

City of Ballarat

Active Kids Club Parent Handbook



Contents

Learning through play	3
Policies, procedures and guidelines.....	3
Child care enrolment	4
Childhood Immunisation.....	4
Central Kindergarten Registration	5
Early Start Kindergarten.....	5
Fees	6
Orientation.....	6
Absences	7
What to bring.....	7
What to wear	7
Allergies and medical conditions	8
Additional Needs.....	8
Illness	9
Administration of medication	9
Incident, injury and illness while in care.....	10
Change of information	10
Child safety.....	10
Photography and social media.....	11
Meals and nutrition	11
Sleep and rest	12
SunSmart.....	12
Behaviour guidance	13
Emergency management	13
Family involvement and communication.....	13
Open Doors	14
Grievances.....	15
Contact information.....	15



Introduction

Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre Active Kids Club is a creche based education centre available to families that are using the services of the centre.

Learning through play

Play-based learning appeals to children's natural curiosity and the desire to engage in experiences based on their interests, strengths and developing skills. This helps children to develop an understanding of themselves, others and the world around them.

Through play, children learn to communicate, foster creativity and imagination, develop social and emotional skills, become increasingly independent, explore, hypothesise, take risks, problem solve and build resilience.

Play is one of the foundations of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). Using the EYLF, our educators guide your child's play, carefully designing the learning environment both indoors and outdoors to meet the individual needs of children.

Our educators are thoughtful and purposeful when creating indoor and outdoor environments. We provide lots of loose parts – that is materials that can be moved around and used for a variety of purposes with no specific set of directions for exploration and the development of creativity. Our routines are flexible. This allows children to be active agents in their learning and to ensure they have sufficient time to develop these important skills through play.

Policies, procedures and guidelines

The City of Ballarat Children's Services comply with the National Quality Framework (NQF). The NQF provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services across Australia. The NQF includes: National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and National Learning Frameworks.

In addition to the NQF, the City of Ballarat complies with all other applicable State and Commonwealth legislation, including in relation to The Family Assistance Laws, The Children, Youth and Families Act 2005, The Child Safe Standards, as set out in the Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005, mandatory reporting requirements and the Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014.

How we implement these rules and regulations is documented in the City of Ballarat Children's Services policies, procedures and guidelines. These are reviewed regularly by our Childcare Management Team and appropriate feedback is sought from educators and families prior to implementing any changes. In addition, educators and family members are invited to enquire and have input into our policies and procedures at any time of the year.

All of our policies and procedures are accessible to families through the Harmony Kids Parent Portal. Alternatively, you can view a hard copy of our policies at our Centres. Please ask your Centre Coordinator if you need assistance in accessing our policies, procedures and guidelines.



For information about the National Quality Framework visit <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/about>

Refer to the **Policy and Procedure Review Policy** for further information.

Child care enrolment

On confirmation of your child's place with the City of Ballarat Children's Services, one parent or guardian must complete the enrolment form. You must provide all requested information including details of at least two emergency contacts.

With the enrolment form you must:

- Provide your child's Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) immunisation history statement as proof that your child's immunisations are up-to-date (see Childhood Immunisations for further information)
- Provide a copy of your child's Maternal Child Health Book for sighting
- Provide a copy of any medical condition Action Plans, where applicable.
- Provide any court orders, where applicable
- Ensure you have obtained a valid Centrelink Customer Reference Number for both parent/guardian and child/children.

Refer to the **Enrolment Policy** for further information.

Childhood Immunisation

Prior to your child commencing care, you are required to provide a copy of a current Australian Immunisation Register (AIR) immunisation history statement (not more than 2 months old at the time care will commence) which shows that your child's immunisations are up-to-date in line with the National Immunisation Schedule. Note: Immunisation History Statements can show immunisations are up-to-date while also recording medical exemptions or catch up vaccines.

Please note, there are some circumstances where our services may enrol children without proof that they are fully immunised under a grace period. If your child is not up-to-date with his or her immunisations, please speak to the Centre Coordinator to find out if you are eligible to attend our service and what steps you need to put in place to ensure your child is on a vaccine catch up program.

How to get an updated Immunisation History Statement

You can get an updated statement from the Australian Immunisation Register:

- online – through [MyGov](https://my.gov.au/LoginServices/main/login?execution=e1s1) <<https://my.gov.au/LoginServices/main/login?execution=e1s1>> once an account has been created
- online – through [Medicare Express Plus App](https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/express-plus-mobile-apps) <<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/services/express-plus-mobile-apps>> once a **MyGov** account has been created
- over the counter – at a [Medicare Service Centre](http://findus.humanservices.gov.au/) <<http://findus.humanservices.gov.au/>>



- by phone – call the Australian Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809
- by asking your GP/immunisation nurse if they can print the statement (note, not all immunisation providers can do this).

