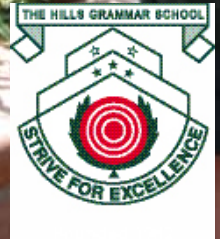


Handbook

Early
Childhood
Education
Centre



THE HILLS
GRAMMAR SCHOOL



Welcome From the Principal

Welcome to our Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) at The Hills Grammar School, Kenthurst.

Located in the beautiful campus of The Hills Grammar School, our purpose-built centre is dedicated to giving your child the best start possible to lay the strong foundations needed for lifelong learning.

In a safe environment which encourages trust, we will help your child realise their full potential. Our educational program is designed to stimulate your child's interest and to foster a love of learning in each child. The ECEC is a place where children can grow in confidence and ability as they develop friendships with other children, staff and families. Curiosity, imagination and a spirit of discovery is encouraged through innovative play and challenging learning experiences.

We recognise our dedicated staff are the key to providing high quality care and education for your child. We employ staff with a range of qualifications, skills and experience to enhance your child's learning experience in the ECEC. There is a ratio of 1 staff member to every 10 children which enables your child to receive the utmost care.

We are excited to share this opportunity with you and your family. This handbook will answer many of your questions and become a valuable reference resource throughout your family's time in the ECEC. It outlines how the centre operates and the educational experiences we will provide for your child to thrive in our environment.



Robert Phipps



Centre Philosophy

At The Hills Grammar School, we believe that children should be given the best start possible. The Early Childhood Education Centre (ECEC) is based on the belief that stimulating childhood experiences lay the foundation for lifelong learning. The centre's objective is to provide challenging and motivating programs to empower young learners.

Our ECEC provides a safe and secure learning environment in which children are able to develop to their full potential. We believe that children should be given the opportunity to develop all facets of their character so they can become well rounded individuals who contribute to society in a positive way.

Inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy, the ECEC recognises that children are born with an innate sense of curiosity and wonder about the world in which they live. Children are seen as strong, capable and resourceful. We harness this belief by offering an inquiry based program which encourages the children to become problem solvers, risk takers and resilient learners.

We recognise and encourage play based learning in which children are able to express their ideas, and engage in exploration, imagination, experimentation and creativity. It is through observing and documenting children's play that teachers are able to extend on the children's interests.

Natural curiosity is fostered by stimulating learning experiences where children can play and imagine, explore and discover, question and predict, think critically and collaborate.

We recognise that the wider community also has a vital role to play in shaping the learning experiences of children. Our teachers engage parents as part of a team who work together to implement programs to suit the needs of each child. We value the differences that all families bring to the centre.

Enthusiastic teachers, parents and children are crucial in creating a strong and vibrant learning community. As a result, our values are people-centred and humanitarian in nature. Our program promotes core values such as empathy, compassion, accountability, honesty, service, integrity, respect, acceptance, fairness and excellence, which are encouraged throughout the School.



The Educational Program

The ECEC learning program is based on empirical research and uses the Early Years Learning Framework – Belonging, Being and Becoming. It is inspired by the Reggio Emilia philosophy which is an inquiry based learning approach centred on the needs and interests of the children. Project work is used to enable the children to build upon their own natural curiosity of the world. Children are unique and learn at different rates. The teachers observe the children and plan learning activities suited to the needs of each child.

Children are encouraged to develop confidence in their ability. Tasks are open ended to enable the children to take risks and develop problem solving skills to enhance their overall learning experiences. Play based learning is an integral part of the curriculum that enables children to experience learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

A school readiness program is integrated into the curriculum to enable a seamless transition into Kindergarten at The Hills Grammar School. Early numeracy and literacy experiences play a vital role in our program, along with developing independence, social and emotional skills in each child. The program is available for you to view at any time. Should you have any questions, please see staff.

Kindergarten Orientation

The children will participate in a comprehensive orientation program prior to commencing Kindergarten at The Hills Grammar School. Regular visits to the Junior School Campus will ensure all children are confident and comfortable to begin their Kindergarten year. The children also take part in various school events such as Book Week, assemblies, visiting Nexus and cooking with Senior School students.

