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RIPPONLEA KINDERGARTEN INFORMATION HANDBOOK

2026



Welcome to Ripponlea Kindergarten.

We hope it will be an enjoyable year for you and your child.

This information booklet, along with the policy statements prepared by the Committee of Management, is designed to help you understand the kindergarten.

Please read thoroughly and keep in a safe place for easy referral.

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KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY

PLAY LEARN CARE DEVELOP

Children begin kindergarten with their own interests, questions, values, and family backgrounds. By respecting this, enduring and equitable relationships between children, their peers and adults can be developed, enabling each child to feel safe, respected, happy, and nurtured.

At Ripponlea Kindergarten we create a safe, welcoming, and stimulating learning environment where:

- Equity, inclusion, and diversity are embedded in practice and discrimination against race, gender, disability, or age is not tolerated. Children are given every opportunity to succeed, and their diverse circumstances, cultural backgrounds and abilities are respected and valued. Respect for others and self is encouraged at all times
- We are committed to the Child Safe Standards and have zero tolerance for child abuse
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultures and Histories are valued and embedded in the curriculum, guided by developing partnerships with the local Bunurong / Boon Wurrung community and our Reconciliation Action Plan
- Children's voices and ideas are listened to and acted on within the community and the curriculum as we recognise that they are competent learners. We have high expectations of what they can achieve
- We endeavor to teach sustainable practices to the children that instill responsibility for their local place and the wider world and a recognition that they are part of an interconnected world where their actions have effects
- We value family and community partnerships at the kindergarten and are led by a parent run Committee of Management. We recognise that children's' connections to their community are essential to their sense of belonging
- We believe that PLAY is essential for children's learning and children learn best within an unhurried environment
- We ensure that kinder is FUN, NURTURING and INCLUSIVE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Ripponlea Kindergarten respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong / Boon Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we are sited. We pay our respects to their Elders past, and present, and acknowledge and uphold their continuing relationship to this land.

STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Ripponlea Kindergarten is committed to providing a safe environment for all children in our care. **All volunteers, including family helpers and family staying longer than 10 minutes to settle their children, are required to hold a current Victorian Working with Children Check (volunteer) and to be familiar with our Child Safe Environment and Wellbeing Policy.**

- We want children to be safe, happy, and empowered.
- We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to the safety, participation, and empowerment of all children.
- We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.
- We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.
- We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.
- We have robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing staff and volunteers.
- We are committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.
- We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.
- We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our committee of management, staff, and volunteers to achieve these commitments.

Please feel free to confidentially discuss any worries or concerns you may have or let us know if you are needing any sort of support.

MANAGING AND OPERATING THE KINDERGARTEN

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

The Committee of Management (CoM) under the guidelines of the Department of Education and Training (DET) manages Ripponlea Kindergarten. The CoM comprises up to thirteen office bearers, elected each year by the Ripponlea Kindergarten community - that is, the parents/guardians of children attending the kindergarten. Committee members are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in November each year. At the 2022 AGM, a special resolution was voted on to change the composition of the Committee, allowing for greater flexibility in the number of office bearers.

We urge you to become actively involved in the CoM, because a strong CoM makes for a better kindergarten. There are also sub-committees formed during the year, for parents/guardians who feel they cannot commit themselves to the CoM but who wish to contribute their skills and expertise.

A list of current committee members is displayed on the notice board at the entrance of the kindergarten.

The following email addresses are available for contacting staff and/or Committee members.

4YO teachers	kinder@riponleakinder.org.au
3YO teacher	kinder@riponleakinder.org.au
Administration officer	tbc (new officer starting)
President	president@riponleakinder.org.au
Vice President – Staff	vpstaff@riponleakinder.org.au
Treasurer	treasurer@riponleakinder.org.au
Secretary	secretary@riponleakinder.org.au
Maintenance/Sustainability Officer	maintenance@riponleakinder.org.au
Grants Writer	grants@riponleakinder.org.au
Quality Assurance	qa@riponleakinder.org.au
Enrolments	enrolment@riponleakinder.org.au
Social/Fundraising	fundraising@riponleakinder.org.au
Marketing Officer	marketing@riponleakinder.org.au

Group Representatives:

Each group has a parent/guardian class rep that helps with communication from teachers and committee to parents/guardians. They are responsible for organising social events throughout the year to support our kinder community.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Before each session, the staff will be preparing for the day's activities and cannot be responsible for your child. When arriving for each session — PLEASE WAIT WITH YOUR CHILD UNTIL THE SESSION BEGINS.