If your child has a vaccine due, you can call the City of Ballarat on 5320 5720 to make a childhood immunisation appointment. Alternatively, you can contact your medical provider for vaccinations.

Refer to the ***Immunisation and Disease Prevention Policy*** for further information.

Central Kindergarten Registration

The City of Ballarat Central Kindergarten Registration Scheme ensures the entire community can access a fair, equal and timely system for processing kindergarten registrations. Applications are accepted from the beginning of the year prior to your child attending three-year-old kindergarten and two years prior to attending four-year-old kindergarten.

You can apply for 3-year-old kinder if your child will be 3-years-old by 30 April in the year they will attend 3-year-old kinder. They cannot attend the program until they have turned 3.

You can apply for 4-year-old kinder if your child will be 4-years-old by 30 April in the year they will attend 4-year-old kindergarten.

If your child's birthday falls between 1 January and 30 April in the calendar year, you have a choice about whether to enrol your child in kindergarten in the year they turn 4 or the following year, which is commonly known as the cut off period. Children learn at different rates, in different ways and at different times. In some cases, your child may benefit from starting a kindergarten program later. Talking with your child's educators can help you make an informed decision based on your individual child's needs. For more information please visit <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/parents/kindergarten/allaboutkinder.pdf>

To apply for kindergarten, you can submit an online application or download an application form by visiting the City of Ballarat website at www.ballarat.vic.gov.au

Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten provides free or low-cost kindergarten to eligible 3-year-old children where programs are offered by a qualified teacher.

Children are eligible who are at least 3 years old by 30 April in the year they are enrolled to attend the kindergarten program, if:

- Your child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Your family has had contact with Child Protection (or been referred to Child FIRST)
- Children who are, or have been, in foster care, permanent care or kinship care.



To apply for kindergarten, you can submit an online application or download an application form by visiting the City of Ballarat website at www.ballarat.vic.gov.au

Fees

The following outlines our requirements in relation to the payment of fees for our children's services at Ballarat Aquatic & Lifestyle Centre.

Summary of fees and session times 2023

60 minutes	\$5.20
90 minutes	\$7.80
2 hours	\$10.50
3 hours	\$15.70

Summary of fees and session times

As per our fees policy, if a child is unable to attend a booked session please call the Children's Centre on 5330 4109 by 8.30am and leave a message, or email Julie directly at juliewarren@ballarat.vic.gov.au. This way cancellation spots can be offered to families on the waiting before sessions begin. Any cancellations after 8.30 will be deemed a 'late cancellation' and a cancellation fee of \$7.80 per child will be applied. Further bookings will not be taken until the fee has been paid.

Families are also required to adhere to their booking times. As we are regulated by strict ratio requirements, if you have booked until 10am it's vital that you arrive and collect your child by that time, and have exited the room, to allow for the next session children to attend.

We are able to take bookings up to two weeks in advance. The creche is currently experiencing high demand and when one session finishes, we have others waiting to begin.

A late fee of \$5.00 per child is incurred per 10 minutes if a child is not collected from the Children's Centre on time. In the event of late arrival to the Children's Centre, please note that the collection time does not change. The original collection time remains as per the booking.

All children need to be collected BY 12 pm as this is a licensing requirement. Again, a late fee will apply for any families and children that remain in the crèche after 12pm.

Orientation

We believe orientation is an important process where educators can learn information about your child's needs and those of you and your family. This process helps to make the transition from home to care as smooth as possible with the aim to maintain continuity between home and the service, which helps your child adjust to their new environment.



Absences

Please phone the Centre if your child will be absent from a session. Notification assists us in planning for the care of all children.

What to bring

Children love to have their own bag for child care, which is placed in the locker for easy access throughout the day.

Please make sure that all items brought or worn to child care are clearly labelled with your child's name.

Please bring the following items:

- A spare change of clothes, including socks and underwear. Please bring extras if your child is toilet training.
- Appropriate seasonal clothing (see What to Wear, below, for further information). In Ballarat's unpredictable climate, it's best to be prepared!
- An empty drink bottle. Please note, no juice or flavoured drinks are permitted.
- A nutritious packed snack
- Nappies
- Own sunscreen if sensitive (generic sunscreen provided by the services)

Children are welcome to bring a comfort item, such as a toy or favourite sleep aid. Please do not bring precious toys that may be lost or damaged. All toys must be clearly labelled.