Specialist Teachers

Music, Foreign Language and Human Movement are an integral part of the ECEC program. Specialist teachers facilitate these lessons which enable the children to express their individuality and develop their skills in a range of different areas.

Information Technology

The ECEC curriculum is enriched by the integration of communication technologies such as an interactive whiteboard and computers. We view understanding and application of new technologies as a vital part of a child's daily learning.



Excursions

Children will attend excursions throughout the year to participate in educational experiences on The Hills Grammar School Campus. We will need your permission to allow your child to participate.

Incursions

Throughout the year incursions will be held at the centre, such as visits from the Fire Brigade and CSIRO. You will be informed of these visits via the newsletter and notice boards.

Communication Between School and Home

Communication between staff and parents is essential in providing the best care for your child. The Hills Grammar School's 'Red Book' is used to maintain communication between home and the ECEC. The staff will look at the diary each day and we ask that you sign it each night. Staff will record information on how each child's day was, including their food intake and sleep/rest information, which can be accessed each afternoon when you collect your child.

All notices will be placed in the Red Book. Centre notices are placed on the notice board in the foyer.

The Hills Grammar School newsletter is sent via email every fortnight and a monthly newsletter from the ECEC staff will inform you about your child's program and special activities occurring within the centre. If you would like to talk to a staff member at any other time, please call to arrange a meeting.

Parent Participation

Your involvement and contributions to the ECEC are important to us. Throughout the year parents will be invited to the centre for special events. If parents have any special skills you wish to share with us, please speak to the Co-ordinator.

Parent Feedback

Parents are able to use the Red Book as a point of communication. If you have any suggestions, a feedback box will be placed in the foyer.

Reporting to Parents

A report based on the outcome of the Early Years Learning Framework will be completed twice during the year and interviews will be held mid year. Should you require an interview at any other time, we will be happy to meet with you by appointment.

Portfolios

Portfolios are used to document your child's learning experiences throughout the year. Portfolios are a collection of observations, work samples, photographs and reflections. Detailed observations are taken by the teachers to plan experiences based on the needs and interests of your child. The portfolios are available for you to view at any time and will be sent home at the end of each year.

Open Door Policy

We endorse an open door policy. Parents are encouraged to visit the centre and their children throughout the day. Parents will be invited to participate in various events throughout the year.



The Day to Day

Staffing

The ECEC follows the NSW Department of Community Service Regulations (2004) for staffing. Our staff have a range of qualifications and experience to provide a warm and loving atmosphere for your child. We employ one staff member for every ten children. Specialist teachers from the Junior School also teach various lessons throughout the week.

Centre Phone Numbers

Families may contact the ECEC via a direct line. The centre Co-ordinator has a mobile phone to answer in emergencies. These numbers will be supplied to you when your child starts in the centre.

For general enquiries, please contact The Hills Grammar School reception on 9654 2111.

Hours of Operation

The ECEC is licensed for 40 children from the ages of 3 – 5 and is open from 7:30am to 6:00pm for 48 weeks each year. The centre will be closed for four weeks over the December-January period.

Arrival and Departure

Each morning, you will be greeted by a member of our team. The children will put their belongings in a locker, say goodbye to their carer and be ready to start the day. You will need to sign your child in and out of the centre each day on the attendance sheets located in the foyer.

To maintain consistency between home and the ECEC, we appreciate any information about your child's night sleep or any needs they may have on a particular day, so we can ensure your child receives the utmost care. You can also use the Red Book to communicate this information.

Authorised people over the age of 18 who are listed on your enrolment form may collect your child. If another person is required to collect your child, please inform the centre in writing. The staff will ask for identification before allowing your child to leave the centre. In the case of an emergency, please contact the Co-ordinator.

Settling Your Child Into the ECEC

Starting at the ECEC is an exciting time for your child and it is only natural for some children to experience an adjustment period. An orientation visit will be organised for your child to visit the ECEC before they start. This will enable parents and staff to meet to clarify any questions you may have. It will also help your child to become familiar with their new environment.

