Parent Handbook 2027

Home Kindergarten

and

Bush Kinder

Email: enrolments@maribyrnongkinder.com.au

WELCOME TO MARIBYRNONG KINDERGARTEN 1

OUR CONTACT DETAILS 1

MARIBYRNONG KINDERGARTEN PHILOSOPHY 1

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS 2

REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME 3

PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES: 3

Why do we need guidelines? 4

Relationships with children 4

Relationships with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff and others 5

In General 5

STAFF 6

Staff Members 6

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT 7

SESSION TIMES 7

POLICIES 7

FEES 8

Fee subsidy: 8

ENROLMENTS 9

Central Enrolment System – Maribyrnong Council 9

Four Year Old Kindergarten 9

Three Year Old Kindergarten9

Pre-Prep 9

FIRST DAYS AT KINDERGARTEN 9

WHAT HAPPENS EACH DAY? 9

HOME KINDER 10

BUSH KINDER 11

Reminders 11

Bush Kinder Cancellation 11

When shouldn't my child attend? 12

Others in attendance 12

INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES 12

Communication 12

Audiri 12

Photography 13

Parent Involvement: 13

Personal Toys 14

Celebrations and Children's Birthdays 14

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS 15

Illness and Infectious Disease 15

No Jab, No Play 15

Illness or Accidents during a Session and First Aid 16

Anaphylaxis Policy – including Allergies 16

Asthma 16

Action Plans 17

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES 17

HOME KINDER 17

Late pick up policy and fees: 17

BUSH KINDER 18

Delivery and Collection of Children Policy 18

Emergency Evacuation 19

Absences due to Illness 19

Absences due to Holidays 19

Punctuality 19

WHAT TO BRING/WEAR TO HOME KINDER AND BUSH KINDER 19

HOME KINDER 19

Clothing 19

What to bring 20

Bag 20

Spare Underwear/Clothing (all articles must be named) 20

Identification 21

BUSH KINDER 21

Clothing 21

What To Bring 23

TOILETING 23

SUN PROTECTION 23

HEALTHY EATING AT MARIBYRNONG KINDERGARTEN 23

Tips for starting Kindergarten 25

2027 TERM DATES AND PUBLIC HOLIDAYS 26

Welcome to Maribyrnong Kindergarten

Welcome to Maribyrnong Kindergarten. The staff and committee wish you and your child an enjoyable and rewarding year. We hope that the following information gives you an understanding of the way in which the Kindergarten operates and ways in which you can be involved.

In 2027 the kindergarten will operate mixed three and four year old groups.

We encourage you to play an active role in your child's education and their kindergarten year. We encourage you to provide information regarding your child's interests and things that they are curious to learn more about. Please let your child's teacher know of any concerns you may have with regards to your child's development and progress.

Our Contact Details

Maribyrnong Kindergarten Incorporated

5 Warrs Road, Maribyrnong VIC 3032

Telephone: 03 9317 9083

Bush Kinder Phone: 0477 812 342

ABN: 76 131 979 546 IAN: A0019945D

Maribyrnong Kindergarten Philosophy

Our Kindergarten Community endeavours to:

- be kind – to self, others and the environment
- be sustainable
- be connected to nature
- listen to each other respectfully
- be socially responsible
- honour each other's rights to feel safe, be heard and feel respected
- value and advocate for children's right to play
- see children as resilient, capable learners and respect different learning styles
- celebrate childhood and the joy of learning
- learn and grow together, recognising and valuing each other's contributions, skills, abilities, opinions and experiences.
- be culturally competent
- make brave decisions
- be grateful

- do our best

We believe that developing gratitude, love and responsibility are important virtues for social living and we keep these at the forefront of everything we do.

We are committed to providing a healthy, safe environment for all children, families and staff, where there is a sense of belonging and where our diverse kindergarten community is represented. We honour and respect childhood and the child's many unique ways of experiencing, communicating and learning.

