

Pitt Town Pre School



Since 1985

Parent Handbook

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Thankyou for choosing the Pitt Town Pre-school to be part of your child's experiences in their younger years.

At the Pitt Town Pre-school we recognise that a child's development is made up of a range of experiences developed both at home & at school. Families are an integral part of our ability to look after your child. It is only through open communication between both families & the school that we can best meet the individual needs of your child.

We are an accredited Centre, always striving for excellence & continually looking for room for improvement by working together with families & our surrounding communities.

About Maryanna

Hi, I am Maryanna Witt, I started this Pre-school in 1985 along with the help & support of my family.

I opened this Centre because of my love & desire to see & help children build a solid foundation of learning to help prepare them for their futures as they move into the big wide world. Our Centre is run upon strong beliefs that all children should have the best start in life. It is by building a strong foundation that their building will grow & prosper.

My personal policies & philosophies are based upon the nurturing of each child as a respected individual & to build within them the confidence to see themselves as important human beings who have the ability to love & respect both themselves & others around them.

My staff are all hand picked in consultation with current staff. The selection is based upon both their qualification & their ability to care for & interact with children & their families. I am of strong belief that both the dedication of a Director together with the staff is what makes a successful Centre.

I am a hands on Director who is actively involved with the day to day running of the Centre. I personally oversee the activities & am on hand for both staff & families to approach.

Helping to build our children's future since 1985

Hi, I'm Maryanna & this is my Daughter Daniella & Granddaughter Bay-lee



We Provide Care For Children 0 - 6 yrs.

At our Pre-school we care for children from the ages of 0 months to 6 years. Currently we are licensed to accept up to 90 children each day.

The Children are divided into age groups throughout the day; each group has their own teacher & assistants.

- Our 0-2 year old group is called the "Turtles", caring for up to 20 children per day (approx. 8 - 10 per room)
- Our 2-3 year old group is called the "Grasshoppers", caring for up to 20 children per day.
- Our 3-4 year old group is called the "Caterpillars", caring for up to 20 children per day.
- Our 4-5 year old group is called the "Butterflies", caring for up to 20 children per day.

We also provide a Before & After School Care & Vacation Care service.

We provide Before & After school care for children between the ages of 6 - 12. Currently we cater for Pitt Town & Cattai Public schools for Before & After School Care.

Vacation care is available to all children in primary school who have completed their first term of Kindergarten & up. For more information about this service please give us a call. (Children must have completed their first term in Kindergarten before they are eligible for Vacation care)

Our Hours of Operation are 7.30am - 6.30 pm.

Our Centre is open Monday - Friday, 7.30am - 6.30pm. *It is important that no child be left at the Centre prior to 7.30 as the Centre & staff is not adequately covered under insurance & licensing guidelines.* It is requested that all children be collected by at least 6.15pm in order to allow the staff adequate time to check & secure the building & lock up at 6.30pm.

Our Centre currently is open for 50 weeks of the year & closes for 2 weeks over Christmas. (This may change where needed).

Fees

We aim to provide the best care that all children deserve, we also understand that childcare can be a very costly endeavour for families, for this reason we try our best to keep fees as low as we can.

Fees are payable throughout the year, fortnightly in advance, whether your child is in attendance or not, as long as your booking remains current. No fees are payable during the time that the Centre is closed for holidays.

Fees are mostly indexed up at the beginning of each July to meet the unfortunate but necessary increase in costs that inevitably occur each year. The Centre reserves the right to increase fees as required.

Childcare benefits are offered through the Family Assistance Office, as well as family Tax Benefits through the Australian Tax Office for working families.

Fees are charged at the same rate for all age groups. Payments may be made via cash, cheque, direct deposit or Eftpos/Credit.

A deposit of \$100.00 for each child is required on confirmation of any booking. \$30.00 goes towards their enrolment & entertainment package when starting pre-school. The remaining \$70.00 will be refunded from the final fees when your child leaves the Pitt Town Pre-school.