Children may experience some anxiety leaving their parents for the first time. It is important for parents and staff work together to assist with a smooth separation. If your child experiences some difficulty in separating, a staff member will call you throughout the day to let you know how your child has settled. Parents are also welcome to call the centre at any time throughout the day.

The staff are experienced in helping your child settle into their new environment with ease and with a minimum of fuss.

What to Bring

All belongings should be clearly labelled and stored in The Hills Grammar School backpack. Please include the following belongings each day;

- School sunhat
- A spare change of clothes, including underpants
- Sleeping package including a fitted cot sheet and blanket enclosed in a labelled bag (a pillow case is ideal). You will need to take this home each day.
- Any cuddly toy or comforter required for sleeping

Uniform

The children wear the School's sports uniform and hat. The red school bag will be used to carry their belongings. These items can be purchased from the Uniform Shop (Arglye and Tweed) located inside the main gate.

Phone: 02 9654 1942

Monday 8:15am – 12:00pm and 2:30pm – 4:00pm

Thursday 8:15am – 4:00pm

Sleep Time

The children will have a short rest period each day. If children choose not to sleep, they may read books on their bed.

Nappies and Toilet Training

Disposable nappies will be supplied should your child require them. Children indicating their interest in toilet training will be encouraged and supported during this time. Please advise staff when your child is ready.

Sun Protection

Please apply sunscreen on your child before they arrive at the ECEC. Sunscreen is available in the foyer and will be applied before playing outside. Please advise the director if your child has any allergies to sunscreen. We will enforce our “No Hat, No Play” policy for children without a hat.

Meals

We provide a healthy, balanced diet for the children and encourage healthy eating habits. The meals are provided by *Food @ Hills* and a weekly menu will be devised by the qualified cook and centre Co-ordinator. A copy of the weekly menu is available for you to read on the notice board.

Drinking water is supplied throughout the day to ensure children are kept refreshed and hydrated.

Children arriving between 7:30 – 8:00am will be provided with a breakfast of cereal and toast.

Allergies

Our Centre has a nut free policy. Please do not send your child with any type of product that contains nuts or traces of nuts. If your child has an allergy or special dietary needs, a meeting will be arranged with the Co-ordinator to discuss suitable meals.

Birthdays

Our Centre staff will provide a birthday cake for each child to celebrate this special occasion on or near their birthday. The cake will be shared for afternoon tea.

Quality Assurance

The ECEC is registered to participate in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System which is governed by the National Childcare Accreditation System. More information is available at www.ncac.gov.au. Throughout the year you will be asked to give your feedback on a variety of things that happen in the centre. This will be used to continually improve our centre.

Toys and Valuables

The ECEC has a wide variety of stimulating toys and equipment. Please do not bring toys from home as they may become lost or damaged. You may bring a comforter for rest time. The children can bring in something to share with the class on their News Day.

Behaviour Management

The centre provides a secure, loving and stimulating environment which encourages children to co-operate and to interact positively with others. Behaviour development will focus on the positive aspects of the child's behaviour. At all times we encourage appropriate behaviour through praise and guidance.

Security

Access to the centre is secure and locked to provide a safe environment for your child. Closed circuit TV cameras monitor the entry/exit areas and inside the large play room.

Complaints Procedures

Please talk to the Co-ordinator if you have a grievance or complaint. An appointment may be made to ensure the complaint is dealt with as efficiently as possible. You will be informed of the steps taken to help resolve the problem. If you are not satisfied with the action taken, please read our Grievance/Complaint Policy which outlines further possibilities.

Policies and Procedures

The centre's policies and procedures are located in the foyer area. Please feel free to view these at any time. Staff and families are encouraged to have constructive input into the development of policies to ensure they meet the needs of the ECEC. Please provide us with any suggestions you may have.

Confidentiality

The staff in the ECEC ensures information from families, staff and the community remains private and confidential at all times. Please view the privacy statement on the School's website for more information.