The beauty of nature, animals, insects and plants is brought to the children with awe and wonder. Children are encouraged to appreciate the natural world in order to help them to value its gifts and to understand its processes and the patterns of the seasons. We create a foundation to care for our world, others and ourselves through gardening, recycling and in taking care of our immediate environment.

Our bush kinder program provides opportunities to experience nature and its elements across the seasons, recognising the place the bush has in Australia and the significance of the land in Indigenous Australian culture. Whatever the weather, children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring and learning in a natural environment. Children are encouraged to share, work together, care for each other and respect the needs of others by engaging with others and by taking responsibility for their own decisions and actions.

Educators and parents work as partners, collaborators and advocates for children. The kindergarten's practices are evaluated regularly through critical reflection, team retrospection and informed decisions. Educators' continued professional learning is valued, promoted and supported.

Child Safe Standards - Keeping Children Safe

The safety, wellbeing and rights of every child are central to our kindergarten. We are committed to creating a child-safe environment where children feel safe, respected, valued and heard.

Our kindergarten follows the Victorian Child Safe Standards, which provide a framework for preventing and responding to child abuse and promoting children's safety and wellbeing. The Standards guide our policies, practices and everyday interactions with children, families and the wider kindergarten community.

We actively support children to:

- feel safe and confident to speak up and share their views;
- understand that their voice and opinions matter;
- develop respectful relationships;
- recognise safe and unsafe situations; and
- know that concerns about their safety will be listened to and taken seriously.

Families and the kindergarten community play an important role in creating a child-safe environment. We welcome feedback, questions and concerns from families and encourage you to speak with educators or kindergarten leadership if you have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing.

The Victorian Early Childhood Regulatory Authority (VECRA) is responsible for regulating the Child Safe Standards in Victorian early childhood services. VECRA monitors and enforces compliance with the Standards as part of its broader regulatory role.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

The safety and wellbeing of every child is our highest priority

Maribyrnong kindergarten has zero tolerance for child abuse and harm. We are committed to providing a safe, respectful and child-centred environment where children feel safe, valued and heard.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme requires organisations, including approved kindergartens, to respond to allegations of certain types of child-related misconduct involving workers or volunteers and to notify the Social Services Regulator (SSR). The SSR independently oversees how organisations respond to these allegations.

Our kindergarten has policies, procedures and staff training in place to help prevent, identify and respond to concerns about child safety. All concerns and allegations are taken seriously and managed promptly, fairly and in accordance with our legal responsibilities.

Where required, allegations are reported to the Social Services Regulator and/or Victoria Police. The Reportable Conduct Scheme does not replace or interfere with police reporting or investigations.

Families are encouraged to speak with our kindergarten leadership team if they have any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. Concerns can also be reported directly to the relevant regulatory authorities.

Participation Guidelines:

Parents/guardians, family members, volunteers and students on placement are a valued part of our program. Below are some helpful guidelines to ensure your stay with us is enjoyable and fun.

Why do we need guidelines?

The Education and Care Services National Regulations outline specific requirements for the protection of children from hazards, which includes providing adequate supervision at all times. Adequate supervision is defined as constant, active and diligent and involves educators keeping each child within sight or hearing at all times. In line with regulations, parents/guardians and

volunteers are not recognised as educators and are therefore unable to be left alone with a child or children at any time.

Parents/guardians, family members and volunteers are encouraged to refer to the Maribyrnong Kindergarten Code of Conduct policy for guidance when attending or assisting at Maribyrnong Kindergarten. Below outlines some of the values and behaviours that will be expected for the year:

I commit to contributing to creating an environment at Maribyrnong Kindergarten that:

- respects the rights of the child and values diversity
- acknowledges the vulnerability of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children from a culturally and linguistically diverse background and children with a disability and has zero tolerance of discrimination
- maintains a duty of care (refer to Definitions) towards all children at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of each child at the service
- is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all staff at the service
- provides a safe and secure environment for all at the service
- provides an open, welcoming environment in which everyone's contribution is valued and respected
- is committed to communicating openly and honestly
- is committed to continually learning how to be inclusive and respectful of cultural needs
- encourages parents/guardians, volunteers, students and community members to support and participate in the program and activities of the service.

