Standards to ensure our Centre strives for quality at all times.

Our Centre uses the Early Years Learning Framework to guide our programming and planning for children's learning. We incorporate the documents values and outcomes into our Centre programs to ensure all children are working towards the same overall outcomes to learning during their time at our Centre. The document encourages staff and families to work in partnerships in order to achieve learning outcomes for children, our Centre values home learning and experiences as important and strive to extend home learning in the Centre environment.

We believe it is important to provide a self-directed play-based curriculum, which intrinsically motivates children to explore and discover their environment. We strive to achieve an appropriate balance between structured and free play whilst keeping a flexible attitude to cater to children's individual and daily needs.

We believe in the importance of staff team consistency as this offers security, familiarity, love and trust to all members of the Centre community. Our early childhood professionals represent a diversity of education, training, cultural backgrounds and life experience. We strive to maintain better working conditions and incentives which reflect the real value of our professional team. We are also committed to ongoing staff development and interpersonal development training. We believe all early childhood professionals need to be respected as individuals and also as valuable members of our team and the whole profession.

# Our Goals

Our goal is to provide a diverse, anti-biased environment, nurturing each child's own sense of self. Encouraging and allowing them to achieve the best possible development in all areas and establishing a positive and trusting partnership with families:

- To provide Christian care and education for our growing community
- To provide for families, children and staff an environment that supports a sense of belonging, confidence and trust to grow and become an integral part of the wider community.
- To acknowledge and celebrate the cultural diversity of our community through our program, activities and experiences, inclusive of all children and families.
- To provide for the inclusion of children with additional needs.
- To enhance a child's ability to develop confidence and self-esteem to work at their own pace and to try without fear of failure.
- To promote the development of life long social and emotional skills in dealing with feelings, getting along with others and being a friend.
- To develop curiosity, concentration and independence through play.
- To learn through innate senses (touch, smell, hear, taste, see).
- To develop sensory motor skills in order to judge, discriminate and sort.
- To develop discipline, independence and persistence in learning.
- To access guidance and assistance from support organizations and professionals within our local community, for the betterment of the centre and its families.
- To work as a dedicated team for the overall happiness and well-being of our children, families and staff of the centre.

# Readiness

The thought of coming to and Early Learning Centre (ELC) for some children can be a very exciting thing. Yet for others going to an ELC can be a big change. Your son or daughter needs a lot of support from you before they start at the ELC and especially in the first few weeks.

So that your child's first day is as enjoyable as possible you may consider visiting the centre together for a few hours, please speak with the ELC director about this option to set a convenient time. Also developing an ELC daily routine and practicing getting ready for the ELC can be helpful. This routine may involve a set bedtime to ensure adequate sleep and a morning routine of getting dressed (uniform for Pre-K students) and packing their school bag. Be positive and reassuring.

To help your child settle more quickly into the ELC you can let your child get used to:

- Undoing drinking containers
- Asking for help
- Knowing when to use a tissue
- Dressing themselves so they can manage things like taking jumpers or coats on and off during the day
- Eating with a spoon or fork
- Setting a start and finish time
- Help them with going to the toilet by themselves and/or ensure they are able to make their needs known to the teacher.
- If your child no longer wears nappies it is still normal for accidents to happen at school so sending a change of underwear can help your school manage the accidents with the least amount of fuss.

# Parents and Teachers

Our ELC endeavors to be an open friendly place. Come and visit just to get to know your child's teacher. Parents are welcome in the centre. Find out from the teacher when it is a suitable time to visit.

Spend a couple of minutes looking at the things in the classroom that your child has made.

Children love it when they see their parents having an interest in their daily activities. Find out if there is anything that can be done at home to help. Sometimes there is cutting out to be done or reading books to cover.

If you are having any problems at home with your child that relate to the ELC, please don't hesitate to contact your child's teacher. Remember the smallest thing may make a big difference to your child's happiness at school.

# Food

All food will be provided for your child within the ELC and Pre-K program. Please ensure you let the ELC director know if your child has any specific dietary requirements.

All food will be provided each day for your child, this includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. The food is prepared fresh with excellent hygiene standards by an experienced cook. The menu is primarily vegetarian with market fresh fruit and vegetables, wholemeal wheat products and excellent variety. The menu will work on a rotational basis and will be available for view each Monday.



Please see an example menu below. These are changed regularly.