Health and Well Being of Your Child

Caring for Sick Children

Children who are unwell should remain at home. If your child becomes ill while at the centre, you will be contacted to come and collect him or her. If your child has suffered from an illness such as vomiting or fevers we ask that you keep them at home for a 24 hour period so that the centre is able to minimise the risk of spreading illness. If your child has a temperature of 38 degrees we will call you for you to come and collect your child.

Hygiene

We adhere to strict hygiene, health and safety procedures in our centre. All staff model best practice throughout the day to ensure your child is taught by example.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent, please notify the centre as soon as possible. We request that you inform us if your child is ill with an infectious disease to allow staff to identify similar symptoms in other children. You will be charged for the days your child is absent from the centre.

Immunisation

We are required to keep records of your child's immunisation status. Please provide the centre with an updated record. Children who are not immunised will be excluded from the centre if a condition usually prevented by immunisation occurs at the centre. This is a Department of Health requirement.

Medication

If your child has been prescribed medication by your doctor, staff can administer the allocated dose providing it is in the original labelled package. Please complete a medication authorisation form available from the staff. You must hand the medication to the staff on arrival who will ensure it is kept in a safe place.

Should your child require medication for the treatment of a long term condition such as allergies, asthma etc, you will need to meet with the Co-ordinator to discuss the condition so a management plan can be put in place.

Accident and Injuries

Our centre has been designed to ensure a safe environment. However, if children are injured they will be immediately attended to by our first aid trained staff. Children also have access to the registered nurse located in The Hills Grammar School's Sick Bay, during the hours of 8am-4pm. In the unlikely event of a serious injury, an ambulance will be called. A staff member will accompany your child at all times and you will be contacted as soon as practically possible.

Emergency Procedures

Our centre has an emergency evacuation procedure which is displayed in each room. The children will participate in evacuation drills on a regular basis.

Child Protection

All staff employed at The Hills Grammar School are mandatory reporters and are responsible for the care and protection of all children attending the centre. Please see the Child Protection Policy if you require more information.



Administration Information

Enrolment

You will need to complete an ECEC enrolment application form as this is a point of entry into the School. If you have applied for Kindergarten in a previous application, you will need to complete a new ECEC form. In this instance, the application fee will be waived and entry date preserved.

The application fees are: \$200 first child/ \$150 second child. Upon acceptance into the School and ECEC Program, parents will be required to pay \$750 of the non refundable enrolment fee, currently \$1500 per student. On starting Kindergarten, another \$750 is required to make up the total of \$1500.

Change of Enrolment

If you require to change the days your child attends the ECEC, please advise the Co-ordinator. Four weeks written notice will be required if you wish to decrease days of attendance. All other enrolment enquiries should be directed to the Enrolment Office on 9654 2111.

Payment of Fees

Details of fee payment will be provided to you prior to your child starting in the centre. You will be charged for 48 weeks per year. You will not be charged for public holidays. You will be charged for the days your child is absent.

Termination of Enrolment

Children attending the ECEC are enrolled at The Hills Grammar School and it is assumed students will progress into Kindergarten. Students not continuing into kindergarten the following year are expected to finish the full year in the ECEC. However, if you wish to terminate your child's enrolment at the centre before the end of the year, four weeks notice is required to be supplied in writing to the Principal.

Late Collection of Children

Due to licensing and insurance purposes the centre closes at 6pm sharp. If a child is picked up after this time the centre will charge a fee of \$15.00 for every 15 minutes. If in an emergency, you are running late, please inform the centre as soon as possible.

Child Care Benefit

Child Care Benefit is a payment from the Australian Government that helps you with the cost of your child care. This benefit is income tested.

Child Care Rebate

The Child Care Rebate is not income tested. If you are using approved child care for work, training or study-related reasons the Government will provide you with 50 percent of your out-of-pocket child care costs, up to \$7778 (indexed) per child per year. This sum is paid quarterly.

Please contact the Family Assistance Office on 136 150 or visit www.familyassist.gov.au to determine if you are eligible for payments.

In order to claim any fee reduction, you will need to supply the ECEC your CRN details and your child's CRN details.

Priority of Access

The Centre complies with the Australian Government's Priority of Access guidelines. For more information on this policy, please read our Priority of Access Policy in the foyer.