Relationships with children

In our relationships with children, I commit to:

- being a positive role model at all times
- encouraging children to express themselves and their opinions
- allowing children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem
- maintaining a safe environment for children
- speaking to children in an encouraging and positive manner
- giving each child positive guidance and encouraging appropriate behaviour
- regarding all children equally, and with respect and dignity
- having regard to each child's cultural values
- respecting individual differences including age, physical and intellectual development, and catering for the abilities of each child at the service.

Relationships with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff and others

In my relationships with the Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, staff, other parents/guardians, volunteers and visitors I commit to:

- reading and abiding by the Code of Conduct Policy
- developing relationships based on mutual respect
- working in partnership in a courteous, respectful and encouraging manner
- valuing the input of others
- sharing our expertise and knowledge in a considered manner
- respecting the rights of others as individuals
- giving encouraging and constructive feedback, and respecting the value of different professional approaches
- respecting the privacy of children and their families and only disclosing information to people who have a need to know as required under the Privacy and Confidentiality policy
- following the directions of staff at all times
- treating the kindergarten environment with respect
- raising any concerns, including concerns about safety, as soon as possible with staff to ensure that they can be resolved efficiently
- raising any complaints or grievances in accordance with the Complaints and Grievances Policy.

In General

- The centre and staff are responsible for the children who are enrolled and signed in; that is, those children attending the children's program.
- Adults are responsible for all children who accompany them — for example, while on duty and at drop-off and pick-up times — ensuring they do not inhibit or disrupt the program in any way.
- Staff may ask parents/guardians to remove children not enrolled and signed into the program if they are disturbing the program.
- Parents/guardians must clean up after their children following meetings and activities that are not part of the program, such as a working bee, and leave all areas as they were found.
- Parents/guardians will also be responsible for children's behaviour when attending other activities and the child is not signed into the program, such as working bees and centre events

Staff

Our staff members are passionate and dedicated educators. Each member of staff has an early childhood specific qualification and participates in ongoing professional development. All

members of staff have current First Aid Certificates as well as training in CPR and the management of Anaphylaxis and Asthma, OH&S and Child Safe Training.

Staff Members 2027

Teachers

Claudia Cabrera Del-Campo

Simone Sciarrone

Educators:

Maple Lai

Ehlana Bowe

Hong Nguyen

Committee of Management

The Maribyrnong Kindergarten is an incorporated association with its own constitution. A Committee of Management coordinates the running of the Kindergarten. The Committee of Management consists of volunteers. Every year an Annual General Meeting is held at the Kindergarten and all parents/service users are encouraged to attend. The Committee of Management gives an Annual Report at this meeting and elects new or continuing representatives. The Kindergarten requires a Committee of Management in order to operate. Please speak to staff or former Committee members if you are interested in participating.

Committee of management meetings are usually held monthly at the Kindergarten. The main responsibilities of the Committee of Management are: planning the budget and maintaining finances, appointing and supporting staff, fundraising, upholding government regulations and maintaining the viability of the Kindergarten to ensure a secure future for generations of children to follow.

Nomination/Interest forms are sent out with an AGM invite, but at any time during the year parents are welcome to join the committee or sit in on a committee meeting if interested in any agenda topics that will be discussed.

2027 Timetable

Groups	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Wombats		8.15 – 3.45 7.5hrs		8.15 – 3.45 7.5hrs	
Lorikeets				8.15 – 3.45 7.5hrs	8.15 – 3.45 7.5hrs
Bilbies	8.15 - 3.45 7.5hrs	8.15 - 3.45 7.5hrs			
Willy Wagtails	8.15 – 3.45 7.5hrs				8.15 – 3.45 7.5hrs

***Bush Kinder will commence in Term 2 on Monday and Thursday.**

****Children attending three-year old kindergarten: If your child has not yet turned 3** their start date will be delayed until your child's 3rd birthday.

