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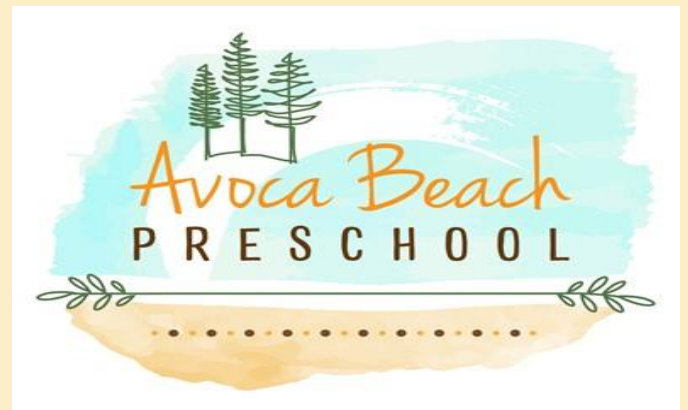
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# Family Handbook

*Building community, compassion and curious minds.*

Welcome to our Preschool.

We look forward to a wonderful partnership with you and your family as we nurture and support your child's learning and development.

Avoca Beach Preschool acknowledges and gives thanks to the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather to learn and play.

"They took care of the land and animals before us"



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1:

### **Our Centre:**

Avoca Beach Preschool is situated in a small coastal village – Avoca Beach. We are a privately owned, purpose-built single-story building that has off-street parking with a car park that has an entry/exit one-way system with road safety features and markings. There is a public bus stop directly at the front of the school. We have been established in Avoca Beach for over 25 years and have been family owned and run for the last 17 of those years. We are open from 7.30am to 5.30pm every weekday. Being closed on Public Holidays and for 3 weeks over the Christmas period.

We are a small, boutique preschool that enrolls children from 2 years up to 5 years of age. We have 2 learning environments – The Koala Room for children aged 2 – 3.5 years and The Bellbird Room for children aged 3.5 – 5.5 years.

We have a strong connection to our local community and primary school. With our preschool room educators attending the 'Headstart' Program for Kindergarteners at Avoca Beach Primary and Copacabana Primary.

Avoca Beach Preschool is committed to providing the absolute best in care and education for children. We aim to work with you to equip your child with all the skills and abilities that they will need as they develop and moving forward. Forming a strong foundation from which to grow and learn. Focusing on holistic care and wellbeing in a loving, engaging, nurturing environment.

We consider ourselves "a home away from home" for the children in our care.



2:

### **Our Philosophy:**

At Avoca Beach Preschool we believe in the value of holistic learning through meaningful play. We celebrate the uniqueness of each child and respect their right 'to be' and to learn in a secure, inclusive and safe setting. We recognise the importance and embrace the difference of all families and see ourselves as a community working to provide a respectful, nurturing, caring and fulfilling learning environment for all children.

We believe a child's learning can be enriched from their environment and develops best with strong, loving, respectful relationships with their caregivers. We endeavour to work as a team with families to promote and support wellbeing, happiness and participation as we plan for children's development. Our philosophy incorporates the importance of all contributors to a child's learning – family, educators and the wider community. We work together to provide a place where everyone feels and experiences a sense of belonging. Through recognised studies we acknowledge the important significant rapid growth and development that takes place in the early years. We use this as underpinning knowledge for intentional teaching and planning resources, activities and play areas to promote and support this. We plan our program extending on the children's interests and curiosity. Aiming to promote and nurture inquisitive and engaged learning for all. We encourage environmental and sustainable practices from an early age and this forms an important part of our beliefs at ABPreschool. We promote and plan experiences with sustainability in mind and to promote respect and wonder for the world in which we live.

Our Educators have strong and sustained links with the Preschool, local schools and community. Key educators have been at the service and working together as a team for long periods of time and regularly update their knowledge, research, learning and qualifications to provide best practice and endeavour to be teacher researchers for the benefit of the children.

