



GREENHILLS
NEIGHBOURHOOD
HOUSE

PARENT HANDBOOK 2021



Community Drive

Greensborough 3088

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We wish to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we stand here today, the Wurundjeri people, and pay our respects to their Elders, past and present.

PHILOSOPHY

Greenhills Neighbourhood House Occasional Childcare (GNHOCC) is committed to providing a warm caring positive environment for all involved with our service. We recognise that each child is an individual and opportunities are provided for each child to experience an educational program where children can further develop through quality interactions with staff and the use of appropriate resources in play.

OUR VISION

We aim to provide

- A safe childcare to meet the varied needs of the families of Banyule and neighbouring municipalities.
- An environment that is conducive to the development of a child's independence and self-esteem.
- A program that is designed to meet the needs and family values of the individual child in a group setting without discrimination.

CODE OF ETHICS

- The children's mental, physical and emotional welfare is our paramount concern.
- The staff will act in a courteous and respectful manner in all dealings with staff, parents and their children.
- The centre will offer a warm, caring and hospitable environment to children, volunteers, families and staff.
- To be familiar with and abide by all government regulations controlling the industry.
- To upgrade professional standards by regular attendance at seminars and in-service training and the sharing of knowledge amongst fellow staff.
- To make our centre a place where children may learn and grow in a non-judgmental and caring atmosphere.

CENTRE STRUCTURE

GNHOCC is run by a Committee of Management made up of volunteers and a team of dedicated staff.

The Committee of Management is responsible for the overall operation and administration of the Centre and is elected each year at the Annual General Meeting. All committee members undergo security and ASIC checks.

The Committee is governed by its **Constitution** and the '**Associations Incorporations Reform Act 2012 (VIC)**'.

The association is registered with Consumer Affairs Victoria and the Australian Charities & Not-For-Profit Commission.

GNHOCC and its Committee of Management are committed to providing a high-quality service to meet community needs and employ qualified staff to run the service in accordance with the Victorian '**Children's Services Act 1996**' and regulated under the '**Children's Services Regulations 2020 (Vic)**'. A copy of these can be found online.

Greenhills Neighbourhood House Inc, trading as Greenhills Neighbourhood House Occasional Childcare (SE-00015643), is licensed with the Department of Education and Training as a non-profit, limited hours service and inspections are made annually by a Children's Services Advisor. A copy of our Registration Certificate can be viewed in the Childcare room.

GNHOCC is licensed to cater for 14 children at any one time, for a maximum of 5 hours per day, and children can attend no more than 15 hours per week.

To be able to provide our families with the Childcare Subsidy assistance (CCS), GNHOCC must also comply with requirements under **Family Assistant Law** and its relevant legislation.

The day to day management of the centre is the responsibility of our Neighbourhood House Co-ordinator, Janelle Dunstan, who is always accessible to staff, children and families.

The centre administration is the responsibility of our Office Manager, Sarah Willits, who can answer all your wait list/ bookings/ accounting / Xplor and CCS queries.

Elaine Freeman is our nominated supervisor of Greenhills Occasional Care and oversees the programming and general care of the children, families, staff and volunteers at the childcare service.

THE PROGRAM

The Centre is founded on the philosophy that children, their families and society benefit from high quality early childhood programs. We believe that there is a crucial link between a child's early experiences and later success in life.

Our approach encourages Educators to act as guides, resources, problem solvers and partners in learning. Open ended discussions, child and teacher-initiated projects bring together language activities, science, social studies, dramatic play and artistic expression. The projects are meaningful and relevant to the child's life experiences. We use documentation of children's work in progress.

The program is based on the belief that children need time to be children, and time to experience their childhood. Educating is the art of providing young children with an environment which encourages active exploration and discovery. Opportunities are provided for children to take responsibility, make decisions and learn through play in mixed age groupings.

Children's positive feelings of self-worth must be the foundation of all curriculum development in early childhood. Each child's learning is filtered through his or her unique screen of self-concept. Each child brings his or her own world, to us each day.

At the centre, materials are provided to foster early literacy, math, science, social studies, as well as fine and gross motor skills. Children are provided opportunities to select activities independently to guide their social development, and to allow the teaching staff to gather information about skills, interests and group dynamics.

The program is documented, post-experience and this documentation forms the main type of programming or accountability for the children's learning outcomes.

Please see staff if you would like further information regarding the program.

The children are cared for in a multi-age/family environment.

We believe, especially with siblings attending the centre, that children feel more secure and happy in a "family" like environment. We also believe this arrangement creates opportunities for children to understand the needs of others; older children learn responsibilities and care for those younger children, it provides challenges and learning opportunities and reflects family structures.

EVALUATION

The centre is committed in all aspects of its operation to constantly evaluate the service provided. Staff and parents are expected to play a key role in this process.

Parents feedback is encouraged, and management will ensure regular opportunities for formal and informal feedback.

Formal evaluation is conducted yearly through audits by the state government to ensure that we comply with all regulations and standards.

QUALIFIED STAFF POLICY

Our staff are a dedicated team of professionals and undergo a rigorous interview/screening process to ensure quality of knowledge, skills, expertise and qualifications (as recognised by the regulations). The centre also offers staff professional development to further enhance skills on childcare related topics.

Staff ratios are always maintained, for the duration of any session. The ratio for under 3's - 1 staff for every 5 children (changing to 1 -4 in 2022). The ratio for over 3's - 1 staff member for every 11 children. We will always have as a minimum, 2 staff per 14 children.

Further information on staffing ratios can be found in the '*Children's Services Regulations 2020 (Vic)*' of which a copy can be found online.

GNHOCC strictly adheres to staff / children ratios for the entire session and has permanent, casual and relief staff available.

We take all reasonable steps to employ skilled people to work with children. We develop selection criteria and advertisements which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social, ethical and legislative responsibilities. All people engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

We carry out reference checks and police record checks to ensure that we are recruiting the right people. Police record checks are used only for the purposes of recruitment and are discarded after the recruitment process is complete. We do retain for our own records if an applicant's criminal history affected our decision-making process. If during the recruitment process a person's records indicate a criminal history, the person will be given the opportunity to provide further information and context.

ENROLMENTS, CCS AND BOOKING POLICY

Hours of operation are 9am-1pm Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Fridays. On Tuesdays we have 2 sessions, 8.30am – 12.30pm and 1.30pm – 4.30pm.