WEEK 1	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Fruit, vegetables, & milk	Fruit, vegetables & milk	Fruit, vegetables & milk	Fruit, vegetables & milk	Fruit, vegetables & milk
<b>Lunch</b>	Stuffed Spuds with salad  Fruit Loaf	Pasta Salad  "Monkey" Banana Bread	Corn & Zucchini Fritters  Berry Yoghurt	Vegetable Pizza with garlic bread  Fruit Jello	Assorted Sandwiches  Ice Cream Cones
<b>Afternoon Tea</b>	Carrot Cake	Peach & Coconut Muffins	Vegetables crudités & dip	Anzac Biscuits	Muffins
<b>Late Afternoon Tea</b>	Fruit, cheese & crackers	Cucumber sticks, sultanas and dip	Fruit, cheese & crackers	Fruit, cheese & Pretzels	Carrot Sticks & rice crackers

PLEASE NOTE: We are a 'Nut Free' Zone. No nut items such as peanut butter, nutella etc will be used in lunches. Please let us know if your child has allergies.

## Sign In and Out

For all ELC students, as per government requirements, parents/carers are required to sign in and out for their child(ren) each day. This is done electronically on an iPad located near the front door of the ELC and PreK rooms. Each parent, or carer, just enters their phone number in the iPad (the phone number you have entered on the system at time of enrolment) and on the first time use you will enter a 4 digit pin, repeat and save. After that, each time you drop off or collect your child(ren), you just enter your phone number and pin.

Unless the person is registered in our system they are not permitted to collect a child under any circumstances. However parents can register with us the names and numbers of as many additional people to collect their child(ren) that they choose, BUT each must be registered under their own NAME, PHONE NUMBER, and PASSWORD in our system. If there is any questions regarding this, please refer the person to the office.

# Pre-Kindergarten Program

When your child turns 4 they will be assessed to enrol into the next term of our Pre-Kindergarten program (Pre-K). The transition will be discussed with you before your child enters their first day as a Pre-K student.

Our highly acclaimed Pre-Kindergarten offers a head start in the classroom for your four year-old child.

Pre-K is designed to encourage each child's natural learning styles in a structured school environment. Children in the Pre-K class are encouraged to develop their pre-writing, mathematics, reading and personal skills in a fun stimulating classroom environment with a dedicated teacher. Pre-K is also fully integrated with our K-6 years for school assemblies, sport and school excursions which is great preparation for starting school the following year.

This Pre-K program follows the preschool curriculum and offers students an opportunity to extend their learning through play as well as formalised learning opportunities. Pre-k students are included in the long day care hours of 7.30am-6pm, their Pre-K specific curriculum runs daily between the hours of 9.30am and 3pm.

## Uniform

### Children aged 2-3 years

No set uniform requirements. You can dress them in their personal clothes, however for those who will be moving to 1<sup>st</sup> formal year of school the following year (Kindergarten) they are encouraged to wear the School sports uniform which gets them in the habit and mind set of wearing a uniform.

### Children aged 4 entering the Pre-Kindergarten Program

Pre-Kinder uniform requirements are as follows:

- Hat - Available from **Working Gear Schools**
- Canberra Christian School polo shirt – Available from **Working Gear Schools**  
With:
  - Summer - Navy Blue shorts
  - Winter - Navy Blue Tracksuit with School Polo Shirt
  - White socks
  - Runners- predominantly white
  - Bag
  - Art smock - Available from school

**WORKING GEAR SCHOOLS** is contracted to supply our school uniform and is located at shop 5/51 Kembla Street, FYSHWICK ACT. You can also order on their site [shop@workinggearschools.com.au](mailto:shop@workinggearschools.com.au) and either arrange a delivery to your home or a free delivery to the school which they do on a Thursday. We have their order forms here and also often have a supply of second hand uniform items. So if you have any questions on this please talk to one of our front office staff who will be happy to help you.

## *Items Needed for ELC*

The ELC will provide most items for your child's care each day, however, there are a small number of items we ask you to supply daily, they include:

- Hat
- Bag
- Drink Bottle
- Nappies if required
- Spare change of clothes in plastic bag
- Uniform if in Pre-K

## *Labeling Your Childs Items*

Please label ALL your child's belongings to protect them from being lost.

## *ELC Opening Hours*

Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre operates 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday 50 weeks of each year – it is closed for 2 weeks over Christmas and is closed on Public Holidays. Children in PreK can be dropped off from 7.30am in the OSHC at the school.

## *Arrivals and Departures*

At Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre educators work to ensure that arrivals and departures to and from the Centre are not only safe and secure for the children, but also a valuable means of exchanging information.