The principal mission of Avoca Beach Preschool is to provide a place for all children to develop and learn at their own pace and time. For each child and family to feel included, supported and welcomed. To assist the children and families in preparing children for a lifelong love of inquiry, learning and strong sense of self. "Every day our children will learn something...

some days they will bring it home in their hands,

some days they will bring it home in their heads,

and some days they will bring it home in their hearts."

3:

### **Our Educators:**

Avoca Beach Preschool employs a professional team with a wide range of qualifications and experience. Information about individual team members is on display at the centre. Our recruitment process is rigorous and thorough, ensuring that our educators are not only experienced and qualified, but also genuinely passionate about helping young children to grow and develop and that each educator aligns with our services philosophy. We place a strong emphasis on continued development of team skills and knowledge. We invest heavily in professional development of our team through attendance at courses, workshops, webinars and monthly team development meetings. Primary Contact team members work with specific groups of children continually and are responsible for developing programs that meet the individual and group needs of all children.

We are proud that each of our educators have been at the preschool for several years and we have a high retention of staff. The commitment, knowledge, continuity of care and value they bring to the service is invaluable.

4:

#### Our leadership:

Avoca Beach Preschool is privately owned and operated.

The licensee holds a certificate 3 in Early Childhood and has over 17 years' experience in managing the centre.

Our centre Director and Nominated supervisor holds an Early Childhood teaching degree and is the licensee's daughter. They are responsible for the day-to-day management of the preschool, with the help of the assistant director, who holds a Diploma in Early Childhood and is the certified supervisor/educational leader. Together, they oversee operational requirements, committing to meeting the National Standards and supporting the educational team to provide high quality care.

All educators are responsible for planning and implementing programs for the children in their care. This is done in collaboration with the whole team, across the service. The Educational Leader provides guidance and support to each of the teams to ensure programs are of the highest quality and in line with the objectives of the Early Years Learning Framework.

5:

### **Policies and Procedures:**

ABPreschool has developed a wide range of policies and procedures in line with the National Quality Standard and Early Childhood Education and Care regulations. Policies are to ensure practices carried out are to meet the needs of all children in our care.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) is a key aspect of the National Quality Framework (NQF) and sets a national benchmark for early childhood education and care services. The NQS is divided into 7 areas that contribute to the quality of early childhood education and care: • Educational Program and Practice • Children's Health and Safety • The Physical Environment • Staffing Arrangements • Relationships with Children • Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities • Leadership and Service Management. Our policies and procedures set out our aims and guides our practices to ensure we meet the requirements of these 7 quality areas.

A copy of our policies and procedures is available to view at the service. A list of the policies is available to families on enrolment. If you would like a copy of any policy, please see the centre management. The policies are reviewed regularly in collaboration with all key stakeholders, including staff and families. Your comments are important to us, so please feel free to provide feedback on any of the policies.



6:

### Play based learning:

Avoca Beach Preschool recognises and values the benefits of learning through play. Play based learning provides children with opportunities to engage with people actively and imaginatively, use resources, objects and the environment to co-construct their own learning. Children are naturally wired to do the very thing that helps them to learn – play! Learning through play promotes the holistic development (physical, social, emotional, cognitive and creativeness) of a child. One of the greatest benefits of playing is to assist with the building of social competence. Children can build friendships, learn to resolve conflicts, regulate their own emotions and behaviours. Playing is a known stress relief and often linked to child wellbeing.

At Avoca Beach Preschool, we encourage calculated risk challenges during play and endorse the benefits to development during physically active play. Physical play allows children to test all types of motor skills. It promotes significant health and wellbeing advantages. When children are physically challenged, they form stronger pathways and dispositions for learning.

7:

## Early Years Learning Framework (E.Y.L.F)

### BELONGING, BEING AND BECOMING ...

The Early Years learning Framework, along with the National Quality Standards, forms the guidelines and policies around early childhood education and care in Australia. It outlines the basis for early childhood educators to scaffold, extend and enrich children's development and learning. It recognises the vital importance of rapid brain development in the first five years. The E.Y.L.F is made up of learning outcomes, principles and practices, which educators use in their documenting of children's learning and reflecting in their planning and practice.