Two weeks written notice is required if your child is to discontinue their enrolment or drop days at the Pitt Town Pre-school for any reason. Cancellation of days will not be taken after the 1st of November for reasons that it is not viable to start a new child in the last few weeks of the year. Cancellation of days after 1st of November will only be considered under special circumstances.

The Centre has a make-up day policy, including one for 5 day a week families, in place to give parents a chance to catch up on days they have paid for & not attended. These are only given for public holidays & illness accompanied by a Medical Certificate with a limit of 4, we require fees to be up to date before issuing make-up days. Full details of this policy are available in the front foyer of the Pre-school.

In order to register for childcare benefits & claim your 50% rebate if eligible you will need to:

- Phone the family assistance office on 136 150 (8am - 8pm) & inform them that your child will be attending the Pitt Town Pre-school
- If they ask about being a "school child", only say yes if you are registering for B&A or Vacation care.

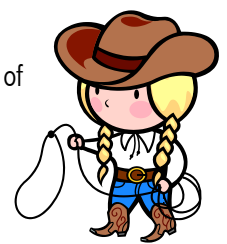
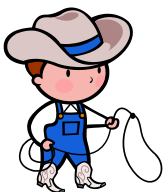
What kind of activities will we there be throughout the day?

All children will participate in a range of activities, which are both specifically designed to assist with the development of each child as well as fun. Activities will vary from age group to age group as to their appropriateness & safety, e.g. small Lego will not be offered to the 0-2's.

Children can explore a wide variety of activities, playdough, home corner, Lego, Toole, cars & trucks, books, puzzles, dolls & babies, craft experiences, balls, sand play, climbing frames & so many other things there are too many to mention, our teachers incorporate a range of activities into their programs each week keeping in mind the key learning & developmental areas.

Our teachers will be monitoring such areas as:

- **Social/Emotional Skills:** This is an extremely important area of a child's development as confidence & emotional maturity will give children the skills to work to the best of their ability for the rest of their lives.
 - **Gross Motor Skills:** The ability to run, jump, hop, skip, hit a ball with a bat & catch a ball etc.
 - **Fine Motor Skills:** The ability to manipulate objects with their fingers, hold & control a pencil, cut with scissors, thread, paste items to paper etc.
 - **Cognitive Skills:** The ability to recognise basic numbers, colours, shapes & basic mathematical skills as well as understanding concepts.
 - **Language Skills:** Our staff will monitor each child's language skills, however if there is any concern about any child's speech development he/she may be referred onto a speech therapist.



Daily Routines

Each day will be flexible to meet the needs of individual children though we try to maintain a structured routine that children get to know & follow. Routines will vary between seasons. These routines consist of:

- **Outdoor play:** at this time children have the opportunity to exercise their large muscles & develop those all important gross motor skills. It is also a great time to develop friendships & social skills.
- **Indoor play:** this is a slightly more structured time which is designed to assist children with the development of such things as their fine motor, social, cognitive & imaginary play skills etc.
- **Music groups:** at music time all children are invited to participate in varying musical activities with movement to music programs & a variety of music appreciation programs designed for their specific age groups.
- **Story groups:** during story groups, teachers may read stories as well as encourage children to participate in group discussions regarding varying topics of interest or be relevant to things they have been learning in their daily programs.
- **Meal times:** These are great times for children to sit together with their peers & carers & enjoy their meals over lots of discussions. A great social experience & opportunity to expand taste buds.
- **Rest periods:** all children are offered the opportunity to have a rest or sleep during the day, resting periods are usually after lunch though we are flexible to meet the needs of all children, especially with the 0-2's who all have varying routines.
- **Afternoon tea:** children still at school at 4pm will take part in a yummy afternoon tea.
- **Late afternoon tea (5.45pm):** children will be offered a drink of chocolate/plain milk & a biscuit.

At our pre-school we also have regular in-house activities which expose children to new experiences & extend on ideas & interest children have expressed throughout our programs. Such activities include puppet shows, culturally diverse dancers, life education, wildlife displays & many more.