Groups:

Gawarn (Echidna - red - 4yo) - Monday and Tuesday 8.30am - 4.00pm = 15 hours

Kurrborra (Koala - yellow - 3yo) - Wednesday and Thursday 8.30am - 4.00pm = 15 hours

Warrin (Wombat - blue - 3yo) - Wednesday and Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm = 15 hours

Walert (Possum - green - 4yo) - Thursday and Friday 8.30am - 4.00pm (walk to bush kinder on Thursday at 12.30pm and get picked up from there) = 15 hours

Session Times for 2026

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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8.30							
12.30						walk to BK	
4.00							

KINDERGARTEN STAFF

Teachers: Mishel Lowndes (Bachelor of Arts Early Childhood Education)

Laurian Treleani (Graduate Diploma in Early Childhood Teaching)

Co-educators: Melissa Buordalone (Diploma of Community Services (Children's Services))

Jasmine Main (Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care)

Angie Anggraini (Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care)

Angela Russo (Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care)

Italian teacher: Franca Butera Crea (Bachelor of Arts – Italian, Diploma of Education)

Administration officer: Jamie Gaylard

Our teachers have a Bachelor level qualification or equivalent. Our teachers are supported by a team of co-educators, all of whom hold a Diploma in Early Childhood Education. All staff members hold a current First Aid Certificate and have Asthma and Anaphylaxis training. Teachers are currently registered with the Victorian Institute of Training and co-educators have a Victorian Working with Children Check.

From time to time the kindergarten assists in training pre-service teachers (university students) and participates in providing work experience/community service for secondary school students. A qualified teacher supervises students at all times.

TERM DATES 2026

There are five scheduled days during the year when the kindergarten will be closed to children (in addition to public holidays), to enable staff to set up/clean up, plan for the kindergarten program, undertake professional development, and hold an orientation session for the following year's families. Please note these dates are subject to change.

Ripponlea Kindergarten Calendar 2026

TERM ONE		
Commences	Tuesday 27 th January	Staff set up day
	Wednesday 28 th January	Staff set up day

		7.30 – 8.30pm (-9pm bush kinder participants) Parent information session all groups (in person)
	Thursday 29 th January	Warrin, and Walert group parent interviews via zoom
	Friday 30 th January	Warrin group 8.30-11.30 and Walert group 1.00-4.00 short day orientation
	Monday 2 nd February	Gawarn group interviews via zoom
	Tuesday 3 rd February	Gawarn group short day orientation - half group 8.30-11.30 and 1.00-4.00 Kurrborra group interviews via zoom
	Wednesday 4 th February	Warrin group full days commence Kurrborra group short day orientation 8.30-11.30
	Thursday 5 th February	Kurrborra group full days commence Walert group full days commence (bush kinder held at home kinder)
	Monday 9 th February	Gawarn group full days commence
	Thursday 12 th February	Walert group first day of bush kinder
	TBC February	Welcome picnic for all groups with Ripponlea Primary School
	Monday 9 th March	Labour Day holiday (Kinder closed)
	Sunday 15 th March	Working Bee: 9am -11am
<i>Last day of term</i>	Thursday 2 nd April	

TERM TWO		
<i>Commences</i>	Monday 20 th April	
	Saturday 2 nd May	Kinder Open Day
	Friday 29 th May	Offers for 2027 sent out
	Monday 8 th June	King's Birthday (Kinder closed)
	Thursday 18 th June	Kinder closed (staff professional development)
	Saturday 13 th June	Working Bee: 9am – 11am
<i>Last day of term</i>	Friday 26 th June	

TERM THREE

<i>Commences</i>	Monday 13 th July	
	Saturday 5 th September	Working Bee: 9am – 11am
<i>Last day of term</i>	Friday 18 th September	

TERM FOUR		
<i>Commences</i>	Monday 5 th October	
	Wednesday 14 th October	2027 Family Orientation sessions (Kinder closed)
	Tuesday 3 rd November	Melbourne Cup Day (Kinder closed)
	Thursday 12 th November	AGM: 7.30pm
	Sunday 29 th November	Working Bee: 9am – 11am
	Thursday 17 th December	Last day for children to attend
<i>Last day of term</i>	Friday 18 th December	Staff clean up

PROGRAMMING INFORMATION

The Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF) was updated to support and advance all children's learning and development from birth to eight years. The framework sets expectations for every child and identifies five outcomes for learning and development:

Identity: children have a strong sense of identity.