An enrolment form must be completed before any child attends a session. We also ask that all families come and visit the centre before your first session (by booking a time).

Enrolment forms are available from the Office Manager or any staff member. These forms outline:

- the names and contact details of parents/guardians
- the name and date of birth of the child (or children)
- medical and pertinent information relating to the child
- emergency contacts and alternative authorised pick ups
- any custody arrangements or legal arrangements for the child

- CRN numbers for both claiming parent and child (if claiming CCS) and primary parents DOB.
- enrolment forms MUST have the most recent copy of the child's **up to date** immunisation status attached.

Please hand in your enrolments to the office and they will be checked. All enrolments are then uploaded onto Xplor and the staff will confirm days, orientation and fees. It is important that you understand that Greenhills is a CCS approved centre. This means that you may be eligible (as per Centrelink approval) for reduced fees according to your circumstances. Being approved for CCS is through Centrelink and it is important that you apply as soon as possible. This process can take 6 weeks once submitted and can delay your entitlement for reduced fees.

Information on how to apply is through www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-claim

CCS and linking your entitlement to Greenhills Occasional Care

Greenhills Occasional Care uses the government recommended third party app called Xplor to monitor CCS entitlements, attendance and payments.

How to link your CCS entitlement to your account at Greenhills:

1. Once enrolled at Greenhills the primary carer will be sent a link to their email address from Xplor to set a passcode for their personal account in Xplor. It is imperative that you do this immediately. Please make sure that you write down this passcode.
2. **You will need to digitally sign your CWA (Complying Written Agreement) in Xplor to formally link GNHOCC to your CCS entitlement.** Your entitlement can only be backdated to the date that you sign this CWA as per Family Assistance Law. **Delaying this will mean that you may need to pay full fees for the period of care prior to this date.** Help on how to sign your CWA in Xplor is available here: <https://support.ourxplor.com/hc/en-us/articles/360015429272-CCS-CWA-Parent-Steps-on-Xplor-and-MyGov>
3. Within 46 hours you should receive notice in your MyGov account that you have made a CWA with Greenhills. You will need to **confirm it in MyGov** ASAP to finalise the CCS connection to Greenhills.
4. Contact the office at Greenhills and confirm that you have finalised the connection. We will then check it on our end and confirm that everything is connected. We will be able to confirm your current 'Gap' amount that you will pay for each session.

Xplor Digital Sign In and Out including Xplor app.

Your Xplor passcode is required to sign your child into their first day of childcare. On the first day you will set a 4 digit pin. Your mobile number and 4 digit pin will be the way you digitally sign in and sign out of your child for each day of care. This is done on the room ipad and the educators can assist you.

Your attendance is uploaded to Centrelink and will form part of your CCS details.

Since the implantation of COVID Safe policies we encourage families to download the **Xplor Home app** (red square white house) and use that to sign their children in and out of care.

All payments and fees will be shown on your Xplor account.

CENTRELINK ABSENCES AND CHILDCARE SUBSIDY (CCS)

Centrelink will continue to pay the CCS subsidy for up to 42 absences for each child per financial year. You can use these absence days for any reason, including if the child is overseas. We do not need evidence.

More information: www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-manage-your-payment/if-your-child-absent-from-child-care

You can only use an absence day after your child has physically attended the service for the first time. CCS will not be paid if your child has not yet attended the service.

In special circumstances, you may get CCS for more than 42 absence days. Talk to Centrelink about this, you may need to provide supporting documents.

Centrelink will cancel your CCS enrolment if either of the following occurs:

- your child hasn't attended childcare for 8 continuous weeks
- Greenhills advises Centrelink that your child is no longer attending.

Greenhills has its own policies on absences and fees. Please read below for our information.

Waiting List and priority of care:

The centre will maintain a waiting list for care in application date order.

Once a vacancy arises, the staff will contact the next family on the list.

As per CCS guidelines (as a CCS approved centre) we are legally required to prioritise families who meet the following guidelines: www.education.gov.au/priority-filling-child-care-places.

Every effort is made to cater for families and communities needs in line with the ethos of Neighbourhood Houses.

Changes to Enrolment Information:

Please inform the Office Manager or a staff member, as soon as possible in writing if any details recorded on the enrolment form should change such as address, telephone numbers, emergency contact details and immunisation updates. Requests for change of enrolment must be addressed to the Office Manager at admin@ghnh.org.au. It is a parents/carers responsibility to make sure enrolment details are up to date.

Importantly if there are any changes to CCS entitlements it is the carers responsibility to inform the centre ASAP. You are wholly responsible for any changes that may occur with the CCS and therefore resulting in fees owing to Greenhills.

FEES & PAYMENT POLICY

Greenhills Neighbourhood House Occasional Childcare operates on a non-profit basis.

Fees are set in accordance with Centrelink's recommendations for our program

Fees are reviewed by the Committee of Management each year and subject to change.

Current Fees:

\$49 per AM session (This amount will be reduced according to your percentage of CCS entitlement).

\$36.75 per 3 hour PM session

A discount in childcare fees are available for committee members. If interested, please contact the office.

If you are unable to claim CCS, please contact Sarah Willits- Office Manager, for options available to you.

METHOD OF PAYMENT

For families who are enrolled in care, the gap payment (difference between fees and CCS entitlements) is required at the start of each term and this will be shown on your Xplor statement. You will be sent an invoice prompting you to pay your fees, this will also tell you how to pay your fees. This invoice will have the due date of the fees and parents can expect a late fee penalty if you do not pay by this date and have not contacted us to discuss. (See below)

Greenhills Neighbourhood House Occasional Childcare can provide an electronic Statement of Entitlement to each family using the service about their child's care usage, total fees and CCS paid. This will be through the Xplor app.

CANCELLATION POLICY, ABSENCES & LATE PICKUP FEES

Cancellation - All families are required to give two-weeks' notice when cancelling any day of care. We ask that you inform us of this and confirm last date of care in writing to avoid confusion. It is your responsibility to ensure that the office has received your email.

Sessions will be charged to you as per your booking over this two-week period even if not attending. Refunds of the gap (non CCS) amount will be given to families who have paid in full for the term after the 2-week period has been served.

We ask that you settle all outstanding accounts prior to or on your last day of care.