Policies

For all Maribyrnong Kinder policies please visit: Policies and Procedures

Fees

Free Three- and Four-Year-Old Kinder is available across Victoria at participating services. Free kinder means more Victorian children can have the best start in life, no matter where they live:

- For three-year-olds, this means 15 hours per week of a kindergarten program (600 hours a year)
- For four-year-olds, this means 15 hours per week

Participating kindergarten programs will receive funding directly from the Victorian Government, so families are not out of pocket (and don't have to claim the savings).

Maribyrnong Kindergarten acknowledges the support of the Victorian Government.

VICTORIA State Government

Fee subsidy:

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development provides funding to organisations to enable eligible children to attend Kindergarten for minimal cost. To be eligible you must hold at least one of the following concession cards:-

- Commonwealth Health Care Card
- Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
- DVA Gold or White Card

Also eligible are families with parents or children who hold:-

- Refugee visa (subclass 200)
- In-country Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 201)
- Global Special Humanitarian visa (subclass 202)
- Temporary Humanitarian Concern visa (subclass 786)
- Protection visa (subclass 866)
- Emergency Rescue visa (subclass 203)
- Women at risk visa (subclass 204)
- Bridging visas A - E

The subsidy is also available for:-

- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children; and
- Triplets and quadruplets attending a Kindergarten program in the same year.

Families wishing to claim this fee subsidy must provide a copy of the relevant document at the time of enrolment.

Enrolments

Central Enrolment System – Maribyrnong Council

Enrolments for Maribyrnong Kindergarten are managed under the Central Registration Service run by Maribyrnong City Council. Places for three and four year old kindergarten are allocated through the Central Registration Service.

To enrol your child in 3 year old or 4 year old kindergarten, please enrol online at http://www.maribyrnong.vic.gov.au/CRS or collect a form from Maribyrnong Council.

Specific enquiries can be directed to the Early Years Officer at kindergarten@maribyrnong.vic.gov.au.

Please be aware that enrolment in our 3 year old program does not give your children automatic enrolment into our 4 year old program the following year. All enrolments are controlled by the

Maribyrnong City Council and as such you must register your child with them as soon as possible.

Four Year Old Kindergarten

To be eligible for four year old kindergarten a child must turn four years of age on or before **30th of April in the year of attendance.**

Three Year Old Kindergarten

To be eligible for three year old kindergarten a child must turn three years of age on or before **30th of April in the year of attendance.**

Pre-Prep

Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will gradually transition to Pre-Prep over the next decade from 2025. Funded kindergarten hours will double from 15 to up to 30 hours a week. Pre-Prep will be delivered through sessional kindergartens and long-day-care centres. By 2036, children across Victoria will have access to 1,800 hours of funded kindergarten before school, comprising 600 hours of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten and 1,200 hours of Pre-Prep.

Pre-Prep priority cohort: From 2026, between 16 and 25 hours of Pre-Prep will be available to:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- children from a refugee or asylum seeker background
- children who have had contact with Child Protection
- children who were supported by Early Start Kindergarten (ESK) or Access to Early Learning (AEL) in their Three-Year-Old Kindergarten year.

Pre-Prep hours for this group of priority cohort children increase to up to 30 hours from 2028. In 2026, Maribyrnong Kindergarten will be offering 22 hours of Pre-Prep to the above eligible cohort. Pre-Prep cohorts will be offered an extra 7.5 hrs, a total of 22.5hrs.

For all enrolment enquires, please contact the Administration and Enrolments officer enrolments@maribyrnongkinder.com.au

SOURCES AND RELATED POLICIES

- Best Start Best Life: https://www.vic.gov.au/give-your-child-the-best-start-in-life
- Additional year of funded kindergarten: https://www.vic.gov.au/additional-year-of-funded-kindergarten
- Exemption from school enrolment: https://www.vic.gov.au/going-kindergarten-if-your-child-six-years-old
- The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education): www.vic.gov.au/kindergarten-funding-guide
- Resources for Funded Kindergartens: https://www.vic.gov.au/resources-funded-kindergartens

Starting Kindergarten

The kindergarten year begins with an orientation and transition period, giving children and families an opportunity to become familiar with the kindergarten environment, educators and routines.