What to wear

Your child should wear clothing that is comfortable, suitable for the weather, allows them to explore and play freely, and minimises the risk of injury. Our service has a strong focus on indoor-outdoor play all year around, so remember to always provide clothing that is suitable for both inside and outside. Some suggestions include clothes that:

- are loose and cool in summer to prevent overheating
- protect your child from the sun during outdoor play, including not dressing in sleeveless clothing and providing a broad-brimmed or bucket style hat and sunglasses
- are warm for cold weather including beanie and coat for outdoor play in winter
- are comfortable and safe for sleeping. For example, babies and toddlers should not rest or sleep in clothes with hoods, cords, ties, ribbons or crocheted jackets that can pull tight around their neck
- won't compromise safety during activities – clothes with cords, strings or hoods may catch on equipment and furniture for example
- allow easy access for toileting. For example, elasticised trousers, track pants – rather than buttons, zips, belts etc.
- can get dirty when children play and engage in activities.



Footwear needs to enable children to play comfortably and safely, so avoid thongs, clogs or backless shoes that compromise safety.

Please clearly label all of your child's clothing.

Please note, based on Australian Government product safety warnings, we do not allow children to wear amber teething necklaces or bracelets at our service. This is to minimise the risk that they may choke on the beads if the necklaces or bracelets break apart.

Refer to the ***Children's Clothing Policy*** for further information.

Allergies and medical conditions

It is important that all of your child's medical conditions including asthma, are discussed with the service.

If your child has a medical condition, then prior to commencing care we require a management plan for the condition to be approved and signed by a medical practitioner. The management plan is an important document, as this is used to discuss steps that need to be put in place with educators, other relevant staff at the service and families as needed, to ensure the wellbeing and safety of your child. If this plan changes over time, then it is important you notify us of any changes to the plan as they occur. As a minimum, management plans must be reviewed and updated annually.

Where necessary, we will arrange for training of educators. It may also be necessary to develop a risk management plan and communication plan.

If you have provided the service with a management plan, including the administration of medication and you fail to bring that medication, or the medication you have supplied is out of date, you will not be able to leave your child at the service until you provide the medication.

Refer to the ***Medical Conditions Policy*** for further information.

Additional Needs

Our services respond to and welcome children with additional needs. We are committed to inclusive practices that reflect equity, rather than equality, to maximise learning and development opportunities for all children. We provide each child, regardless of their needs and abilities, with a supportive and inclusive environment that allows them to fully participate in service activities and programs.

To ensure we can provide the best support for your child and, as necessary, access external support arrangements, we encourage you to speak to us about your child's needs and provide information about any support arrangements you may already have in place.

Refer to the ***Additional Needs Policy*** or further information.



Illness

The physical health and wellbeing of all children and staff at our services is very important. If your child is sick, the best place for them to rest and recover is at home in their own bed.

Your child should not attend our service, or will be required to be collected from our service, if they have:

- A temperature above 38 degrees Celsius
- Vomited and/or had diarrhoea within the last 24 hours
- Three or more loose bowel movements, showing symptoms of diarrhoea within 24 hours
- Started a course of antibiotics in the last 24 hours
- Eye discharge
- Any rashes that have not been identified and cleared by a doctor, with a current doctor's certificate
- Symptoms of an upper respiratory tract infection (cough, nasal discharge, sore throat, earache) associated with a fever
- Extreme lethargy or fretting

For any illness not listed above, staff will be guided by the exclusion recommendations listed in 'Staying Healthy in Childcare'

If your child becomes ill while in care you will be contacted by an educator. It is important that you pick up your child immediately or arrange for another person to collect your child. Educators only call when genuinely concerned about your child's health. If parents cannot be contacted, the educator will call those listed as emergency contacts on your child's enrolment form.

If your child arrives at the service and the educator feels that your child is too ill to stay, you will be asked to take your child home.

Refer to the ***Infectious Diseases Policy*** for further information.

Administration of medication

To ensure the health, wellbeing and safety of children in our care we follow strict procedures when administering medication to children.

Educators will only administer medication when there is written authorisation to do so from a parent or other authorised person. The exception to this is where a child is experiencing an asthma or anaphylaxis emergency.

If your child requires medication, you or another authorised person will be asked to sign our medication form, completing all the necessary information including the last time the medication was administered. Any medication administered will be recorded on this form.