Community: children are connected with and contribute to their world.

Wellbeing: children have a strong sense of wellbeing.

Learning: children are confident and involved learners.

Communication: children are effective communicators.

The VELYDF recognizes that children's learning and development is holistic and that children have different learning styles, different times and different ways of learning. This approach is consistent with both the national Early Years Learning Framework and that adopted in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).

The programs at Ripponlea Kindergarten incorporate the principles of the VELYDF and National Quality Framework in conjunction with the educators' education philosophy. Our program is based on an emergent curriculum, following the children's changing needs, interests, and family and community needs.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

All children have opportunities to play both indoors and outdoors throughout the day (weather permitting) with resources and materials that have been carefully chosen according to their developmental appropriateness. Staff maintain supervision ratios at all times, so children may be asked to move indoors or outdoors as required. The door is kept closed during the colder and warmer months, so we don't waste heating (in colder months) and cooling (in warmer months).

Do not expect your child to bring home a piece of physical work every day, because imaginative play, block play, sand play, mud play, etc, cannot be handed to you at the end of the day!

DOCUMENTING CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND PROGRESS

Your child's strengths, interests and skills are continually observed, monitored, evaluated, and recorded in visual (photos) and written (observations, anecdotes, stories) formats.

Observations of the children are communicated through informal (daily chats with parents/ guardians) and formal (Kindyhub app, program board, appointments) means. Educators plan for individuals and for group experiences. The cycle of planning involves collecting information on the child (interests and developmental needs), analysing that information, planning, and then reflecting on the learning that has taken place.

Kindyhub is a digital communication tool, allowing educators to easily share your child's early learning experience. We use it to communicate our fortnightly programming and termly intentional plans.

As a parent/guardian, you (and your chosen relatives) will have a secure private login to access Kindyhub via email or the Kindyhub smartphone parent/guardian app.

All families are also offered a mid-year meeting to discuss their child's learning and development. This is a chance to reflect on the progress your child is making and revisit any goals you might have set for them at the start of the year.

For children transitioning to school, the 4-year-old teacher prepares Transition Learning and Development Statements in November each year. We share these with the parents/guardians of each child before we send them to the Prep teacher at the child's proposed school. The statements help Prep teachers get to know the children entering their classes and plan for each child's learning and development when they start school.

ROUTINES

Children learn from experience — from doing things themselves. Learning experiences are planned so children have many opportunities to participate fully through a 'hands on' approach. Routines such as packing away, washing hands, and eating together are also valuable learning times. Children are learning to help each other and be responsible for their environment when packing away.

Informal morning tea is offered. The children select their own labelled snack boxes from the trolley and while this time is informal, staff encourage all to participate. At lunch time and afternoon tea all children sit down together to eat their meals and are supervised by the staff. The children eat indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather conditions.

Recharge time is a part of the daily routine and uses CDs, books, meditation, and soft music. This period allows the children the opportunity to rest and reflect on the morning they have enjoyed with their peers and to rejuvenate for the afternoon.

During formal group times, the staff facilitate learning initiated by both the children and the adults. Small informal group times also occur throughout the day. Larger group times may operate once or twice daily depending on the level of children's activity. This creates more formal rest and/or active opportunities where children come together to share stories, meditation/visualisation techniques, music and movement, yoga/dance and/or other exercise.

CHILDREN'S ARTWORK

At the end of each session, artwork (if any) can be claimed from the artwork box. Please do not assume your child has done nothing if she/he has no artwork to take home. Our session is full of different activities. The process of learning is more important to children than an end product.

INCURSIONS

An incursion brings the fun to the kindergarten, without the children having to go anywhere. All programs will have the opportunity of incursions throughout the year. Incursions are subject to availability and may be altered accordingly.

For further information, see the Policy Statements.