The first few weeks are a gentle time for children to settle in, build relationships and develop a sense of belonging. Educators provide support and reassurance as children become comfortable with the daily routine, meet new friends and grow in confidence.

Every child settles in at their own pace, and we work closely with families to ensure their transition to kindergarten is positive, supportive and enjoyable.

What Happens Each Day?

At Maribyrnong Kindergarten, we nurture the whole child; supporting children's physical, social, emotional and spiritual development.

We believe children are naturally curious and capable learners. Through child-led play, meaningful experiences and supportive relationships, educators nurture their interests, encourage curiosity and provide opportunities to explore, discover and grow.

We see the environment as the third teacher, creating flexible spaces where children can investigate, imagine, create, problem-solve and connect with others.

Through play, children build confidence, friendships, language, creativity and early literacy, mathematical and life skills—all while having fun!
We celebrate the joy of learning through play and empower every child to become a confident, curious lifelong learner.

Wet Weather Clothing: At Bush Kinder, it is essential for children to have access to wet weather clothing at all times in case of sudden weather changes. This includes waterproof pants and jackets that can be worn over their regular clothing.
Families have the option to either purchase and provide their own wet weather gear for their child to use, or they can request a set to borrow from the kindergarten for the duration of the kinder year. Please speak to your child's teacher if you would like to borrow one from the kindergarten's supply.
It is important to ensure that children are prepared for any weather conditions that may arise during their time at Bush Kinder.

Fruit: Please bring 1 fruit to place in the fruit basket each home kinder session. This will be cut and shared during our fruit picnic.

Lunch at Kindergarten

Busy little bodies need good food and plenty of energy! We ask families to pack a nutritious lunch and snacks to help children fuel their busy day of learning and play.

Think simple, healthy and colourful—for example:

- Fresh fruit or vegetables
- A sandwich, wrap or crackers with chee se

🥕 Veggie sticks with hummus
🚰 Water bottle

We also encourage lunchboxes and reusable containers where possible. This helps reduce plastic and waste while keeping our kindergarten kinder to the environment. Healthy tummies, happy learners!

Our Home Kinder Routine

We value a slow, caring and relationship-focused rhythm. Rather than rushing from one activity to the next, we give children time to settle, connect, play deeply and follow their interests.

🌼 Arriving & Settling In

Children are warmly welcomed by their educators and encouraged to take their time settling in. They put away their belongings, wash their hands and check in at our Belonging Tree. These familiar routines build independence, confidence and a sense of belonging.

💗 Gathering & Connecting

We come together for conversations, stories, music, movement and group experiences. Children may share ideas, make plans, play games or welcome special visitors. These moments help us connect, listen and learn together.

🍉 Fruit Picnic

We pause for a relaxed shared fruit picnic mid morning. Children enjoy fruit from home while connecting with friends and educators.

🪁 Open-Ended Play

Much of our day is dedicated to uninterrupted indoor and outdoor play. Children can choose where to play, who to play with and how deeply they want to explore. Educators follow children's interests, joining their play, extending their thinking and supporting meaningful relationships.

🥣 Kinder Café/Picnic

Lunch is a social and relaxed experience at our Kinder Café. Small groups of up to 10 children eat together with an educator during our lunch period. Children can practise independence by

making their own café reservations on the whiteboard. As the group settles, friendships strengthen and social skills develop, we often notice that half way through the year children prefer shared group picnics.

Slowing Down/Relaxation

A gentle pause to slow our bodies, recharge and reset through quiet reading, calming music and peaceful moments before transitioning into our afternoon rhythm.

Gentle Afternoon Play & Connection

We ease into the afternoon with purposeful, unhurried experiences that nurture connection, curiosity and wellbeing—gardening, outdoor play, small-group games and collaborative projects. Children have time to explore their interests, build relationships and enjoy learning together.

Farewells

As the session draws to a close, children have time to finish their play, pack away and gather together. We share a final moment before welcoming families into the kindergarten to reconnect and say goodbye.