### OUTCOMES...

- 1 - Children have a strong sense of identity.
- 2- Children are connected with and contribute to their world.
- 3- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing.
- 4- Children are confident and involved learners.
- 5- Children are effective communicators.

### Principles...

- Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships.
- Partnerships with families.
- High expectations and equity.
- Respect for diversity.
- Ongoing learning and effective practice.

### Practices...

- Holistic approaches.
- Responsiveness to children.
- Learning through play.
- Intentional teaching.
- Learning environments.
- Cultural competence
- Continuity of learning and transitions.
- Evaluating children's learning and wellbeing.

8:

### **The Koala Room:**

The KOALA Room is our learning environment for children from 2 - 3.5 years of age.

Toddlerhood is an exciting stage in a child's development. It is a time of rapid growth and when a child starts to build their independence. Our environment is set-up and planned in a way for children to learn through exploration, listening, touch, role modeling and connection making with educators and peers. Our goals for the Koala room are to create a loving environment for the children to feel safe, secure and develop a sense of belonging. To build attachments to educators and develop emerging social, emotional and language skills. Our play experiences and resources introduce concepts of colour, counting, finger and hand fine-motor development and self-help skills, along with building strong physical development. We use song, dance and storytelling to nurture learning and a sense of wellbeing.

9:

### **The Bellbird Room:**

The Bellbird room is our learning environment for children 3.5 - 5.5 years of age.

Our focus is to foster the developing skills of preschoolers through curiosity, investigation and co-learning. Our program is implemented by Early Years Teachers with goals for equipping children with social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills needed for a great start to formal school life. We hold strong the assessment of being 'school ready' is entirely holistic - being well-rounded and confident in personal identity, wellbeing communication, connecting with peers and others and fostering a strong disposition for learning are all factors that we consider and value for a child being ready for 'big' school. We endeavour to provide a place that children can develop all these skills within their own time and pace. Through our learning program and planning, we scaffold literacy and numeracy concepts and work towards engaging in building skills for handwriting, name writing, letter and number recognition, mathematical understanding, creative skills and critical thinking. We promote creative arts with the use of different medias such as clay, paints, pastels and water colours and build musicality through song, dance and musical instruments. We foster wellbeing with daily yoga and mindfulness. We support children to have agency, become critical thinkers and have curiosity, whilst valuing empathy, compassion and respect for others and the world in which they live.

10:

### *Documenting children's learning:*

Each day, educators record their program of learning and create a daybook that is displayed in each room. It is a snapshot of the planning and implementation that has taken place, with a focus the learning outcomes achieved and aimed for. There is a photographic slideshow of the adventures and activities of the day displayed on a monitor in each classroom. Also, around the classrooms there will be representations of children's learning through artworks, investigation and inquiry topics alongside displays of interest areas and activities that are taking place.

Observations of each child's development is recorded, reflected upon and planned by educators regularly. Interactions, conversations, magic moments, photos, work samples and learning stories are all captured to create the journey of growth and learning for every child during their time at Avoca Beach Preschool. These observations, documentations of learning, artwork and photos are placed into an individual portfolio for every child. The portfolios are a work in progress as children grow with us throughout their time here and are then completed and handed over to take home at the end of each year, they are a wonderful and special representation of a child's time with us and are a lovely keepsake.

## Enrolling your child at Hillside:

11:

### Enrolment process:

Starting and finding care for your child is a big milestone and we encourage families to come in, meet the educators and our team and tour the service. We have an open-door policy for prospective families and welcome visits anytime. We urge you to connect with us to arrange a day and time that suits you and your child. On physical visits or enquiry contact through phone or email, we can take all your details to be placed on our waitlist to enroll. Our waitlist and enrolment works on priority of access (see further down) and once we have a placement in the room for your child, we will then contact you to complete our enrolment form pack which we will digitally send to you. (Paper copies can also be given).

Enrolment forms: Enrolment forms will be handed out once a confirmed spot has been allocated, offered and accepted.

Enrolment forms need to be fully completed and supporting documentation received along with enrolment fees to finalise enrolments ...