BUSH KINDER (Walert Group)

Ripponlea Kindergarten launched a Bush Kinder program in 2016 for our four-year-old Possum group. This program will continue in 2026 on Thursday afternoons each week. The program is at Rippon Lea Estate in Elsternwick.

Our Bush Kinder program reflects growing recognition and research that children's sedentary lives negatively affect their social, physical, and mental health. Bush Kinder exposes young children to natural outdoor settings where they can play, explore, and experience natural systems and materials. Engaged outside in all types of weather, children and educators investigate natural phenomena and learn about where they live.

Our program aims to:

- Facilitate a closer connection with nature
- Encourage a community that values and participates in nature-based activities more regularly
- Inspire a healthier and more environmentally aware community
- Develop a well-connected and cohesive community
- Foster creative, independent and resilient children

In 2026 we will walk to bush kinder from home kinder, requiring family helpers to be involved at each session.

Walk to bush kinder time: 12.30pm

Pick up time: 3.50pm Rippon Lea Estate

The Bush Kinder Handbook contains full details about the running of the program, including location and procedures for picking up and clothing that is appropriate for Bush Kinder sessions.

ITALIAN PROGRAM (Gawarn, Warrin and Walert Groups)

The kindergarten has received funding from the Department of Education to carry out an Early Childhood Language Program in Italian. The Gawarn group will participate for 3 hours every Monday and the Walert and Warrin Groups for 3 hours every Friday, learning through their play-based curriculum and supported by a fully qualified Italian teacher. Further information can be found here: <https://www.vic.gov.au/early-childhood-language-program>

INTRA-SCHOOL EXCURSIONS

Parents/guardians must sign this form on enrolment to cover excursions involving travel from the Kindergarten to areas of Ripponlea Primary School. We use certain areas of the school for our program, but as it is out of the confines of the Kindergarten gates we need parents/guardians to sign an Intra-School Excursion Form.

For further information see the Policy Statements.

GENERAL INFORMATION

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

(Please note: The Department of Education is rolling out an online sign in and out system called Arrival. It is hoped that it will be fully in place by 2026. In the case that it isn't the below procedure will still apply)

The Education and Care Services National Regulations require parents/guardians to sign an attendance book every day. This book is currently situated outside on top of the shelving storage unit near the doorway into the Kinder (but may change). Please note this is on public display.

On arrival - sign your name, time of arrival, expected departure time, name of the person expected to pick up your child, and a contact phone number.

On departure - sign out and state time (It is imperative this is done on departure and not before, because the actual departure time must be stated). Please note that it is important to pick up at the time stated on the register.

This is an official record of children's attendance and the first document required in an emergency, so information must be recorded accurately. **THIS BOOK IS FOR ADULT USE ONLY.** Please ensure children/toddlers do not write in this book.

It is Kindergarten policy for each child to be brought in by a responsible person and placed in the care of the teacher or co-educator before that responsible person leaves.

Children must only be collected by an authorised person as nominated on your child's enrolment form.

LATE FEES

Children need to be picked up at their scheduled pick-up times. Families that frequently arrive after pick-up times are charged \$10 for every ten minutes, or part thereof, from the end of the session.

CHANGE OF INFORMATION

Parents/guardians must notify the Kindergarten in writing if any of the following information about their child changes: address, work numbers, persons authorised as emergency contacts and persons authorised to collect your child. If this information changes throughout the year you will need to update your child's enrolment form.

For further information, please see the Delivery and Collection of Children policy and the policy statements.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

The CoM and staff will use a variety of methods to keep parents/guardians apprised of Kindergarten news, developments, and activities. Please check the following communication avenues:

- the Kindyhub app
- the quarterly newsletter (distributed via email)
- your email address
- sms.

ENROLMENT

Refer to the Enrolment and Orientation policy for the enrolment process and details.

16-25 HOURS OF KINDERGARTEN FOR CHILDREN IN PRIORITY GROUPS FROM 2026

From 2026 children identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, from a refugee or asylum seeker background, or who have had contact with Child Protection services will have the possibility to access up to 25 hours of free kindergarten per week.