Growing Together with Family

Families are an important part of our kindergarten community. We welcome your ideas, contributions and feedback and value working together to support each child's learning and wellbeing.

Our goal is to nurture confident, curious, caring and capable children who develop a lifelong love of learning and a strong sense of connection to others and their community.

Once the children are feeling settled into their Kinder routines, we look forward to introducing Family Connection Time, most likely from Term 2. Between 2:45 and 3:45 pm, families will be invited to join us for a relaxed afternoon of play, sharing stories, drawing and enjoying time together in our Kinder environment. This will be a lovely opportunity to connect with your child, build relationships with other families and educators, and enjoy a gentle end to our Kinder day. More information about how this will work will be shared with families closer to the time.

Bush Kinder

Maribyrnong Bush Kinder is a special part of a child's total kinder experience. It draws upon and extends on the existing philosophy and pedagogy of Maribyrnong Kindergarten to offer a unique educational program and recognises the place the bush has in Australia and the significance of the land in aboriginal culture.

The children and adults benefit from using only what nature has provided. Outdoor spaces with plants, trees, rocks, mud and water invite open ended interactions, spontaneity, risk taking and a connection with nature. On occasion tools and equipment may be added to extend and support learning. Examples include; magnifying glasses, binoculars, compass. **No toys from home please. Please ensure you have read all our Policies and are familiar with your responsibilities and our procedures. A hard copy of these can be located in the foyer and a digital copy on our website.**

Reminders

- Wear (or keep in bag) appropriate clothing (long pants, sturdy shoes and a hat)
- Apply sunscreen before the session when advised by Sunsmart UV 3+
- Bring a drink, fruit and a substantial healthy lunch

Bush Kinder Cancellation

Bush Kinder starts in Term 2 and will only be cancelled in times of extreme weather.

If relocation or emergency cancellation is necessary, you will be notified via Audiri (email and App Notification) and this may occur on the day of your session. PLEASE ENSURE YOU KEEP US INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES FROM YOUR MOBILE NUMBER and EMAIL ADDRESS. Although relocation or cancellation is unlikely, the following information can be used as a guide to determine the possibility that a session may not be run.

In most instances, staff will also assess local conditions on site.

- Forecast temperature - 36 degrees Celsius or greater
- Forecast wind speed in excess of 40km per hour
- Forecast of electrical storm activity
- BOM weather warnings of extreme storm conditions and excessive rainfall

For weather details visit: http://www.bom.gov.au/vic/forecasts/melbourne.shtml

Others in attendance

To ensure our kindergarten children are given freedom to play and engage with nature we ask that adults be respectful of their space at all times. During Pick/up and drop off times if you have siblings present please ensure that you are aware of where your child is at all times to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Information for Families

Communication

We believe communication is a vital key to build positive relationships between parents, staff and children. The staff will endeavour to address your queries and concerns before and after a session.

Audiri

Audiri is our main form of communication between the Kindergarten (Educators, Administration and Committee) and the families.

Please ensure you have downloaded the "Audiri: School Communication" App from the Apple Store or Google Play. Follow these easy steps:

- Open the app and follow the prompts to set up your account. You'll need your email to get started.
- Click on the ADD/REMOVE icon to search for the organisation by name (Maribyrnong Kindergarten) and press enter. Tap the plus icon to subscribe to the kindergarten.
- You'll be prompted to allow Audiri to send you notifications. Ensure you select allow so you don't miss any crucial information!
- Click on our logo to navigate to our profile page. Click on the Groups tab to find and select your child's group to receive news as a member of that group.

There are several ways we encourage communication: -

- A suggestion box is located in the foyer for parents to utilise;
- A Weekly Newsletter is published for each kindergarten group via Audiri which will contain information about what we have been doing, discussing, enjoying etc at Kindergarten. This information aims to keep families informed and also support conversations with your child based on the groups interests, books read, new songs or games we learnt.
- Audiri notifications promoting events in the Maribyrnong Community;
- Audiri notifications from the Committee promoting fundraising events within the kindergarten community;

Furthermore, if you have any concerns, questions or just want to keep us up to date we encourage you to approach your child's teacher, either in person, via email or by phoning the Kindergarten, and we can arrange a time to have a chat.