In regards to arrival and departure times we ask that parents or their representative:

- sign in on the attendance iPad on both arrival and departure
- leave their child in the direct care of an educator
- inform educators when you are taking your child home
- feel welcome to spend time with their child both upon arrival and departure from the Centre
- keep goodbyes brief for children at drop off time
- ring to notify educators if their child's arrival and departure times will vary significantly at any time.



In addition attention is drawn to the following:

- authorised adults to collect children are those listed on the ELC Admission Form, and
- both parents, unless a Magistrates Court or Family Law Court make different orders, have lawful authority of their children, and are consequently permitted to remove children from the Centre's care.

Educators always endeavour to be available and responsive to the parents' and children's needs at these times. Through creating an environment of trust and support, our educators ensure that the transition from home to Centre, and Centre to home is at all times a pleasant and positive experience for the parents and the children.

## *Late collection*

If parents are unavoidably detained and unable to collect their child at the agreed time, they must telephone the Centre and advise their expected time of arrival. If another person is to collect their child they must provide full details about this person to the Director of Centre.

If parents have not contacted the Centre and their child has not been collected by closing time the educators will attempt to telephone them. If this is not successful, the emergency contact people listed on the child's Admission form will then be contacted to arrange for immediate collection of the child.

The Centre has a policy of charging a fee to parents who are late to collect their children. This fee is to cover the costs of educators' overtime hours plus all telephone costs. A late fee of \$5 for every 5 minutes or part thereof will apply to cover educators' overtime. This fee is not covered by the Child Care Benefit.

## *Holidays*

Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre will close for two weeks over Christmas each year. No fees are charged for these two weeks. Families are also entitled to an additional two weeks holiday per year at your own choosing for which only half the daily fee is charged. A minimum of two weeks' notice is required for this fee reduction. This notice is required to be formally sent as an email to the Main Office prior to the family taking this leave.

***The dates for 2024/2025 are: Last day is Friday 20<sup>th</sup> Dec 2024 and reopens on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025.***

Please note:

- two weeks' notice should be given prior to the holidays,
- weeks from year to year are not able to be accumulated,
- two weeks' notice is required to cancel holidays,
- any other holidays taken outside of the two weeks are payable in full.

## Public Holidays

Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre will be closed all public holidays and no fees are charged for these days. They are :

- Australia Day
- Canberra Day
- Good Friday
- Easter Monday
- Anzac Day
- Reconciliation Day
- Queen's Birthday
- Family & Community Holiday
- Labour Day

## Absences

Please contact the ELC if your child will be absent for any enrolled day. This is because Canberra Christian Early Learning Centre has a legal obligation to the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) to record all absences of children who are in receipt of the Child Care Benefit within the Centre.

All absent days at the centre are charged at the normal daily rate.

### Allowable Absence Days

The Australian Government **Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations** allows 42 absence days for each child per financial year with no impact on a families CCS. These absences may be taken for any reason and do not require supporting documentation but they are only available on a day on which care would have otherwise been provided and the family was charged for that care. You will be contacted if you reach this limit.

## Fees

The daily fee for all students is \$102.00 a day.

Please note as per the policies relating to the ELC all fees are charged two weeks in advance and invoices must be paid two weeks in advance of attendance. Also be advised that the daily charge still applies should your child not attend for any reason. Additional fee information can be found in the information pack as well as downloadable on the school website [www.ccs.act.edu.au](http://www.ccs.act.edu.au).

### **Banking details for Direct Debit:**

Westpac Bank

Name : SDA Schools (SNSW) Ltd Canberra Christian School

BSB : 032 719

Account # 543 635

## Child Care Supplement (CCS)

The CCS is a payment from the Australian Government that helps working families with the cost of child care for children under compulsory school age. The percentage of CCS eligibility varies and is assessed on the following criteria.

- A family's [annual adjusted taxable income](#) determines the percentage of subsidy they are eligible for
- An [activity test](#) determines how many hours of subsidised care families can access, up to a maximum of 100 hours per fortnight, and
- The [type of child care service](#) determines the hourly rate cap.

*More information can be found out by calling the Family Assistance office on 13 61 50 and/or on the following web. <https://guides.dss.gov.au/family-assistance-guide/1/2/6>*

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of paramount importance at Canberra Christian Early Learning Centre. All of the information provided by families, such as addresses, phone numbers, and custody information, is seen and recorded only by the administration staff and the educators directly responsible for the care of the child.

At no time will information be released without parents' consent, and any individual meetings that take place between parents and educators will be undertaken with the highest degree of professionalism.