Supporting documents: Along with completed enrolment forms, a copy of the child's **birth certificate** and up-to-date **immunisation record** statements must be received by the service. Any relevant court orders and health management/medical plans need to be attached also.

Families need to ensure they have correct C.R.N numbers for both guardians and child.

Once a place at the service is allocated, families will need to ensure that the service is nominated on individual relevant Centrelink accounts to confirm Child Care Rebate is paid. If the service is not nominated, rebate will not be paid by the government, and full fees will be charged.

Current fees are charged per day at \$113.00 rising to **\$115.00 in 2022**.

On enrolment a refundable bond of \$180, plus an administration charge of \$60 (per child per year) is required

Accounts are expected to be kept 2 weeks in advance. To be paid either fortnightly or monthly.

A 2-week period of advance notice is required to drop days or unenroll a child.

### Priority of access:

Services must comply with family assistance Law. The priority of access guidelines are set out in the Child Care Benefit Determination 2000.

Priorities of access for filling vacant positions ...

Positions must be offered and filled in order of priority; these are:

- 1) Child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- 2) A child of a single parent or of parents who both satisfy the work, training, study test.
- 3) Any other child.

12:

### Orientation:

At Avoca Beach Preschool we acknowledge starting care is a momentous occasion for children and families. We aim to work together to make this as smooth a process as possible. We want you and your child to feel secure, confident and happy. To support this, we recommend an orientation process tailored to suit you and your child's needs.

After enrolling with us we offer an open-door policy for you and your child to come and visit, stay and play for as long as you feel comfortable. Often, this is for a period of time before your child actually starts care with us. You are welcome to come and spend time exploring the service, getting to know the educators and environment and allowing your child to play whilst you are still on the premises.

On enrolment we work with you to settle your child and feel confident to say goodbye comfortably to spend the day with us. We recommend shorter days to start with to help your little one settle and form a consistent and regular drip-off routine – always say goodbye and leave your child knowing we will endeavour to ensure they are happy, nurtured and secure. We will call you to let you know how your child is settling and you can call, pick-up, drop-off at any time.

**13:**

**What to wear:**

Preschool is a time to explore and investigate! We strongly recommend comfortable clothes that your child can easily get off and on for practicing self-help skills and most importantly, clothes that you will be happy to get messy! We investigate and learn through many things at preschool, such as paint, Texas, playdough, water-play, glue, clay, kinetic sand, sensory mediums and sand. Your little one will get messy! A change of clothes and spare underwear is essential.

For our younger children, we ask you to supply sheets for rest time and if needed, nappies for the day.

We ask you to always send your child to preschool with a wide-brimmed hat. No snapback caps please.

We suggest shoes that are easy for children to practice putting on themselves with assistance. We have many barefoot children and value the benefits of barefoot play but do ask for your child's shoes to be sturdy and comfortable.

We require clothes to be sun safe, t-shirts/long sleeve tops to cover shoulders are essential. No singlets or straps at all please.

Please label all items of clothing. Shoes and clothes are taken off multiple times during the day and it is important we can identify which items belong to whom. So, please label everything!

**14:**

**What to bring:**

In your preschool backpack we recommend - a wide brimmed hat, 2 x change of clothes, spare underwear, sheets and nappies if needed.

We ask that no toys from home are brought to preschool - these are a source of great distress to children as they inevitably get lost, used by other children and/or broken. We have a myriad of toys at preschool for children to explore and we ask home toys stay at home.

15:

### **Signing in and out and late fees:**

We have an electronic tablet system for signing your child in and out of the service.

On arrival, please use it to sign in your child – your child's name will be found by pressing the 'room' tab, a list of the day's children appear alphabetically, once you have allocated your child, press their name and sign them in on the sign in page.

The same routine is followed for signing out on departure.

The sign in tablet is directly linked to our account attendance administration software and is an important part of account management so we ask that it is only used by authorised persons 18 years of age and older.

Please also be aware that our system is time sensitive and our preschool closes at **5.30pm** – we are not licensed to care for children after this time and we require children to be collected and signed-out by this time, before the preschool closes.