Absent Fees – Families are required to pay for ALL sessions booked within a term (excluding public holidays or cancellations on the centres behalf).

As discussed above you are required to pay within 2 weeks of your official invoice being sent.

We **DO NOT** offer refunds for illnesses, holidays or any other type of absence.

We do not offer any 'make up' sessions or casual sessions.

Late Fees - A late fee of \$5.00 per five minutes per child applies when children are not collected within fifteen minutes of their session ending. A statement will be issued with the relevant amount due and is to be paid before the child attends their next booked session. Continued lateness could result in the family forfeiting their booking. Please respect staff and children in this matter.

Termination of care

A 'Termination of Care' notification may be issued to families under certain circumstances including non-payment of fees; incomplete authorisation of child enrolment records; or inability to provide a service. Families will be provided with two weeks' notice of termination of care in normal circumstances.

If there are extreme circumstances to be considered – such as violence, threats or perceived threats then immediate termination will occur.

PAYMENT OF LATE FEE PROCEDURE

Fees are required to be paid on a term basis. The total fee for the term is to be paid within 2 weeks of your invoice, (the only exception will be if suitable payment arrangement has been entered into and kept as per arrangement).

If fee payments fall into arrears, the following action may be taken (except in cases of hardship):

- Step 1: Issue of a reminder notice stating fees are now overdue giving families 5 working days for payment.
- Step 2: If no payment is made and the family have not contacted the office to organise a payment plan, a \$30 late payment fee will be added to the current outstanding fee.

A further 3 working days will be given to make payment of current fees including late payment fee.

- Step 3: If payment has not been received or an agreed payment plan has not been arranged a final demand for full payment (including the late payment) immediately will be issued. This will give the family 24 hours to make the payment. If no payment is made at this time, there will no longer be a place available at the service for the child and a debt collection process may be initiated.

FRAUD POLICY

The Committee of Management and staff of Greenhills Neighbourhood House Occasional Childcare (GNHOCC) are committed to ensuring robust governance and the ethical conduct of all employees/parents by preventing, detecting and investigating all forms of fraud and corruption that may occur within GNHOCC.

GNHOCC is committed to identifying and acting on non-compliant and fraudulent behaviour, including through the Childcare Subsidy System.

GNHOCC has zero-tolerance of fraud, with all incidents regarded as serious. Fraud undermines GNHOCC's ability to deliver this service and its purpose and values.

Potential case could cause reputational loss, financial harm and loss, reduction in staff morale and performance, and/or inability to effectively deliver this service.

Fraud and corruption control

- The Board and senior management intend to;
 - (a) Ensure that there is an effective fraud and corruption risk management framework in place;
 - (b) Understand the fraud and corruption risks to which the Company is exposed;
 - (c) Maintain oversight of the fraud risk assessment and the controls in place to mitigate the risks identified; and
 - (d) Monitor reports on fraud risks, policies and control activities that include obtaining assurance that the controls are effective.
- In ***Accordance with Family Assistance Law***, each employee of GHNHOC who has the authority to accept the enrolment of a child must ensure that the information below is collected:
 - The names and contact details of the parents and child.
 - i.e. the relevant names and phone numbers of the family and emergency contacts.
 - The name, enrolment date and date of birth of the child to whom sessions of care are proposed to be provided
 - Notify day of care that will be provided on a routine basis under the arrangement
 - Details about fees proposed to be charged to the individual for the sessions of care provided under the arrangement, which can be detailed by reference to other material (such as a fee schedule or information available on a website maintained by the provider) that the parties expressly understand may vary from time to time.

Investigation protocols and Reporting

- Any employee, community member or parent who suspects fraud or corrupt activity can report the matter confidentially through one of the following options notifying his or her immediate manager, Coordinator or CFO. It is the responsibility of all officers, employees and contractors to report all suspected, attempted or actual fraud or corruption incidents. All information received is treated confidentially by the CFO and their relevant supporting functions.

The aim of this policy is to;

- ensure that our Committee of Management, staff and families act legally, ethically and in the public interest
- ensure the Committee and staff understand their obligations under ***Family Assistance Law*** and implement practices to stop potential, or actual, fraud from occurring
- align with the vision, purpose and values outlined in the GNHOCC philosophy and values.

In order to provide our families with fee assistance, GNHOCC is entrusted to administer this scheme under the **Family Assistance Law**. We are responsible for ensuring childcare funding is properly administered and is used to assist eligible families with the real costs of genuine childcare. Deliberately defrauding the Government is a crime.

The risk of fraud may be internal or external and can range from deceitful conduct or omission to cause actual or potential loss to any person or entity for the benefit of any person or entity.

Fraud can relate to theft, false representations, providing false attendance records and/or unauthorised use of information. Deliberately defrauding the Government is a crime.

Fraud prevention and control is everyone's responsibility. GNHOCC encourages all staff and families to work with the centre to report and prevent fraud.

PRIVACY POLICY

Philosophy

Our aim is to protect the privacy of the families and staff at Greenhills Neighbourhood House Occasional Childcare.

Rationale

GHNHOCC takes its obligations under the **Privacy Act 1998 (C'th)**, the **Health Records Act 2001 (Vic)**, and other applicable privacy laws, very seriously. We respect the privacy of the personal information that we hold. This policy sets out how we handle personal information about individuals according to the **National Privacy Principles (NPPs)**.

Collection: Personal information collected and held by GHNHOCC may include information on the parent/guardian or the attending child such as; name, date of birth, current and previous addresses, telephone/mobile numbers, email address, occupation, medical conditions, physician and CRN numbers.

Personal information is collected for the purposes of:

- Providing our services
- Researching and developing our services
- Reporting to Government authorities
- Complying with the law

Where possible GHNHOCC will collect personal information directly from the individual concerned. However, in some cases we may receive personal information about an individual from third parties such as referees and government agencies. In either case, we will take reasonable steps to ensure that the individual is aware of the purposes for which the information is collected.

What happens if an individual chooses not to provide the information?

Individuals are not obliged to give us their personal information. However, if an individual chooses not to provide GHNHOCC with certain personal information, particularly that information which we are required to collect by law, or for the requirements of the Childcare Subsidy, then we may not be able to provide you with the full range of our services.

Sensitive information: In certain circumstances we may collect sensitive information such as health information. We only collect this information with the individual's consent (or with the consent of the parents, guardians or authorised representative as appropriate) or as required or authorised by law.