## Changing or Cancelling Care

Should you need to change or cancel your child's care, 4 weeks' notice must be given during which time normal fees will apply. Please send an email to [admin@ccs.act.edu.au](mailto:admin@ccs.act.edu.au). Failing this, a cancellation fee equivalent to the cost of four weeks care will be charged to your final account.

If your child does not attend the Centre for more than four consecutive weeks without any notice to the Director, then the family's booking will be automatically cancelled, and the child's place will be offered to another family on the waiting list.

# Curriculum

Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre is committed to providing an excellent early learning curriculum, which is highly structured, intentional and focused, and is building on the children's interests, strengths, capabilities, culture, developmental needs and experiences. The curriculum decision making aims to reflect the Early Learning Centre philosophy and the Canberra Christian Early Learning values and ethos. Our curriculum development aspires to be a cycle of reflection, planning, implementation and evaluation. Each step depends on the other and the best educational experiences are provided for the children when these steps are working effectively.

All children are carefully observed and the fortnightly programs are based on these observations and reflections of their interests, strengths and developmental needs. Educators work within their teams to provide the best possible learning outcomes for each individual child and groups of children. Documentation of the children's work and ideas is a big part of the Curriculum and takes shape in the form of the daily stories on Storypark, children's individual portfolios and displays of the project work the children have undertaken.

Parents and members of the wider school community are welcomed to participate in the curriculum development cycle by providing input and feedback, and by taking note of our programming 'tools' such as the daily stories on Storypark. These are an excellent medium for discussing the events of each day with children and families, both in reflection and in preparation for a new day.

The very successful Jolly Phonics program which is a Synthetic Phonics program is a part of the daily program in the pre-kinder room and is taught by the PreK teacher.

# Emergency Evacuations

Canberra Christian Early Learning Centre will carry out evacuation drills once every 6 weeks. All educators and children present on the day will take part. These drills are documented and recorded.

## Communication

We realize communication between the school and our families is very important. So we have a number of avenues to communicate with you:

- Newsletter
- Storypark

### **Storypark**

Storypark is a tool used to create children's learning stories and ePortfolios online. It is a private learning community for each child to engage teachers and parents in their daily activities and learning. Information about Storypark will be provided to you on your first day at the ELC.

### **Newsletter**

A newsletter is produced regularly and is available via your email. To register to receive it go to our website at <https://www.ccs.act.edu.au/> scroll down to the bottom of the first screen and enter your email in the box that says **join our newsletter**

## Medication

If your child requires any form of medication please pass it on to a staff member on arrival at the centre. Staff will ask you to complete a form to ensure the medication can be administered during the day. All medication must be clearly labeled with the child's name and date of birth.

## *Injuries, Illness and Infectious Conditions*

Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre aims to take all precautions to prevent accidents and injuries to children, educators, volunteers or visitors to the centre, and to minimise complications. We ensure at least one person who has a current approved First Aid Certificate as described by the ACT Childcare Services Standards is on the premises at all times and we regularly practise emergency procedures with children, and keep a record of these. We also have an easily accessible fully stocked First Aid Kit which is kept inaccessible to children.

We will also ensure immediate action; appropriate services and care are provided in a medical, dental emergency or accident involving an educator, a child, a volunteer or a visitor, to prevent further injury or death. On enrolment, parents or legal guardians give written authorisation for any ELC educator, director or other CCS staff to seek medical assistance which they deem necessary in the case of accident or emergency e.g. ambulance, hospital or other medical services. They also agree to pay all medical expenses on behalf of their child.

When a child is acutely ill from an infectious disease or an educator or a person normally working at or visiting the centre is suspected as having an infectious disease as listed by the ACT Health Communicable Disease Control Section, we will, under the Public Health Regulations (ACT) exclude them from care or work and notify the local Public Health Unit providing any details of any known or suspected person (children) with any of the following vaccine preventable diseases - measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis (whooping cough).

When a child becomes acutely ill or is injured during care, we will:

- Notify the family as soon as practically possible, and request they or a responsible person nominated by the family, pick up, take charge of the child and take him/her to the child's doctor.
- Keep the child under adult supervision until the child's family or a responsible person with consent to take charge of the child arrives, and, if required, provide appropriate first aid.
- If medication is required in an emergency without prior consent of the child's parent or legal guardian, make every attempt to secure consent from a parent or legal guardian or consent from a registered medical practitioner.

## *Birthdays*

Birthdays are very important to young children. You are welcome to send in something special to share with their classmates to celebrate your child's birthday. However, please note that it cannot be home made items. They need to be store bought items that also have full ingredients noted and commercially packaged. As a suggestion ice blocks, lollipops, individually wrapped sweets. As we are a Nut Free Zone, please ensure no nuts are in the ingredients.