If

If I can
ask my questions,
try out my ideas,
experience what's around me,
share what I find;

If I have
plenty of time for
my special pace,
a nourishing space,
things to transform;

If you'll be
my patient friend,
trusted guide,
fellow investigator
partner in learning;

Then I will
explore the world,
discover my voice,
and tell you what I know,
in a hundred languages.

References:

1. Edwards, C; Gandini, L & Forman, G (1998) *The Hundred Languages of Children – The Reggio Emilia Approach – Advanced Reflections*, Ablex Publishing, Westport

*Pamela Houk*¹



Founded 1982

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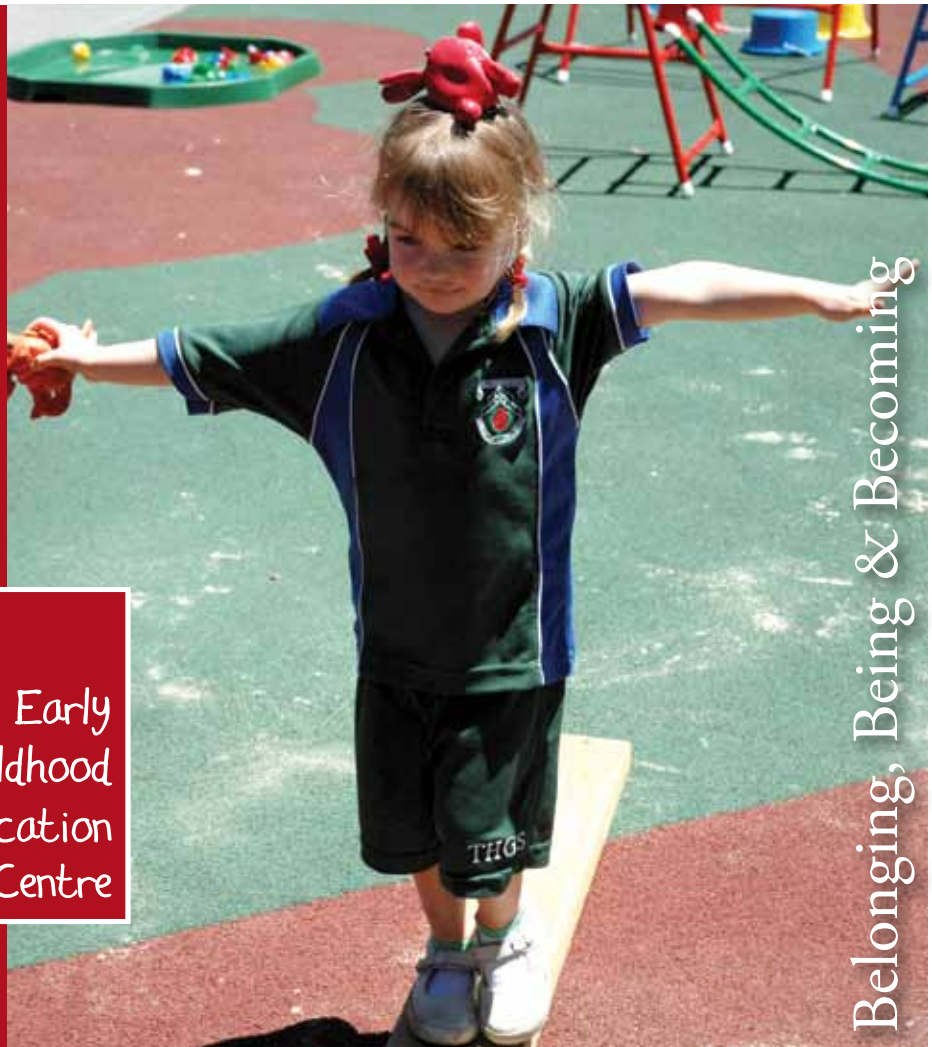
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CRICOS Provider Code: 02260G



Early
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Belonging, Being & Becoming

For further enquiries and enrolment information,
please contact the Enrolment Office on 02 9654 2111