Use and Disclosure of Personal Information: We may provide relevant personal information about individuals to government departments and sponsor organisations where we are required or authorised by law to do so. We may otherwise use or disclose personal information (including health information and other sensitive information) about staff, children, parents or other individuals for purposes related to the main purpose for which the information was collected, with the consent of the individual (or with the consent of parents, guardians or authorised representative as appropriate) or as required or authorised by law.

Storage: We will take reasonable steps to protect the security of the personal information that we hold from misuse and loss and unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. This includes appropriate measures to protect electronic materials and materials stored and generated in hard copy. We train our employees how to properly handle personal information and we restrict access to what is necessary for specific job functions.

Access and correction: You can request access to and correction of the personal information that GHNHOCC holds about you. If you wish to do so please speak to our Centre Coordinator. We take reasonable steps to make sure that the personal information we collect, use and disclose is accurate, complete and up to date.

Complaints: If you have any complaints about our privacy practices or wish to make a complaint about how your personal information is managed by GHNHOCC, please contact our centre Coordinator or the Committee of Management.

Further information regarding compliance with **Family Assistance Law** can be found from:

fdcsupport.org.au/wp-content/uploads/FDC-Support-Project-Compliance-Brochure.pdf

ORIENTATION TO THE CENTRE

For most children, entry into childcare may be the first experience of being separated from their parents, so some anxiety is normal. Parents are required help their children adjust by visiting the Centre together for a short time prior to commencement to familiarise themselves with the new environment. Being confident helps your child adjust (if parents are anxious, this can easily influence the way the child feels).

All enrolment forms **must be completed in full – with attachments** (medical management plans, immunisations

statements etc) **two working days** prior to care commencing. If you have not filled in your forms properly (with attachments) then we will have the right to refuse care until they are properly filled in and processed.

Sometimes a child's special security item (clearly labelled) such as a teddy bear is a good idea. Remember to tell your child when you are going, and that you will be back. When you say goodbye, it is better to go quickly so that the child can settle down and get on with enjoying his/her time at the centre.

You are welcome to have a coffee in the office area initially if you would like to stay in vicinity of your child.

If still concerned, ring childcare on 0490 105 828 half an hour to an hour after your departure to enquire after your child, the staff are only too happy to ease your mind.

CHILDREN'S ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURES

ARRIVALS

Digital sign in is compulsory.

On entering the centre, parents (or authorised people) must sign in on the centre iPad/app using Xplor and inform the staff of the child's arrival. If an authorised person is dropping off the child, they should have their own log in and PIN or use of the app to digitally sign in, set up by the parent or guardian. All authorised people need to be listed in the enrolment form.

Staff should be notified of any change in circumstances that has occurred to the child that will assist them with their care.

Digital sign out is compulsory.

Parents or authorised people collecting the child are to report to staff, then use the iPad/app to digitally sign-out the child.

These procedures are rigidly adhered to in order to protect children during each transfer to and from the centre.

Legal responsibility and parent's/guardian's cooperation and support is essential in this matter. It is imperative that centre staff be notified if an unauthorised person is to collect the child.

Please be aware photo ID will need to be shown if the person collecting your child is unfamiliar to staff.

LATE DEPARTURES

Families should be aware that their late arrival to collect children places significant stress on the staff and the children. Every effort should be made to arrange for the collection of children by the completion of their session. If a child has not been collected within fifteen minutes of their session concluding, staff will attempt to contact the parent/guardian or emergency person listed on the enrolment form. Under government regulations two staff will remain at the centre until the children are collected. Late fees will apply when children are not collected on time

(see Fee Policy). If children are not collected and parent's/guardian's or emergency contacts cannot be contacted within two hours, staff will contact Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in accordance with regulations.

CUSTODY & ACCESS

If a parent is experiencing problems associated with custody and access, please discuss this with the childcare coordinator or office manager. A copy of the current custody order is required for our file, and we will do the utmost to abide by this. If there is any likelihood of problems associated with the collection of a child, it is the parent's responsibility to notify the staff of any changes to court orders or care arrangements.

NON – DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Centre program does not discriminate based on race, religion, cultural heritage, political beliefs, marital status, national origin, or sexual preference.

ANTI BIAS STATEMENT

The Centre does not discriminate based on race, colour, religion creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability or handicap, or sexual orientation. The centre understands that at an early age, children can absorb our society's biases of gender, age, colour, language, physical characteristics. We believe that the anti-bias curriculum that we embrace supports the children as they explore, celebrate and understand differences.

Our approach acknowledges that children and adults can be empowered to stand up for their rights and the rights of others and to recognise and question social injustice. We challenge the children and ourselves to:

- Explore issues of fairness as seen from a child's perspective;
- See conflict as a challenge in problem solving;
- Be open to differing perspectives, ideas, attitudes and behaviours;
- Monitor our words and actions for unconscious bias or prejudice;
- Recognise and demonstrate respect for diversity among people;

INCLUSION

The Centre provides for all children, including those with identified disabilities and special learning/development needs. Modifications are made in the environment and staffing patterns in order to include children with additional needs. Staff are aware of the identified/diagnosed needs of individual children and will follow through on specific intervention plans. The childcare Co-Ordinator makes appropriate professional referrals when

necessary. Family ideas and input are encouraged to aid program planning . Staff address priorities and concerns of families of children with additional needs.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION AND DIVERSITY

GHNHOCC, which values the diverse backgrounds of all people, is committed to assuring that the centre experience is one that challenges, empowers, supports and prepares its children to live in, work in, and value our increasingly global and diverse world.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The general atmosphere of the centre should encourage positive relationships between staff, parents, children and the community. The interrelationships between the people connected with the service should be facilitated through mutual respect, warmth, support and cooperation. Since the child's earliest experiences occur in the home and parental interest and involvement in these experiences is significant to the child's development, a cooperative effort by the parents and childcare staff is essential in providing continuity of experiences from the home to the centre.

Through positive and open communication between parents and staff we can ensure that there is expression and acknowledgement of individual needs, and facilitation of shared decision making in regard to these needs. It is important parents feel comfortable in taking an active role in the service, to the degree that they are able.