Educators are not able to give your child over the counter medication unless it has been authorised by a medical practitioner (such as pharmacist or doctor).

Refer to the ***Administration of Authorised Medication Policy*** for further information.



Incident, injury and illness while in care

All of our educators have a current first aid qualification. If your child is injured, becomes ill or is involved in an incident at our service, an educator will respond to the injury, illness or trauma needs in accordance with their first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis training, and in accordance with the child's medical management plan, risk minimisation plan if relevant and/or our infectious diseases policy.

We will ensure you are notified as soon as possible and complete an Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record without delay.

Depending on the nature of the incident, or if your child has become unwell, we will ask you or another authorised person to collect your child within one hour of the request.

Refer to the ***Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy*** for further information

Change of information

While we update our enrolment information annually, it is important you notify us of any changes to your child or family circumstances that may have an impact on the health and wellbeing of your child and the education and care we provide.

For example, please notify us:

- of any changes to address or phone numbers so we can easily contact you in case of an incident, illness or emergency
- if your child has a new or changed medical condition, so we can implement an appropriate management plan and risk assessment as required
- of change in family circumstances, such as a new sibling, death in the family, separation or any new or updated court orders so we can best support your child and family.

Child safety

It is important that children are able to learn and develop in a safe and supportive environment. The safety, health and wellbeing of children is our number one priority. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in children's best interests. We will ensure our environment and practices are always safe, consistent with best practice and legislative requirements, including the Child Safe Standards.

From 1 March 2019, all early childhood workers and other persons in licensed and approved early childhood services are mandatory reporters. Our educators undertake annual training that alert them to their responsibilities for protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people and enable them to:

- identify indicators that a child or young person may be in need of protection
- make a report about a child or young person who may be in need of protection
- comply with reporting obligations under child protection law and criminal law and fulfil their duty of care, and
- feel confident in their role in keeping all children safe.

Refer to the ***Child Safe Policy*** for further information.



Photography and social media

Our service respects the privacy of children and families. We will not take or distribute photographs of your child without obtaining appropriate authorisation from a parent or carer. Additionally, permission will be obtained on each occasion prior to a child being filmed or photographed to appear in any newspaper/media or external publications.

Permission to photograph and/or film your child is obtained as part of our enrolment process and reviewed annually. Parents may withdraw their authorisation to take photographs of their children at any time by advising the Centre in writing.

Refer to the **Photography Policy** for further information.

Meals and nutrition

We aim to promote good nutrition, healthy food habits and attitudes to all children and families at our centres through the Healthy Together Victoria Achievement Program with support from Ballarat Community Health.

We also aim to support and provide for children with food allergies, dietary requirements or restrictions, and specific cultural or religious practices.

We encourage all children to bring their own drink bottle to access water throughout the day. Please label lunch boxes and drink bottles.

Refer to the **Food, Nutrition and Beverage Policy** for further information.

Breastfeeding and bottle-feeding

The City of Ballarat supports, promotes and values breastfeeding. We will feed children breast milk supplied by their families and provide spaces for mothers to breastfeed. We recognise that some mothers/families are unable to or choose not to breastfeed and will feed children with an infant formula as supplied by the family.

Breast milk procedure

Breast milk that has been expressed should be brought to the service in a clean container labelled with the date of expression and the child's name. We encourage families to transport milk to the service in cooler bags and eskies. Educators will:

- Put the breastmilk in the fridge as soon as families arrive at the service
- Refrigerate the milk at 4° Celsius until it is required
- Warm and/or thaw breastmilk by standing the container/bottle in a container of warm water
- Test the temperature of the milk before giving it to the child
- Consult individual families for instructions if they do not have enough breastmilk to meet the child's needs that day
- Return any unused breastmilk to families when they collect their child. Educators will not store unused milk at the service.

Infant Formula Procedure



Powdered formula must be:

- Pre-measured and provided each day, not made up, in a container with sterilised bottles and teats, clearly labelled with the date, the child's name and the amount of water to be mixed with the formula, or
- Provided in its original tin, clearly labelled with the child's name, with sterilised bottles and teats.

Refer to the ***Breastfeeding and Bottle-Feeding Procedure*** for further information.

Sleep and rest

Appropriate sleep and rest are important for childhood growth, learning and development. Our service implements rest periods which are consistent with the developmental needs of children.