## *Excursions*

Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre offers excursions to children that are designed to:

- add to their individual learning experience
- provide opportunities to explore new environments
- respond to specific interests of the children

Often these visits will be a walking visit into the school property or surrounding neighbourhood. As part of enrolment parents are asked to give authority for their children to take part in such visits without specific permission each time.

On the occasion of other more significant excursions, parents will be given at least two weeks' written notice. Children who do not attend an excursion will take part in a supervised program at the ELC.

## *Sun Protection*

Hats are necessary to protect the children from the sun. It is compulsory to wear hats during all outdoor activities. Don't forget to label you child's hat clearly on the inside. We also offer sunscreen for children to put on before they go out to play.

## *Drink Bottles*

Your child will need a drink bottle with water in it. No juice or cordial please. Ensure the water bottle is labelled with their name and filled with fresh water each day.

## *Toys at School*

Please do not let your child bring toys from home. They will not be able to play with them during ELC hours. This is purely to safeguard you child's toys from loss or breakage.

# Orientation & Settling-in

Canberra Christian School Early Learning Centre aims to ensure that families have a smooth transition into the Centre. It is very important that both parents and children feel welcome, comfortable and settled into the program before commencing care.

Families are invited to attend the ELC for a personalised settling-in process for their child. The orientation process is for an hour between 9 and 11 am and the parent(s) to remain with the child for their confidence. We encourage parents, who have been offered a place, to bring their child along for a visit on a mutually convenient day. Fees are not charged for children's orientation visit, but parents must remain on the premises due to licensing requirements. As quiet/sleep time is between 12 noon and 2 pm accordingly this is not a time to plan to visit the centre. .

If parents are concerned in any way during the time the child is attending the Centre, they are encouraged to telephone, e-mail or meet the child's Room Leader or the Centre Director for reassurance of the child's wellbeing and progress. Educators will always tell them honestly how their child is.

## Priority of Access

The Commonwealth Government provides guidelines in regard to access that is prioritised according to need. When filling vacant places, a service must fill them according to the following priorities:

**Priority 1:** a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect

**Priority 2:** a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work, training, study test

**Priority 3:** any other child

**Priority 4:** special consideration will be given to families with children with special needs, and parents in need of respite.

Although all effort would be made to avoid such occasions, because of these government guidelines it may be necessary to change either the time of attendances, or number of attendances, for families considered of lower priority under these guideline, to make room for a family requiring care for reasons considered within these guidelines as a higher need. Families should be assured that they will only be asked if absolutely necessary.



# Record Keeping

The Centre maintains all information provided by the families on computer and on file. Families are asked to ensure records are kept up to date by communicating any changes to the child's pertinent information to the Director. After updating the central administration records, this information is forwarded to the educators in the child's playroom, where relevant written records are updated.

If any of the following details are changed, the Centre should be notified:

- your child's diet
- allergies
- change of address or phone
- immunisations (dates, please)
- change of work/study address/phone
- change to emergency contacts

The Centre should be informed of any changes throughout the year in order to cater for the child's needs and to be able to contact the parents throughout the day if the need arises.

# Policy and QIP

All Centre policies related to the operation, governance and daily activities in the center can be found in printed format in the ELC and front office as well as on the Storypark website. The Centre's Quality Improvement Plan can also be found in the same locations. We value all feedback and appreciate any comments or ideas you may have in relation to these documents.

# The First Day

*Being prepared:*

- If you can, have everything ready the night before. Your child will go off to the ELC happily if everything goes smoothly rather than a last minute rush.
- Some children find drop-off very stressful. Try to make your actual goodbyes fairly brief and leave as soon as you see that your child has settled or the room leader is looking after them. Most children who get upset are fine as soon as you leave the school grounds.
- Don't be worried if your child is happy to go to the ELC on the first day but on the second and third day that they don't want to go. This is a typical reaction for beginners.
- You may notice your child is tired and gets upset easily. Time in Care at first is a very long day. You may need to give your child a little more attention and sleep to get back to normal.
- Demonstrate your trust in the staff and your enthusiasm about the ELC.





NURTURE FOR TODAY  
LEARNING FOR TOMORROW  
CHARACTER FOR ETERNITY



### **Contact Us**

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Phone: 02 6286 3989

Email: [admin@ccds.act.edu.au](mailto:admin@ccds.act.edu.au) or [principal@ccs.act.edu.au](mailto:principal@ccs.act.edu.au)

[www.ccs.act.edu.au](http://www.ccs.act.edu.au)