Parents can make suggestions to enhance the center's program by;

- Putting their ideas in writing and send to the centre coordinator
- Completing parent surveys
- Speaking to the staff about their views

PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- Only send their child to the GHNHOCC if they are well
- Maintain confidentiality
- Communicate openly and honestly
- Pay fees punctually
- Notify immediately if there are any changes to your CCS entitlements
- Notify of infectious diseases or illness in your household (that may affect others)
- Notify of absence
- Ensure enrolment details and their Xplor details are accurate and up to date
- Provide up to date management plan for children if they suffer from anaphylaxis/allergy or asthma
- Ensure staff know of any concerns, risks or specific needs of child
- Notify changes to custody orders

- Sign child in and out
- Respond to emails from the centre and keep communication open
- Participate in centre events to link with your child's friends and educators in a social way

PROVISION FOR COMPLAINTS REGARDING CENTRE OPERATION

The Centre is committed to the provision of the highest quality service possible and developing an environment where both staff and families are able to be actively involved in the services provided. It is acknowledged however that there will be occasions when a family has a concern relating to the operation of the service. Families always have a right to express valid concerns relating to the service and to be assured that their concerns will be treated in a confidential and professional manner and this expectation applies to the individual as well.

It is the expectation that every effort will be made to deal with all issues in a fair and informed way without prejudice. It is the expectation that many concerns will be resolved in an informal, co-operative situation, without the need to institute formal processes and at the local level.

Management will always act in accordance with the requirements of the *Children's Services Regulations* which requires complaints procedures to be clearly available at each centre.

Our complaint process is available to parents at the entrance to the centre.

HYGIENE & INFECTION CONTROL

The centre is committed to ensuring that the health and wellbeing of children attending the centre are cared for in a manner consistent with the *Children's Services Regulations 2020* and with an appropriate duty of care.

Effective hygiene strategies and practices assist us to protect all persons from, and minimise the potential risk of, disease and illness. We will demonstrate to children the hygiene practices which reduce the likelihood of cross infection and explain the reasons for them. Experiences that promote basic hygiene awareness assist children to become competent, independent, and develop valuable life skills.

When groups of children play and learn together, illness and disease can spread from one child to another even when the service implements recommended hygiene and infection control practices. We believe that hygiene is an important strategy in infection control, which encompasses the service's guidelines for excluding children and adults with an infectious illness or disease.

Our service will promote hygienic practices that assist in preventing the spread of infections by implementing the following strategies:

- effective hand washing/santiser
- hygienic cleaning techniques
- handling, storage and disposal of body fluids

- maintenance of a hygienic environment
- knowledge of infectious diseases and exclusion guidelines
- identifying and excluding sick children and educators
- promoting immunisation of children and educators

To assist in managing hygiene and infection control our service will:

- Notify families, educators, local community or the relevant health authorities of a diagnosed infectious illness or disease
- Notify families or emergency contact when a symptom of an excludable infectious illness or disease has been observed
- Notify stakeholders when an excludable infectious illness or disease has been confirmed by a medical practitioner
- Ensure educators have adequate equipment or products, such as disposable gloves, nappies etc.
- Maintain procedures, such as correct handling of body fluids
- Maintaining educator's awareness of hygienic human contact and physical interaction with others
- Increase educator awareness and knowledge of cross infection
- Maintain a hygienic and healthy environment and ensuring that the service is well ventilated
- Identify and comply to exclusion guidelines and timeframes

For more on Hygiene and Infection Control please see our policies (available at the centre)

MEDICAL MANAGEMENT

In the event of accident, injury, or illness of a child, the centre shall immediately contact the parent/guardian.

If unsuccessful, an emergency contact number will be called to arrange collection of the child.

The child shall be isolated and made comfortable and observed until collected.

If, in the opinion of staff, emergency medical treatment is required, hospital or ambulance assistance will be sought as authorised by the parent/guardian on the Enrolment form. Any expenses occurred will be the responsibility of the parent/guardian.

An Accident, Injury or Illness report shall be completed, by the attending staff member. Parents/guardians are to sign this in acknowledgement of the accident, injury or illness.

The coordinator shall immediately inform the Committee of Management of the occurrence of a serious accident, injury or death of a child. The Committee shall ensure a report of the incident is submitted to Department of Education and Early Childhood Development within 24 hours of its occurrence.

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION POLICY

If children require medication to be administered whilst at the centre the following procedure must be followed.

- Staff must first be notified, and medication is required to be handed to staff.
- The child's name, name of medication, dosage and time of administration must then be entered and signed by the parent/guardian, in the medication book.
- The child's name must be shown clearly on ALL medication.
- The medication must be administered from its original container, bearing the original label, instructions and the expiry or use by date clearly visible. Staff will not administer out of date medication.
- When administering medication, a second staff member will verify the dosage, child's name and medication according to the medication book. The medication book is signed by both staff members.
- Parents are required to sign the book on departure to indicate that they are aware of the medication administered.
- If a parent/guardian has not given written permission a child cannot be given any medication except for asthma and anaphylaxis treatment.

IMMUNISATION

GNHOCC follows the "No Jab, No Play" policy. The Victorian Government amended the **Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008**. The amendments mean that early childhood education and care services including GNHOCC cannot confirm enrolment of a child unless the parent/carer has provided documentation that shows the child:

- Is fully vaccinated for their age, or;
- Is on a recommended catch up schedule if their child has fallen behind with their vaccinations; or
- Has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.
- To be eligible for the Childcare Subsidy a child must also meet immunisation requirements.

"Conscientious objection" to vaccinate is not an exemption.

CHILDREN'S ILLNESSES

The centre aims to prevent illness spreading within the centre. We feel home is the best place if a child is unwell. Excluding sick children is an important way of preventing the introduction or reintroduction of infection.

A Covid safe plan is in place at the centre.

Sometimes children need to be away from the centre for the safety of others. This is called exclusion. The exclusion period is the minimum period to be away from the centre, however a child may need to stay at home longer than the exclusion period to recover from the illness.

Children and staff with an infectious disease, as prescribed by the Health Department of Victoria's "**Minimum Period of Exclusion from Schools and Children's Services of Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts**", will not be accepted

into the Centre until the exclusion periods recommended are adhered to. The child is permitted to attend once the exclusion criteria has been met.