Meals throughout the day

All families are required to send along a healthy & nutritious morning tea for their child/ren. It is strongly encouraged that all morning teas consist of at least 1 piece of fruit, as well as maybe another healthy snack such as a yogurt, cheese stick, rice crackers etc. We strongly advise that things such as chocolate products, roll ups, chips etc. be saved for home.

The Centre has a strict policy of NO PEANUT BUTTER products or products with any nut content, please be very careful when sending muesli bars etc. as many contain some form of nuts, plain muesli is fine.



We will provide all children with milk during the day - if your child has an allergy to milk it is important that staff are notified so we can discuss an alternative. Fresh drinking water is available to all children at all times throughout the day.

Our cook will make up a nutritious combination of mixed sandwiches for our 2-5 year old children, a hot meal will be offered to this age group once per week on a rotational basis.

The children in the 0-2 year old room will be offered a hot meal each day together with a selection of sandwiches.

Afternoon tea often consists of fresh fruit, crusikts, muffins, two fruits, jelly, custard etc. with a drink of water.

All our meals are nutritionally balanced in accordance with the requirements set out & are monitored by a nutritionist at the Local Area Health.

If you should have any concerns about the meals your child is being offered or you have any special requirements please make sure you speak to a staff member - we will be more than happy to listen to you & attempt to meet the needs of each child. Our weekly menus are always on display in the office, we welcome comments & new ideas.

Meeting the needs of all children developmentally

Each child within the Centre has an individual development chart designed specifically to cater for all ages & stages of development.

The teachers work on a rotating cycle so that each child's development is observed & documented monthly. Individual activities are planned in conjunction with our observations for each child to further develop skills. Teachers are able to monitor each child closely to make sure that all children are developing appropriately for their age.

Please feel free to discuss your child's development with his/her teacher on a regular basis. You are also invited to look at your child's development chart - you will need to ask your child's teacher to access these files as they are securely locked away for privacy.

Should the teachers at the Centre have any concerns about a child, they will approach the parents in order to discuss a strategy to assist in furthering their development.

Special needs at pre-school

The Centre has an anti bias policy that no child will be discriminated against, regardless of race, religion, gender, ability, family structure or economic status.

Children with special needs will be welcomed & catered for to the best of our ability within the Centre. The Centre is wheelchair friendly & allows access to most areas of the pre-school.

The Centre will wherever deemed necessary seek outside assistance in order to meet the needs of special needs children & seek advice from relevant professionals in the field.

Privacy within the Centre

As families enter the Centre, the computer automatically allocates each child with an id number. You will need to ask your teachers what their number is when you start.

We use these numbers when writing up observations or activities relating to your child on a publicly displayed chart each week. The reason we use the number system is for privacy of each family. The number will remain the same throughout their time at pre-school. Only staff has access to all the numbers.

It is a strict policy of the Centre that no staff member is to give out information about another child or their family to anyone other than direct family members. Please don't ask us for other children's phone numbers or addresses as we cannot give these things out, we can request for those families to contact you instead.

Safety

The Centres enrolment form asks for authorities to collect children from pre-school. It is a strict policy of the Centre that *only* people nominated as authorities by the legal guardians of the child will be allowed to collect the child. Any collecting person should be at least 16 years of age. Unless there is a court order stating otherwise both mum & dad have the right to collect their children at any time where there is a divorce or separation issue.

It is a good idea, wherever possible, to bring these people to the Centre & introduce them to staff so both your authorities & staff are familiar with each other.

If the staff are not familiar with the person collecting the child, & they have identified themselves as a nominated authority, they will be asked to produce some form of ID, e.g. drivers licence, before being allowed to take the child from pre-school

Illnesses & Pre-school Don't Mix Well!

It is the policy of the Centre that sick children need to stay away from school until they are better.

If a child has had any form of contagious illness, e.g. vomiting, diarrhoea it is requested that they be free of these symptoms for a period of at least 24 hours before they return to school.