**Late fees** will be charged for children signed out after 5.30pm, this will be at \$2 per minute for the first 5 minutes than will increase by an extra \$1 per minute thereafter. Attempts will be made to call guardians and emergency contacts, if no one can be contacted within 15 minutes, we are required to notify police of an uncollected child. Our educators are not expected to stay after 5.30pm and we politely ask that this is respected – consistent late pick-ups will place your child's enrollment at risk.

16:

### **Canceling/changing attendance:**

We will do our utmost to try to accommodate requests for changes to enrolments if spots or spaces are or become available, we try to allocate them to existing families and meet their needs if we can. We are happy to put requests for day changes or extra days on a waitlist.

If requiring to drop a day, we require a 2 – week notice period.

If wishing to cancel enrolment, we require a 2 -week notice in writing (via email).



On leaving the service, once notice is given and accounts are settled, the full bond of \$180 is returned.

**17:**

### **Menu and dietary requirements:**

At preschool we aim to provide food that is nutritious and fresh. We have a full-time cook to provide all our home-cooked meals.

We offer Morning Tea, Lunch, and Afternoon Tea, with a late snack for children who are with us at 5pm and later.

Our meals are planned in accordance with Australian dietary guidelines, and we follow the 'Munch and Move' NSW Health initiative to support the healthy development to provide the recommended nutritional intake for children. We have been awarded a 5 star healthy rating for our menu.

Our weekly menu is displayed on a whiteboard above the sign-in tablet in the foyer - it rotates weekly over a 4 week period and each season. We always welcome and are open to suggestions and ideas for our menu.

Water and milk are available as drinks. We have a water bubbler for children to use.

### **Dietary requirements:**

We plan and accommodate dietary requirements and intolerances and work with medical action plans to do so.

We are a peanut free centre and ask that children do not consume peanut products before coming in to the service that day - we have an educator with peanut anaphylaxis.

**18:**

### **Sleep and Rest:**

We follow safe sleep practices and advocating for the needs of the child. All children are provided with the opportunity to rest or sleep during the day. For our younger children, we have sleep and rest time after lunch and they are each provided with a bed. We allow children to wake naturally and will work with families to discuss the sleep requirements of their child.

19:

### Toileting:

Learning to use the toilet is a big milestone and we will work with you to support your child with toilet training. We ask you pack extra underwear when toilet training and communicate strategies so we can work together to positively support your child's step into successful toilet training.

20:

### Special events, incursions, excursions:

We regularly welcome incursions at Hillside and have visiting performers into the centre to offer a wide range of experiences – such as Reptile shows and music entertainers. We will notify families of such occurrences and seek written consent for children to participate.

Occasionally, the older children will venture on an excursion – such as to the local library. We will notify families beforehand, carry out thorough risk-assessments and seek permission for such events.

### Health and safety:

21:

### Immunisations:

From January 1<sup>st</sup> 2018, it is a legal requirement that all children be fully immunised before being accepted into an Education and Care setting. Children who have not been vaccinated due to 'conscientious objection' cannot be enrolled. Only children who are not vaccinated due to a certified medical exemption can attend.

Before enrolment, families must provide an Australian Immunisation Register (A.I.R) History Statement, that shows a child is immunised, is on a catch-up schedule or cannot be immunised due to medical reasons.

Parents can request a copy of their child's A.I.R at any time, up to the age of 14:

- using their Medicare account through myGov <https://my.gov.au>
- using the Medicare Express Plus App [www.humanservices.gov.au/individual/subjects/express-plus-mobile-apps](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/individual/subjects/express-plus-mobile-apps)

- Calling the A.I.R general enquiries line 1800 653 809

## 22:

### Illness:

We regard children's and educator's health and wellbeing as utmost importance. We are vigilant with children's health and to prevent the spread of illness, we follow 'staying healthy in childcare' 5<sup>th</sup> edition in regard to sickness and illness in children.