Please do not send your child to the centre if he/she has:

- **A Fever:** A child with a fever of more than 38 degrees must be kept at home (or will be sent home). The child should stay home until fever free for at least 24 hours. His/her activity level and appetite should also be back too normal.
- **Prescribed Antibiotics:** A child who has prescribed antibiotics for an illness should be kept at home for at least 24 hours. The centre will not administer the first dose of any medication.
- **Diarrhoea:** A child who has watery stools should not return to the centre until he/she has been free of diarrhoea for 24 hours. If however, the child has an allergy condition which regularly causes diarrhoea, please alert staff to this when you enrol your child.
- **Vomiting:** A child should be kept home until the vomiting has stopped for 24 hours. Micro-organisms which cause vomiting and diarrhoea are highly contagious and will spread through the centre very rapidly.
- **Contagious Conjunctivitis:** This is an infection of the eyes, characterised by redness, a yellow discharge and watering. This condition requires specific medical attention and the child should be kept home until after 24 hours on medication and the discharge has cleared.
- **Pediculosis (Head Lice):** The child should be excluded until treatment has commenced. Other members of the family will also need to be checked.
- **Impetigo (School Sores):** This is a contagious skin infection characterised by crusted sores, which usually appear first on the face area. The condition requires specific medical attention and the child should be kept at home until the sores have healed, or treatment has started, and the sores covered.
- **Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex):** These are painful sores usually around the mouth, and possibly a fever. The condition requires medical attention if the infection is severe or if the sores become secondarily infected. The child should be excluded until the sores have healed, particularly where there is risk of the infected child coming into contact with young babies.
- **Hand-Foot-Mouth Disease:** This is a highly contagious infection which needs medical attention. It consists of small lesions which tend to spread quickly on the tongue or inside the mouth around the cheek region. Lesions also appear on hands, feet, legs, and occasionally on the buttocks. Parents are asked to keep the children away from the Centre until they have recovered from the infection.
- **Pandemic Illness:** As required by the Department of Education we will follow all guidelines as directed and updated to minimise the risk of spread. You can check this on the Department of Education website.

Parents are requested to notify the centre of the occurrence of any infectious disease contracted by a child attending

the centre. As soon as practicable, the centre will inform parents/guardians attending the centre, of the occurrence of an infectious disease.

HYGIENE POLICY

Parents, staff and children are all affected by the spread of infection at the centre, therefore the importance of reducing the spread of infection is extremely important.

In practice:

- The centre shall be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition at all times.
- The children's rooms and bathroom will be swept and mopped daily with benches, toilets, floors and changing mat being disinfected as used or as required.
- Tables are wiped down after meals and activities or when needed.
- Staff wear gloves to change nappies, handle blood or other bodily fluids.
- Children are encouraged to wash hands appropriately with soap before meals, after toileting or when required.
- Parents shall provide sufficient clothing to enable children who soil or wet their clothing to receive a change of clothing. Cleanliness shall be observed where food is prepared, stored or handled.
- Unwell children shall not be permitted to attend the centre, this shall be at the discretion of the staff.
- All parents must adhere to regulations concerning the exclusion of children with infectious diseases. An exclusion table is on display.
- We will follow any guidelines from appropriate government departments in the event of a pandemic.

DAILY HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKS

- All materials and premises, play areas, equipment and fittings accessible to children shall be maintained in a good state of repair and safe condition.
- Plants, trees and shrubs planted shall not be of a toxic or irritant nature.
- Any dangerous and/or toxic substance used for cleaning the centre shall be secured out of reach of children at all times. No child or group of children shall be left unsupervised either indoors or outdoors at any time.
- A First Aid kit shall be placed out of the reach of children. All contents must be checked regularly, and items replaced as they are used or become out of date.
- The play outdoor area must be checked by staff before the children go outside.

TOILET TRAINING

It is the right of all children to feel dry and free from urine or faeces on their skin which can cause rashes and infections. As children show readiness to toilet train, parents are encouraged to plan an approach with staff for consistent management. Encouragement and praise will be used always, never force or punishment for accidents.

Signs of toilet training readiness

- Constant dry nappies
- Child is aware of wetting or soiling
- Language is used to let people know they are wet
- They have developed skills in self-help such as pulling pants down.
- Children should feel secure and comfortable about the toileting process.

NAPPY CHANGING

Nappies are changed when wet or soiled and changing occurs in a safe and hygienic manner. Changing nappies should be a pleasant experience and viewed as an opportunity for one to one attention and interaction with children.

Nappies are checked at regular intervals throughout the day.

Hand washing proceeds any nappy changing and wearing of gloves is adhered to. Benches and change mats are disinfected after each change. A detailed nappy changing procedure is on display in the bathroom area.

CLOTHING

Appropriate clothing for the season is necessary for comfortable play and activity at all times. We encourage parents to dress their child in clothes that promote free play and expression rather than clothes that are uncomfortable or leave children feeling they can't participate because they are not allowed to get dirty. Children will enjoy a wide range of experiences, some of these will be messy. We endeavour to use smocks at these experiences however at times accidents or over excitement does occur.

Please ensure that an extra set of clothing is provided in your child's bag and is left at the centre during your child's session. **Please label all belongings with your child's name.**

Footwear: Please make sure that your child's shoes are comfortable, well fitting and appropriate for outside play. No crocs, thongs or backless sandals please.

Any centre clothing that you borrow must be cleaned and returned to the centre as soon as possible.

SUN SMART POLICY

To enjoy plenty of outdoor activity, staff and children will be encouraged to develop Sun Smart practices.

We will endeavor to run part of our program outside, every day, avoiding the intense afternoon sun.

We request sunscreen be applied at home before arriving at the centre. This allows appropriate absorption time before children play outside. Parents to provide a named sun hat which protect the face, neck and ears when outdoors. We encourage wearing of appropriate clothing which covers shoulders and backs.

Staff will act as role models, wearing sunscreen and hats, as well as educating and encouraging children to follow Sun Smart practices. Staff are encouraged to wear sunglasses in the warmer months.

Staff shall ensure children are provided with adequate cool water to help prevent heatstroke and direct children to use shaded areas where possible.

In program planning, the Sun Smart philosophy will be encouraged amongst the children and all playground developments will have as a priority the need to provide a Sun Smart environment

FOOD POLICY

We believe snack time is an important part of every session. Snack time promotes important concepts about health and hygiene, helps to build a sense of a cohesive community, as well as developing a positive attitude towards food. However, with around two percent of the population suffering from some form of food related allergic symptoms (the reaction to these can be life threatening and may progress very quickly for some children) the following guidelines are to be followed in the interests of safeguarding all children who attend the centre.