FEES FOR 2026

From 2026, the Victorian Government is subsidising the cost of kindergarten for three and four-year-old children. Funding for your child's kinder program is provided to our service directly from the Victorian Government. The funding that Government will provide in 2026 is expected to cover most of what it costs the kinder to run the program, but not all. Because of this gap, we will be requesting voluntary payments from families in 2026 of \$300 per child, per term, to make up the difference between the government subsidy and the actual cost of running the program. In Term 1, we offer the option of using your \$250 Kindergarten holding deposit as a voluntary contribution, however you may also have this refunded to you. Families may also choose to pay the voluntary contribution for all 4 terms up front. In doing so they will receive a \$50 discount.

For further information, please refer to the Voluntary Contribution Summary 2026 document.

Your child can only be funded for a kindergarten program place at one service at any one time and only for one year in a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program and one year in a Four-Year-Old Kindergarten program (unless your child is assessed as being eligible for a second year of either (not both) 3 or 4yo Kindergarten by your child's kindergarten teacher).

FIRST WEEK ORIENTATION/INTERVIEWS

The first few days of the kindergarten year are designated to staff preparation and parent/guardian and child orientation sessions. You will be advised of your orientation session date and time and the date of your child's first day.

If you have any concerns about your child's ability to assimilate with their kinder group, please discuss an appropriate strategy with your child's teacher.

BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE

Over time children develop their own inner controls. As adults, we can guide children towards meeting their own needs and respecting the rights of others and their environment. Setting appropriate and consistent limits will help children to feel safe and emotionally secure. When there is a problem or conflict between children staff will:

- look at what happened
- talk about the consequences
- guide the children involved towards a possible solution.

For further information refer to the Interactions with Children policy.

SAFETY MEASURES

Please make sure the Kindergarten gate is **ALWAYS KEPT CLOSED**, and that **ONLY ADULTS** open and close the gate.

STOP children not in your care from passing through the gate with you.

Please refrain children from climbing on the gate and fences — this is dangerous, and it damages the gate.

Always hold your child's hand when crossing Carrington Grove and use the SCHOOL CROSSING when flags are displayed — it is a very busy street at drop-off and pick-up times.

Please observe the parking signs and note the parking area immediately outside the Kindergarten is a pick-up and drop-off zone for parents/guardians only at certain times — you must not leave your car unattended in this area during these times.

Always check to ensure your child is buckled up in your car.

Health Commission regulations require NO SMOKING or VAPING in the Kindergarten or the surroundings.

If attending a stay and play session you will be required to leave your mobile phone in a locker in the staff room as per Department of Education guidelines about not using personal devices in the service.

ATTENDANCE AND HEALTH

Under the Victorian Government's 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, all parents/guardians must ensure their child's vaccinations are up to date before they can commence kindergarten. The law came into effect on the 1st January 2016.

Specifically, parents/guardians must provide evidence (Immunisation History Statement from Australian Immunisation Register) on enrolment that their child is:

- fully immunised for their age OR
- on an approved vaccination catch-up program OR
- unable to be fully immunised for medical reasons.

'Conscientious objection' is no longer an exemption.

For more information, please see the 'No Jab No Play" information sheet on the Victorian Government's Better Health website: (<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play>).

It is important children attend kindergarten regularly. However please keep them at home if they have ANY infection so other children, parents/guardians and staff are not exposed to it.

For minor ailments, please use your own judgment about whether your child is well enough to attend kindergarten — if you are in doubt, he/she is usually NOT well enough to attend. Sick children cannot cope with the demands of kindergarten when they are unwell.

Children sent home with a temperature will be excluded from the Kindergarten for 24 hours after their last recording of a temperature higher than 37.5. If your child has had vomiting or diarrhoea, please keep them home until 48 hours after the last time they were sick or had a loose bowel movement. Children suffering from, or in contact with, an INFECTIOUS DISEASE must adhere to regulations specified by the Victorian Department of Health. Details of the infectious diseases and recommended exclusion period are displayed on the noticeboard at the Kindergarten.

We will move any child who becomes ill during the session to a quiet place and contact the parent/guardian or other emergency contact. If a parent/guardian or contact is not available, the teacher will take whatever steps considered necessary to prevent a dangerous situation. If the teacher has to call an ambulance, the parent/guardian must meet the cost if not already an Ambulance Subscriber.

For further information, refer to the Hygiene policy, Dealing with Infectious Diseases policy, and the Incident, Injury, Trauma, and Illness policy.