For the safety & wellbeing of all who are within the Centre we ask that you adhere to this policy strictly as illness can quickly spread throughout the Centre if it is not immediately nipped in the bud.

It is important that you have adequate alternate arrangements in place to care for children when they are ill - particularly for working parents.

It is inevitable that children will become sick from time to time, sometimes whilst at school, if this occurs there must be reliable contact numbers for someone who can collect your child.

Please make sure that if you are concerned about your child's health that you contact your family Doctor for advice about coming to the childcare environment. It is also advised that all children keep their immunisation schedules up to date.

If a child becomes sick whilst at school the staff will:

- Attempt to call mum or dad as soon as possible to make arrangements for alternative care.
- If mum or dad are uncontactable, we will attempt to contact nominated emergency contacts.
- If all nominated contacts fail - the Centre will attempt to call the Child's own Doctor to seek medical advice. It is however important that a reliable contact is nominated.

All children when unwell will at all times be made as comfortable as possible while waiting for a person to collect them & will be consistently monitored by a teacher / first aid officer.



Yucky Germs!

Everyone has them & most children are more than happy to share them! Our Centre has a strict policy of hygiene, which is followed by all staff members. In the office we supply hand sanitiser, we ask that families all use this on their way in & out of the centre each day.

Part of our programs for children includes teaching about the importance of hygiene. We particularly target such areas such as:

- Putting used tissues in the bin
- Washing hands before eating
- Flushing toilets & washing hands after toileting
- Not touching other peoples drink cups or food
- It is a great assistance to children & us if parents could also help follow these practices at home.

The staff all work together in the fight against germs, we strictly disinfect all toys at the end of each week to prevent cross-infections between rooms.

Unfortunately Accidents Happen!

Kids will be kids & gross motor skills are not always at their highest yet during their pre-school years which often leads to the occasional accident. The majority of our carers hold first aid certificates (mostly at senior level) & are competent in the administration of first aid to an injured child.

Should there be any concern at all regarding the nature of an accident, the Centre will attempt to contact the child's parents/guardians or emergency contact for advice before proceeding with first aid. Again it is very important to provide us with reliable contact numbers.

If deemed necessary the Centre will call for an ambulance to attend an injured / sick child, families will be contacted as soon as possible.

For full details of Centre accident procedures please refer to our policy manual.

Administration of Medication

The staff at pre-school can administer medication to a child at pre-school providing the following steps are followed:

- A medication form must be filled out correctly by a parent or guardian with exact instructions as to the dosage, times to be given, reason for the medication etc.
- The medication must be in it's original packaging & labelled clearly with child's name & correct dosage, Prescription medication can only be administered to the prescribed person.
- Medication must not be to treat anything contagious or detrimental to the safety of the child or other people within the Centre.
- Medication along with a correctly filled out permission form must be handed to a child's teacher immediately. At no time must a medication remain in a child's school bag.
- The staff will complete the medication permission forms when medication has been administered to inform Parents the time & dosage the medication was administered, a copy of this form will be returned to parents via their pocket in the foyer.



There are trained staff on hand at all times who have been trained in the administration of an EpiPen should a child require one.

Asthma & Pre-school

We encourage children to attend school providing the asthma is under control & does not pose a risk to the child throughout the day. Refer to our administration of medication policy for further details. Staff at the Pitt Town Pre-school has the skills to administer children with ventolin whether it be a puffer or a nebulizer.

Concerns & Complaints

If you have a concern or complaint at any time you can take the following steps:

- Talk to your child's teacher in order to resolve the situation
- Talk to the Director (Maryanna or Daniella)
- There is a suggestion / concerns box in the front foyer - for concerns or suggestions in writing, alternatively you can always e-mail us about anything.

We will make every effort to address your complaint or concern as soon as possible & attempt to resolve any issues that may arise.