GNHOCC aims to provide a supportive environment for children who suffer from allergies by promoting a nut free environment and ensure all staff and volunteers are aware of, and supervise closely, children with allergies.

Additional allergens may be excluded (according to children attending the centre), all parents will be informed in writing if this is necessary.

All staff are trained in anaphylaxis management.

Guidelines on food from home

Greenhills recognises the importance of healthy eating to promote the growth and development of young children and is committed to supporting the healthy food and drink choices of children in our care. It is acknowledged that the early childhood setting has an important role in supporting families in healthy eating. Greenhills therefore recognises the importance of supporting families to provide healthy food and drink to their children.

Suggested fruit snacks	Suggested lunch ideas:
Pieces of fruit or vegetable (pre-cut)	Sandwich/wrap
Fruit bar/roll up	Cheese and crackers
Dried fruit (apricots, sultanas, bananas)	Pasta salad
Fruit pouch	Yogurt
Veggie chips	Fruit or vegetables

KEEP IT SIMPLE - large amounts are daunting for young children

Food policy implementation guidelines

- A water bottle (labelled) full of fresh water is to be brought to childcare with the child. Water for refill is available and will be provided by an educator.
- Parents are not to supply food containing nuts or nut products. Food sent containing nuts or nut products will be sent home with a reminder of the food policy.
- Children who suffer from allergies must have a management plan completed at time of enrolment.
- Children and educators will wash their hands prior to eating.
- Children will be encouraged to remain seated whilst eating their lunch and the centre has a no share policy for food and beverages.
- The children are always supervised whilst eating their meals.
- We aim to create a relaxed atmosphere at mealtimes where children have enough time to eat and enjoy their food as well as enjoying the social interactions with educators and other children.
- GNHOCC will encourage children to eat what is in their lunch boxes but will not force a child to eat or finish.
- **CHILDREN'S BIRTHDAYS – In line with our “no shared food policy” , if you wish to bring a treat for the group to share in celebrating your child’s birthday we suggest stickers or bubble bottles.**

INTERACTIONS WITH CHILDREN

At Greenhill's Occasional Childcare we recognise the importance of promoting positive interactions and respectful relationships. A consistent approach by adults will encourage children to feel safe, secure and promote a sense of belonging to Greenhills.

AIMS

- To promote positive relationships
- To develop an understanding of their own and others feelings
- To increase children's awareness of their impact on others
- To encourage children's ability to socialise and share with others
- To reinforce positive and discourage negative interactions

PROCEDURES

Staff will:

- Have appropriate developmental expectations, not overestimate a child's understanding
- Be sensitive and mindful to the children
- Protect children's feeling of self-worth, avoid making them feel ashamed, embarrassed or insecure
- Use positive rather than negative reinforcement to guide children's behaviour (tell them what to do rather than what not to do)
- Encourage children's social interactions by giving them strategies to deal with conflict through use of appropriate language and actions
- Plan and prepare the environment to minimise difficulties by offering access to a range of activities, providing appropriate materials, space and supervision

- Be consistent with behavioral expectations
- Re-direct children where necessary, for behaviour to be acted out in an appropriate way
- Encourage children to show empathy for others that are experiencing difficulties
- Explain and remind children of the possible dangers of their behaviour

GUIDENCE

- Encourage a child's efforts to achieve
- Use clear positive language
- Acknowledge children's feelings and encourage them to express them verbally and creatively
- Be clear and consistent in setting limits
- Model positive actions and language
- Remain sensitive to cultural differences, family circumstances and health

BEHAVIOUR GUIDENCE PLAN

If a child repetitively displays inappropriate behaviour which is of a serious nature, an incident report will be made for center records. If deemed necessary a behaviour guidance plan will be drawn up by staff and parents, ensuring continuity in our approach and reviewed regularly.

If child's behaviour is such that he/she is harming others and the program is no longer able to meet the child's needs, non-admission may be the only option available. This decision will not be taken lightly and will involve the Committee of Management who have the right to revoke care.

CHILD SAFE POLICY

GNHOCC is committed to child safety. We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers. We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

GNHOCC has robust recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers and is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks. We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously. GNHOCC is committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early and removing and reducing these risks.

If you believe a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

REPORTING OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE POLICY

Professionals, including early childhood educators, who have a high contact level with children, have a legal obligation to report child abuse. GNHOCC will follow the mandatory reporting procedures to notify the

Department of Human Services and **Child Protection Services of Victoria**, if we believe on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered, or is likely to suffer, harm as a result of physical injury or sexual abuse, and that the child's parents have not protected or are unlikely to protect the child from such harm.

Reasonable grounds for reporting:

- That the child tells the care giver that he/she has been physically or sexually abused
- That another person known to the child or who knows of the child, tells a care giver that the child has been abused and the care giver finds evidence or is evident by the observations of the child
- The care giver's observations of the child's behaviour and/or knowledge are leading her/him to suspect that the child has been abused (see indicators of physical and sexual abuse)
- That the care giver observes the abuse of the child

Indicators of physical abuse:

- Physical abuse is any non-accidental form of injuries inflicted on a child by any adult.
- The injuries may be caused by striking, shaking, burning, squeezing and assault with a weapon.
- Indicators may include:
 - Bruises or welts (often of different ages), burns, scalds, sprain or poisoning

Sexual abuse

Child sexual abuse occurs when any adult uses his or her power over the child to involve that child in sexual activity.

Sexual abuse involves a wide range of sexual activity which includes fondling, masturbation by adult to child and child to adult, voyeurism, exposure to pornography and sexual intercourse.

Children are unable to give informed consent to sexual activity because of their dependence and developmental immaturity.

Centre follow up after a report is made:

The centre will make written observations of the child available to **Child Protection Services of Victoria** by written request only. The centre staff will be available to work within C.P.V.'s requests of future planning and counselling for the child. All workers in the centre will be made aware of the report and ensure that they write up any future suspicious observations of the child.

The identity of the notifier is not revealed by the protective worker unless written permission is given by the notifier. Staff will acknowledge that if the matter goes to court, they may be requested to appear in court to give evidence of their observations. The coordinator will encourage staff to seek professional counselling for themselves if needed after reporting the incident.