NON-ATTENDANCE

Please notify the teacher if your child will be absent from Kindergarten and why.

MEDICATIONS

Staff will only administer medication provided by a doctor to children if the parent/guardian has completed the Kindergarten Medication Form available in the office. Medication must be provided in its original bottle with your child's name on it and will be stored in the medicine cabinet located in the Kinder room or fridge. Parents/guardians must be responsible for collecting their child's medication at the end of each session. For further information refer to the Administration of Medication policy.

ANAPHYLAXIS, ALLERGIES AND ASTHMA

If your child is diagnosed as at risk of anaphylaxis, allergy, or asthma you must inform the Kindergarten as soon as possible. The following information and details must be provided prior to commencement of care or if the condition is diagnosed after commencement at the Kindergarten: An approved action plan developed by your child's doctor (with colour photo), along with your child's medication. The service will work with you to develop a detailed Risk Minimisation Plan specific to your child, including strategies to prevent your child being exposed to the triggers of an allergic reaction or asthma attack and how to store and use any medication.

Children cannot commence Kindergarten until an action plan and medication have been received.

Ripponlea Kindergarten keeps two spare EpiPens (adrenaline autoinjectors) that can be used with approval and guidance from Ambulance Victoria on children who have not been identified as anaphylactic, but who are presenting with anaphylactic symptoms. Families will be notified as soon as practicable of the steps taken.

For further information refer to the Anaphylaxis policy and Asthma Policy.

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

The Sun Protection policy applies whenever the sun's UV levels reach three or higher. During these periods children and adults are required to wear hats outdoors— No hat, NO PLAY. Please provide your child with an appropriate hat that protects the face, neck and ears (such as legionnaire, broad-rimmed or bucket hats). Caps are not permitted. Legionnaire and broad-brimmed hats can be purchased from a variety of shops. Children are to leave a Kinder Hat at the start of the year with their names on them. These hats will be kept on site in individual pockets and taken to Bush Kinder as required.

Children should wear loose fitting clothing that covers as much of the skin as possible. Singlet tops or shoestring strap dresses are not appropriate.

Please apply sunscreen to your child just before they come to Kindergarten on days when the UV is above 3. Staff will help children reapply sunscreen during the day. We ask families to supply their own roll-on sunscreen, to be kept at the centre. Please ensure that the sunscreen has a long use by date and that it is clearly labelled with your child's name. We will let you know if they need to be replaced. The day's UV and when protection (hats and sunscreen) is required will be displayed near the sign in area.

For further information refer to the Sun Protection policy or SunSmart website: <https://www.sunsmart.com.au/>

FOOD

The following link has many ideas for providing healthy meals to bring to kindergarten: <https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/10/lunchbox-ideas-meals-for-early-childhood-settings-get-up-and-grow-lunchbox-ideas-meals-for-early-childhood-settings.pdf>

Morning and afternoon tea

Each child is asked to bring in their own labelled container, containing healthy food such as fruit, raw vegetables or cheese and crackers to Kinder for morning tea. They are to place it on the middle shelf of the trolley. Morning tea is usually 9.30am–10.30am and we will progressively ask all children to join in at some stage. Afternoon tea is usually around 2.30–3.00pm depending on the children's needs and is eaten together as a group. Morning/afternoon tea is a social occasion for the children, but it is also a time for children to develop and foster table manners, independence, and responsibility.

Lunch and water bottles

Children must bring their own lunch in a named box, and a named drink bottle. Children are to put their lunch boxes on the bottom of the trolley and put their water bottles on the top shelf of the trolley.

Lunches should contain healthy, nourishing food. The children compare and discuss lunches, so it is important for them to develop positive attitudes towards, and knowledge of, nourishing foods. Please include a frozen container, such as a frozen drink, in the lunchbox with food that is normally refrigerated, or use an insulated lunchbox or a cooler. For food to be eaten hot please use a thermos as the Kinder cannot heat up lunches.

Food brought from home for special occasions

Ensure that food provided for celebrations is kept in a container or covered with foil or plastic wrap. Where appropriate, keep food in the refrigerator until it is to be served. Please provide a list of ingredients or notify staff.

For further information see the Food Safety policy and the Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy.