When children are ill, they cannot fully participate in their day, and this has an impact on their wellbeing. We ask that children displaying any obvious signs of illness such as coughs, colds, runny noses, discharge from the eyes or temperature, are kept at home. If a child has had or has needed pain relief such as Panadol to relieve any symptoms, they should not be in care. Pain relief will mask symptoms and could cover a more serious illness, it also puts other children at risk of infection as a child could still be infectious.

Children that have had vomiting or diarrhoea need to be excluded from the service for a minimum of 24 hours since the last loose bowel or vomit.

If a child has been confirmed as having an infectious disease, the service needs to be informed as soon as possible and the child excluded from the service for the recommended period along with a medical clearance from a doctor to return.

If an infectious disease has occurred, families will be informed via the noticeboard communication and confidentiality will be adhered to.

If your child should become ill, we will contact you for you to collect your child we will make the child as comfortable as possible until you or an authorised contact collects them.

## 23:

### Incident and/or Injuries:

We take every measure to protect children from accidents and injuries but inevitably, accidents can happen. In the case of a minor injury, educators will complete an 'Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness form' details will be listed, along with any relevant first aid given and discussed with families on collection. Forms will be signed by both educators and guardians. Educators may call the family as a courtesy.

In the case of any bump to the head or face, families will be called and advised. Children will only need to be collected if deemed necessary.

In the event of an injury that requires more than basic first aid and or the child is visibly distressed for a prolonged period, every attempt will be made to call primary contacts and emergency contacts on enrolment forms. Professional medical advice, including calling an ambulance will be sought if necessary.

All staff are qualified senior first aiders and are trained in Administering First Aid, C.P.R, Managing Asthma and Anaphylaxis in a Childcare Setting.

**24:**

#### **Medication:**

Medications can be administered with guidelines -

A medication form is completed by the guardian and educator.

All medication is prescribed with the child's name, dosage, exp date clearly labeled.

Pharmacy or over-the-counter lotions and medications cannot be administered without a pharmacy label and headed letter and the child's name clearly stated with reason for medication.

Please notify educators and remove any medications from children's bags to be stored safely by the centre.

**25:**

#### **Sun Safety:**

Avoca Beach Preschool is a certified Sun Safe Centre. We consider sun safe practices important and follow them all year.

We ask children to have 'sun smart' clothes - tops with shoulders covered and wide brimmed hats.

We use a UV Daily index to inform practice and implement our Sun Safe Policy when UV levels rise above safe amounts.

We supply Sunscreen on arrival and ask you to apply sunscreen to your child. During the day we will reapply and support your child to apply sunscreen 20mins before outdoor play.

Our outdoor environment has plenty of shade and we use water play activities in the warmer months.

#### **Partnerships with families:**

**26:**

#### **Communication with families:**

An integral part of our philosophy is our commitment to relationships with families.

Each of our rooms has a 'day book' that the educators complete daily - this is a snapshot of your child's room during that day and an overview of the learning planned and scaffolded. A photo slideshow is displayed on a monitor in each room.

Hillside sends out a monthly Newsletter to update our families on what's happening at preschool and to share information and services along with dates to remember.

We have a Facebook page that we actively update.

There is a family communication book in the foyer for family contributions and quality improvement ideas.

The office always has a member of management in attendance to greet families and remain accessible for an informal or formal chat.

**27:**

#### **Child Care Subsidy:**

The Child Care Subsidy is paid directly by the Australian Government. It is usually paid to the service on your behalf. To receive C.C.S you must meet the eligibility requirements and nominate the center via Centrelink and myGov accounts. You must also keep your information and correct - such as working hours, income and lodging of tax returns.

**28:**

#### **Absences, Public Holidays, Make-up-days and extra days:**

Government regulations for receiving C.C.S allocates allowable absences. Absences are set at 42 per financial year. Absences are included and clarified as illness, holidays or any day where a child has not attended for personal reasons. If absences exceed 42 in a year, C.C.S payments will stop.

We are open 49 weeks of the year and closed for 3 weeks over the Christmas break - we do not charge for Christmas close down.

We are closed on all Public Holidays and charge for them. If your child normally attends on a Public Holiday you will receive a Make-up-day in lieu. This can be taken throughout the year, when there is an available spot in your child's room.