TRAINING AND SUPERVISION

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation.

All our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by GNHOCC's **Code of Conduct** which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

Training and education are important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. We train our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

New employees and volunteers will be supervised regularly to ensure they understand our organisation's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to GNHOCC's **Code of Conduct**). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

FAIR PROCEDURES FOR PERSONNEL

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form¹, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES

An emergency could be a serious injury, bomb threat or risk to person or property.

It is centre policy to prioritise and always maintain the safety of children.

Evacuation

1. Room leader to coordinate the evacuation, including calling emergency services
2. Room leader to collect phone (containing the children's emergency contact details) and evacuation kit (water, fire blankets, medications and first aid kit)
3. Assistant to evacuate children onto the deck and conduct head count
4. Room leader to check and clear room (toilets, under tables etc)
5. All evacuate, as practised, to 4 Willis St, Greensborough

It is vital that children are signed in and out in case of an emergency. Xplor is used to account for all children in the case of an emergency and if these records are not up to date children may not be accounted for.

Post Emergency Action

The Centre Coordinator/Room leader is to liaise with emergency services as to the most appropriate action to take before making any decisions e.g. return children to centre, arrange for children to be collected, or transported away from the area.

The director is also to arrange post emergency stress counselling for those who request/require it.

Incident/Accident Report to be completed within 24 hours.

CODE RED DAYS:

GHNHOCC is listed on the department's bushfire at risk register. The centre will be closed on days determined Code Red by the Emergency Management Commissioner.

Once a Code Red day has been determined by the Commissioner this decision will not change – regardless of any changes to the weather forecast.

It is our intention to give parents as much notice as possible of a planned closure, however, unexpected weather patterns may force a closure at short notice.

The final decision will be made no later than 1pm the day before a planned closure.

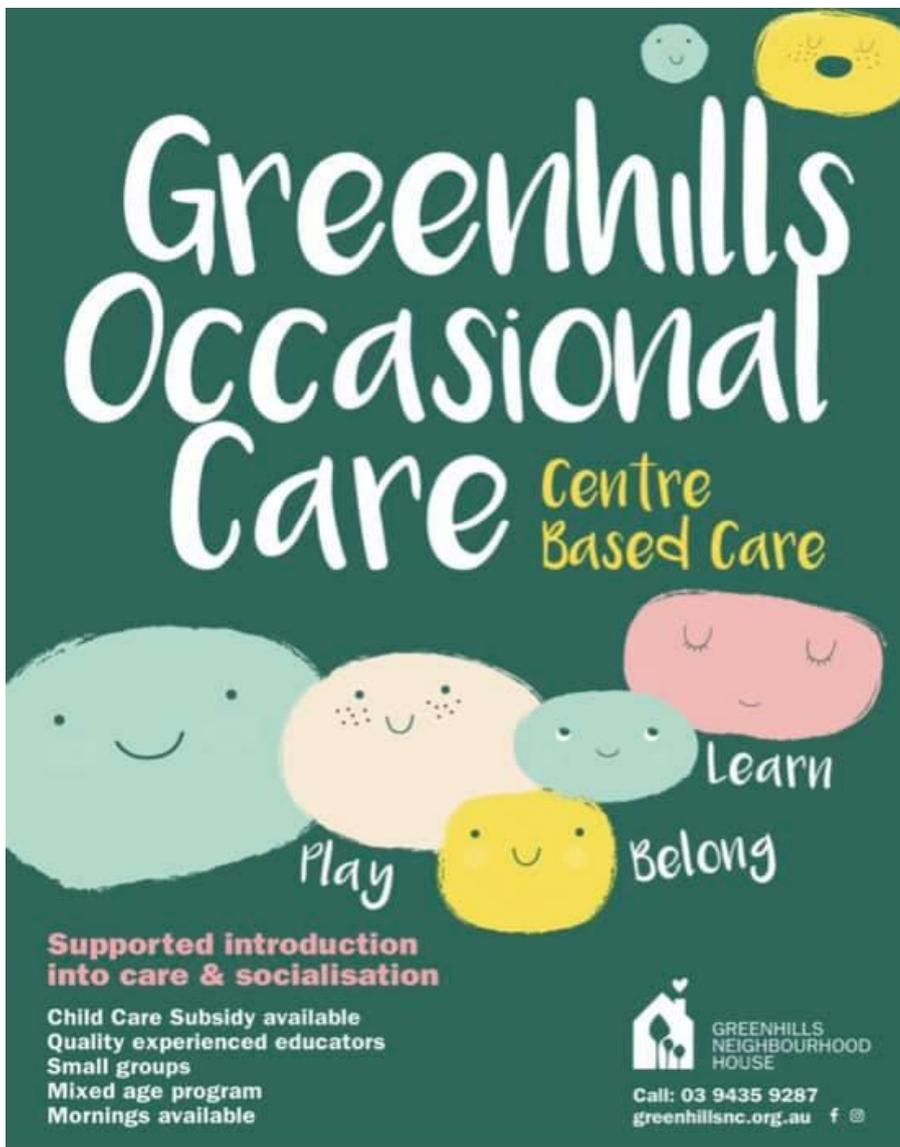
Fees will not be charged for any Code Red days.

The prime responsibility of the staff is to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and other staff. It is the responsibility of rescue services to combat the threat.

Thank you for reading this handbook.

We take the care of children at Greenhills Occasional Care very seriously.

Should you need any clarification please contact the office manager or the centre coordinator on 9435 9287

A green poster for Greenhills Occasional Care. The title 'Greenhills Occasional Care' is written in large white letters, with 'Centre Based Care' in smaller yellow letters below it. The poster features several colorful, smiling faces of various shapes and colors (green, orange, blue, pink, yellow). Below the faces are the words 'Play', 'Learn', and 'Belong' in white. At the bottom left, there is a list of services: 'Supported introduction into care & socialisation', 'Child Care Subsidy available', 'Quality experienced educators', 'Small groups', 'Mixed age program', and 'Mornings available'. At the bottom right, there is a logo for Greenhills Neighbourhood House, a phone number 'Call: 03 9435 9287', and the website 'greenhillsnc.org.au' with social media icons for Facebook and Instagram.

**Greenhills
Occasional
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Based Care

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 GREENHILLS
NEIGHBOURHOOD
HOUSE
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