Allergies

It is important to inform the staff of any allergies your child may have. Some allergies are very severe, even life-threatening, and as such we request that there be NO NUTS, PEANUT BUTTER OR NUTELLA products brought into the Kindergarten AT ANY TIME.

Other foods may also be excluded, depending on the children enrolled each year. This will be determined at the beginning of the year and communicated with parents/guardians.

For further information see the Policy Statements, including our Anaphylaxis policy and Dealing with Medical Conditions policy.

CLOTHES

Your child will be involved in a variety of activities at Kindergarten, so please dress him/her accordingly. We provide smocks for messy activities, but it is normal for children to get dirty. Children should wear practical, easily managed clothes that are not 'best' and that wash easily. To encourage independence, try to choose self-help clothes (e.g. large buttons in front, pull down trousers, manageable zips, shoes that can be managed alone). Please do not send your child to Kindergarten with laced shoes if they cannot manage them independently.

We recommend winter coats, warm hats, gloves, gumboots, and waterproof clothes for wet and cold days. If you do not think your child is well enough to go outside, then he/she must stay at home. It is unfair and upsetting for a child to stay inside when all the other children are going in and out.

In summer, all children must wear sunhats and tops that cover their shoulders.

NO THONGS, PARTY SHOES, LONG DRESSES, OR 'CROCS' PLEASE. They can be a danger and cause unnecessary accidents when children are using the outdoor equipment.

PLEASE NAME ALL CLOTHING because often children have identical clothes and easily make mistakes when clothing, shoes, socks, jumpers, hats, bags etc. are removed. Please note the Kindergarten is not responsible for any lost items.

SPARE CLOTHES: Please provide a complete change of labelled clothes (including socks, underpants, and, if possible, shoes) that are appropriate to the weather, to remain in the child's bag in case of need (eg. a change of clothes after messy play).

LOST ITEMS

Lost items will be placed in a basket near the sign in area. Any items uncollected at the end of each term will be used by the Kinder or sent to the local op shop.

RECHARGE TIME/MINDFULNESS

During recharge time the children may read books, listen to music, do yoga, or participate in visual meditation. It is a time for the children to relax their bodies and rejuvenate for the afternoon. In today's busy world it is important to help children calm down and relax when necessary.

Please see the Sleep and Relaxation policy for more information.

TOILETING

The Kindergarten does not have nappy-changing facilities and it is expected that children are toilet trained or well into the process of training. The Kindergarten will be supportive of children still in the process of toilet training and work with parents/guardians to ensure their continuing success in using the toilet.

PERSONAL POSSESSIONS

Each child needs to bring a Kinder bag that is large enough to carry morning/afternoon tea and lunch, drink bottle, set of spare clothes and completed artwork. Please mark it clearly with your child's name and teach your child to open/close the bag themselves. They also require an extra recycled bag or two inside their Kinder bag for extra art, woodwork, wet or dirty clothes etc.

Bags are to be placed in the locker unit with the child's name.

Warm and wet-weather gear are to be kept in the child's locker so that children can access them easily throughout the day.

Children's artwork will be placed in boxes alphabetically arranged according to first names. Work can be found in front of each name card. This art box is placed outside near the sign in area. Please collect work from the box daily.

We encourage children to bring in books and various interests from home. We do not encourage toys from home as they could be damaged or lost.

BIRTHDAYS

Please speak to the teacher in advance if you would like your child's birthday acknowledged / celebrated at Kindergarten. Usually children enjoy the simple ritual of singing 'Happy Birthday', blowing out the candle on our pretend cake, clapping and handing out a treat at the end of the session. Treats can include homemade cupcakes (no supermarket cakes because they are too high in sugar and preservatives), or something like stickers or bubbles.

Given the increasing numbers of children with allergies, please include a list of ingredients. When preparing food, please ensure you follow safe food handling practices as outlined in attachment 2 of the Food Safety policy and keep any food covered and/or refrigerated.

In line with our Nutrition, Oral Health and Active Play policy, please do not bring sweets, soft drinks, or chocolate etc to share.

If you have party invitations to hand out to children, please ensure they have the invitee's name on them. Please hand them out individually if not inviting every child, otherwise teachers can hand them out at the end of the session.

KINDERGARTEN PHOTOS

The Kindergarten will arrange for a professional photographer to take individual and group photos of your child. Photo day will be notified in advance and the photos will be available for purchase.

PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

PARENTS/GUARDIANS CAN HELP CHILDREN SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY BY:

- attending and observing your child at Kindergarten
- listening to your child when he/she has something to say about what happened at Kindergarten
- not pressing your child to talk about what was done that day if they do not wish to. Children may instead talk about things that occurred several days or even weeks before.
- not pressing or suggesting your child might like to do a painting e.g. for Grandma. Many valuable Kindergarten activities have no obvious or immediate result. The painting done under pressure is usually rushed, with little pleasure or value to the child.
- encouraging your child to be independent in placing their morning/afternoon tea, lunch, and drink bottle on the trolley, putting their coats and bags in their allocated storage cubicle, dressing, toileting, eating, tidying up etc.
- being involved in the Ripponlea Kindergarten community yourself – as a committee member or volunteering your time in another way. You are the first role model for your child and demonstrating your involvement with the kinder can give your child a further sense of belonging to the kinder.

CHANGES

If there is a change of routine or something different occurring in your child's life, please let the teacher know. It may be that mum or dad is away on business, someone is sick in the family or your child has had a late night etc. If we know your child is experiencing a change of some kind, we can plan and give appropriate attention as needed. New phone numbers and addresses also need to be updated if there is a change.

HOW PARENTS/GUARDIANS CAN PARTICIPATE

You have many strengths and skills that can be used as valuable learning experiences with the children. Please let the teacher know if you have the time, resources, ideas, and skills to contribute. Areas such as woodwork, cooking, knitting, weaving, playing musical instruments, talking about your work interests, bringing in a pet etc, can be adapted and incorporated into the program to enrich the children's learning. **We request all families to contribute 10 hours of their time in a voluntary capacity.**

Some ways in which you can help include:

- participating in the daily family time roster
- bringing in materials for use during the program

- taking Kindergarten washing home occasionally
- bringing things asked for in newsletters
- helping with mending, working bees
- joining a sub-committee, the committee, or nominating for class rep
- helping with occasional fundraising efforts.

LAUNDRY ROSTER

Parents/guardians are asked to assist with washing items the children use at Kindergarten (e.g. smocks, tea towels). We will put out the roster at the beginning of each term and then display it in the kitchen.

STAY AND PLAY

Stay and Play involves participating in group activities and supervising the children as they collect their own, correctly labelled food container from the trolley and engaging with them as they eat. You might also be asked to help clear the art activities or engage in other activities.

Family members should not attend family time if they are unwell and should arrange to swap with another family. A Family Contact List will be circulated at the beginning of the year to assist with contacting other parents/guardians.

In order to attend we ask that you have a current Victorian Working with Children Check. These are free for volunteers and can be applied for at <https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply>. We recommend applying early as it can often take several weeks for these to come through.

OTHER CHILDREN (e.g. siblings)

Babies/toddlers are welcome to come to the Kinder, but parents/guardians are asked to be responsible for them and to supervise them at all times both indoors and outdoors.

Parents/guardians must actively supervise siblings (older and younger) while they are on the premises. This includes monitoring children's use of the outdoor equipment, which is not designed for children older than 5 (because the equipment may be damaged) or children younger than 3 (because they may injure themselves).

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING

- Kinder bag — labelled with your child's name (plus extra recycled bag/s for extra things).
- Clothing that is practical for play
- Set of spare clothes — labelled with your child's name
- Sunhat — to leave at Kinder — labelled with your child's name
- Coat in winter — labelled with your child's name
- Snack and lunch box — labelled with child's name — containing healthy snacks and lunch
- Drink bottle — labelled with your child's name
- Labelled bottle of sunscreen to stay at the Kinder
- List of ingredients if you bring a cake/cupcake to share

PLEASE DO NOT BRING

- Cordial, juice, biscuits, cake, chocolate, sweets, chips etc
- Nuts or foods that contain traces of nuts
- Thongs, party shoes, long dresses, singlets or sleeveless tops, or "crocs"
- Toys from home

A FINAL WORD

Trust and effective communication between the home and Kindergarten is very important. Please do not hesitate to speak to us if anything is worrying you or your child.

We look forward to a happy, educationally stimulating, and enjoyable year with you and your child.

The Staff at Ripponlea Kindergarten