Separation Anxiety

It is a natural process for a child to go through a period of separation anxiety, some children will experience this more strongly than others. Separation anxiety may not be evident on your child's first or second day at school - however it may happen a few weeks after commencing pre-school. Don't be alarmed if after a few weeks your child suddenly says they are not going to school anymore.



While children are going through this process, it is not uncommon to find them saying or doing the following things for example:

- Complaints of a tummy ache - an effect of nerves.
- Reluctance to leave mum or dad's side - even at home - you may find that you cannot do things on your own that you were able to do before (e.g. have a shower alone), children may need to see you at all times for a while till they feel comfortable that you will come back!
- Children may not want to go stay at grandma's right now - even though it was OK before.
- Children may experience restless nights - try not to talk about school too much, it may only make children more nervous, talk to them about how much fun pre-school was on the way home instead of how much fun they are going to have before going.
- Children may have difficulty eating before school in the morning.

What Can Parents Do To Help?

The best thing a parent can do is *remain very positive* in attitudes towards children - if a child senses that a parent is nervous, worried or hesitant about the experience of Pre-school, it will have an adverse affect on them & cause the separation anxiety to last longer or be more severe.

Reassure children over & over again that you will always return to pick them up in the afternoon & that school is a fun place where they will make friends & play with lots of fun toys.

Be patient with children & remember that this is a very new experience for them. As an adult imagine yourself being thrown into an entirely new situation in your life (never experienced before) & not being sure where you are, what's going to happen to you next & when you can go home again - a pretty scary thought huh! Now imagine that through the eyes of a small child looking at the huge wide world, who up till now has been entirely dependant on their parents, has never been away from home before & is suddenly surrounded by strangers, how scary at first!

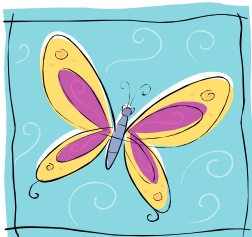
Remember the more often a child attends pre-school, the quicker they will settle in. One day a week to ease a child into Pre-school life is not always the best idea, multiple days can help the settling in process be achieved a lot quicker.

Talk to a teacher, it is important that parents speak to us about any problems they may be facing at home with separation, we will be able to help make this transition time easier on both mother, father & child.

The process of transition to pre-school can be equally as traumatic for a parent as for a child. If your child is upset when you leave them at school, please feel free to give us a call & we will honestly give you an update on how your child is travelling through the day. It is very rare that a child will cry for the whole day. Most children will settle in fairly soon a parent is out of sight. This is also a great opportunity for a child to get to know & trust their teachers & form a friendship with them.

Parent Involvement Within The Centre

We love parents to come & join in with activities in our Centre. We recognise the fact that families are an integral part of the partnership with Pre-school to their children's life experiences. Parent participation is encouraged at our Centre.



How can parents participate? Parents are welcome to spend some time at the Centre witnessing & experiencing first hand what children get up to throughout the day.

Parents may have interesting hobbies or jobs that they may like to share with us maybe in the form of a demonstration.

Some families may come from a culturally diverse background; we love to get information about other countries that we can learn about.

The Centre also welcomes parent suggestions / requests regarding program planning relating to their children. Tell us about your child's own special interests & we may be able to keep them in mind when programming our weekly activities.

It is important that parents let us know anything that may be culturally relevant to their child to ensure that we are meeting the needs of each individual family.

Parent code of conduct

The Centre asks family's to abide by the Centre's code of conduct when inside Centre grounds, including the car park. It is important to remember that the pre-school environment is a fun, loving & learning experience for all children, to keep it this way we ask that all families refrain from using inappropriate language, behaviour & be good role models for children. And please remember that the Centre is cigarette free zone.

Behaviour Management At Pre-school

The staff at our Centre understands that social skills are learned & not automatically attained.

Our Centre encourages positive methods of teaching socially acceptable behaviour by talking to children & explaining to them that what they may have done may not be acceptable behaviour & offer them an alternative method of dealing with their feelings.

At no times will any child be treated in a demoralising manner by either putting them in a corner, smacking them or making them feel ostracised from the group.