While we will seek to accommodate each child's and family's preferences for rest, sleeping and clothing and will communicate with you daily about your child's sleep and rest routines, we will also ensure adherence with our centre policies and procedures. These include:

- Following the safe sleep practices based on recommendations from Red Nose
- Not using prams or strollers for children to sleep or rest in
- If a resting child falls asleep without assistance in instances where families have requested the child not have naps, we will allow the child to sleep for a period in the best interests of the child's health and wellbeing.

Refer to the ***Sleep, Rest and Relaxation Policy*** for further information.

SunSmart

Too much of the sun's UV radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Infants and toddlers up to four-years-of-age are particularly vulnerable to UV damage.

As a SunSmart service, we have a number of measures to protect your child:

- We will ensure there are sufficient shelters and trees to provide good outdoor shade and we will consider this shade when planning all outdoor activities
- We will ensure educators and children wear sun safe clothing outdoors
- Children are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears when playing outside
- Sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before going outdoors and re-applied every two hours.

Refer to the ***SunSmart Policy*** for further information.



Behaviour guidance

Following the Victorian Early Years Learning Framework and our Children's Services Practice Guide for Educators, our educators use a range of strategies to model positive behaviour and guide children's behaviour in ways that promote their self-esteem.

We understand that inappropriate behaviour is a child's way of saying they need support. As required, our room leaders will develop strategies or a plan with the Centre Coordinator which can be implemented by all educators to ensure consistent responses to a child's behaviour at the centre.

When challenging or inappropriate behaviour continues, and our educators feel that they and the child require additional support, we will work in partnership with parents and carers to develop a Behaviour Support Plan. This may include obtaining parent consent to work with other early childhood professionals, such as our on-site Maternal and Child Health nurses.

If you have any concerns about your child's behaviour, we encourage you to speak to a room educator or the Centre Coordinator.

Refer to the ***Behaviour Guidance Policy*** or further information

Emergency management

Our services have an emergency management plan based on a risk assessment that is conducted to identify potential emergencies that are relevant to the service. The emergency management plan and procedures confirm how emergencies will be managed to reduce the associated risks and maintain children's safety.

Each services' Emergency Management plan includes instructions for what must be done in the event of an emergency as well as emergency procedures and evacuation diagram.

The service's evacuation diagram and instructions are displayed in a prominent position near each exit of the service's premises. Emergency procedures are rehearsed and documented at least every three months while the service is operating, including all staff members, volunteers and children present at the service on the day of the rehearsal and the responsible person present at the time

Refer to the ***Emergency Management and evacuation policy*** for further information.

Family involvement and communication

Our relationships with families determine the quality of our programs. We need to understand how children learn at home before we can support them to learn in our services. We acknowledge and respect our families' beliefs, cultures and ideas about knowledge of their child and their role as first educators of their child.

Consequently, we welcome and encourage your engagement in our service. There are many ways you can be involved including:

- Making suggestions about and reviewing our program, philosophy and service management
- Sharing aspects of your culture or profession with children and educators
- Helping out with activities, such as craft or special events.



We will communicate and consult with you about your child's learning and development using a variety of methods including:

- Formal documentation and children's assessments
- Daily conversations at drop-off and pick-up
- Short surveys
- Private correspondence including scheduled meetings.

In summary, we believe in having Open Doors.

Open Doors

- O** Our Service can be accessed at any time for parental inspection.
- P** Please come and see how we help your child develop and grow.
- E** Entry by you any time shows that we are happy for you to see our practices at any time of the day.
- N** Never leave your child in a service unless you feel 100% confident in their ability to provide for your child.
- D** Don't hesitate to ask us any questions about your child, their development or our service philosophy.
- O** Our Service is proud of the quality of care we provide.
- O** Our educators are qualified, trained, experienced and talented.
- R** Rather than take our word for this
- S** See for yourselves!

Refer to the ***Family Interaction and Involvement in the Service Policy*** for further information.



Grievances

If you have a complaint or grievance in relation to our service, we ask that you raise the grievance/complaint either directly with the educator/staff member concerned or, if required, with the Centre Coordinator or Manager Integrated Children's Services.

Where possible, both parties will try to resolve the issue and develop solutions to ensure the problem does not happen again. Discussions should remain private, confidential, respectful and open-minded. They should not unnecessarily involve other educators, staff, volunteers or visitors (for example parents) and will take place away from children.

Contact information

BACL Childcare Program

Telephone: 5330 4109

Email: juliewarren@ballarat.vic.gov.au

Department of Education and Training

Area: Central Highlands

Telephone: **(03) 5337 8606**
1300 333 232

Email: grampians.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au

Visit: 109 Armstrong Street North, Ballarat, Vic 3350