If the staff feel that a behavioural issue needs to be raised with a child many times & they are not reacting to verbal discussions, staff ask the child to sit on a "time out chair" for a few minutes (1 minute for each year of their age). It is important that the staff member explain to the child why they are sitting on the chair & reassure them that they are not angry with them, however feeling sad with their behaviour.

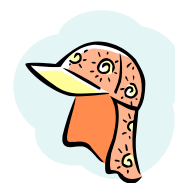
It is important that at the end of time out, the teacher reinforce a positive method of conversation with the child to so the teacher can assist them to deal with the problem.

If a child is experiencing any problems with another child within the Centre, it is important that parents encourage children to tell a teacher so the teacher can assist them to deal with the problem.

Some children may not be as confident at voicing their problems, it is important that parents chat to teachers so we can try to find a resolution. No child should be frightened to come to Pre-school due to another child's actions!



Sun protection



Our Centre follows the advice of the Cancer Council when revising & implementing our Sun Protection Policy. We are recognised by the Cancer council as a 'Sun Smart Centre'.

It is the policy of the Centre that all children have sunscreen applied prior to outdoor play times, both in summer & winter.

All children must wear an appropriate hat, either a legionnaire style or with at least a 5cm rim all the way around. All children are advised to wear sun safe clothing, which includes a sleeve & a collar for neck protection.

Families can visit www.cancercouncil.com.au for further sun safe details

Staff And Their Qualifications

We are one big team that functions as a support for each other, for children & their families. We are a friendly bunch (we like to think so) that are all here because of our love for kids.

The staff at our Centre are made up of a combination of Early Childhood trained (UNI) teachers, Diploma trained (TAFE) teachers, Certificate III & Certificate IV in Childcare trained assistants as well as on the job trainees.

In order to obtain a job in our Centre all staff must undergo a "Working With Children Check".

The staff at the Pitt Town Pre-school must display the following qualities:

- A genuine care for children together with a warm & friendly attitude towards both children & families in the Centre.
- Have the ability to work well in a team
- Have the ability to be reliable, honest & be of a suitable reputable character
- Be able to abide by all regulations as set out by DOCS & the National Accreditation Council
- Have the required qualifications to be able to fulfil their job duties

All staff within the Centre undergo regular ongoing training in the form of seminars in order to upgrade or attain skills, to learn about new trends in childcare & get fresh new ideas.

Uniforms

It is not a policy of the Centre that all children attending our Centre wear our Uniforms, we provide these for fun & family convenience so that their own clothes do not get ruined by paint & all the fun stuff that we get up to each day at school.

We have a range of fun, bright coloured t-shirts, hats & bags for parents to purchase. Our hats also meet the cancer council's regulations for sun safety.

Each child upon commencement at the Pitt Town Pre-school will receive their first t-shirt, hat, bag etc. as part of their enrolment package once a bond has been paid in full.

Policies & Procedures

Boring.... unfortunately in today's day & age we have to have a bunch of policies in place for the handling of nearly everything. Our Centre has a comprehensive range of policies available for all parents to read in our foyer, found in a clear folder on the shelf next to the payment box.

We advise that all families have read or refer to this manual when unsure of a procedure & to be familiar with our Centre's guidelines, there are that many that it would be impossible for us to include them all in our handbook.

All our policies are reviewed annually, everyone is welcome to be included in the revision process, each month staff & families are given the opportunity to review particular policies & submit ideas to management, all opinions are valued & taken into consideration when policies are being revised.

Welcome To Our Centre

Thankyou for taking the time to read this lengthy booklet & we hope that this information has been useful to your family.

Please don't be afraid to ask questions, it is important that both your child & yourselves feel comfortable & secure in the safe & happy care of your child.

Pre-school should be a positive experience for all concerned.

We look forward to becoming partners with you in the all too important job of building the foundations of your children - foundations that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Remember the time & love you give your children now will be etched in their memory for eternity.



*Helping To Build Our Children's Future
Since 1985*

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