Photography

A professional photographer will attend the kindergarten during the year to take photos of the children individually and as a group. These photos will be available for purchase by families. You will be notified in advance of the dates for the Kinder photos.

From time to time, the children may be photographed or filmed by the committee or outside organisations such as a local newspaper, for the purposes of promotional, fundraising for

community projects. Parents will be notified of these events, with extra permission notes signed before individual children are photographed.

Throughout the year, staff will take photographs of the children to use in the program, around the centre in displays and in the children's learning journals. Educators are sensitive to the religious and cultural beliefs and custodial issues for families.

Parent Involvement:

Maribyrnong Kindergarten encourages support and involvement from its parents and service users. During the year there are opportunities to be involved in a variety of activities and events. These include:-

- **Stay Play and Learn Program**: The children really enjoy having their parents, grandparents, auntie, uncle or carer stay at the kindergarten. Each session we invite one parent to stay to assist with the Kindergarten session. A roster is placed in the foyer during terms 2, 3 and 4 for parents to put their name down if they wish to stay. Younger siblings are welcome to attend with you; however, they are the responsibility of the parent, not the staff. We appreciate your help.

All Volunteers and Parents or Guardians staying in the session will require a Working with Children's check. Please make sure that during Term 1 you apply for a WWC by logging onto the link below, you will be required to have this check completed and a copy given to the office before you can attend a session.

https://www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au/individuals/applicants/how-to-apply

- **Fundraising:** Due to government funding changes, Kindergartens are now relying on fundraising more than ever to make ends meet. Parents/Volunteers are encouraged to join the fundraising committee and become involved in a number of key fundraising events throughout the year. Parent participation and support is vital to continue the high quality of resources we have on offer.
- **Personal Skills:** Please let staff know if you or a friend has any specific interests or skills, which you could share with the children. For example, cooking, craft, musical or occupational skills, which will all contribute to an exciting and stimulating program for your children.
- **Junk/Recycled Materials**: Notes will occasionally be posted asking for donations of boxes, clean milk cartons, material scraps, paper scraps etc to be used by the children as part of their art and craft program. Please let us know if you are able to provide these, although we are unable to accept toilet rolls or any other food packaging that contained nut products.

- **Toilet Paper/Tissues**: It is appreciated to help keep costs to a minimum if families could donate a box of tissues and a few rolls of toilet paper to the kinder at the start of the year.

Personal Toys

We discourage children from bringing toys from home as they can often get lost, mixed up with kinder toys or mistaken by other children as theirs. Comfort toys or items that your child depends on for security or settling are okay, please inform your child's teacher so they are aware of it.

Celebrations and Children's Birthdays

Celebrations are an important part of community life. We encourage families to tell us about special cultural events and celebrations that they take part in.

At the beginning of the year, a birthday calendar is made for each group. To reinforce our Healthy Eating Policy, it has been decided that providing lolly bags, cakes or gifts to the children should **NOT** be the emphasis of any birthday celebration.

For this reason, we do not allow any treats from home to be distributed to the children during a kinder session.

We do however love making the children's birthday a special day by:

- playing your child's favourite group game or dancing to their favourite music
- having a few friends prepare and decorate a playdough cake with candles
- choosing items from Kinder's Birthday Box to celebrate (party hat, tiara, stickers, bubbles)
- singing "Happy Birthday" & blowing out the candles

Medical Requirements

Illness and Infectious Disease

Staff follow legislated procedures to promote children's health and minimise the spread of infection.

If your child has the following symptoms or illnesses, ***please keep them at home until they are completely well:***

- high temperature (38℃ or above)
- vomiting (if less than 24 hours since the last episode)
- loose bowel motions (if less than 24 hours since the last episode)
- rashes – any irritation that cannot be identified
- red, swollen or discharging eyes

- if your child seems sick without obvious symptoms. For example, they are unusually tired, irritable, lethargic, not eating or drinking.

A list of all infectious diseases in the Children's Service Centre's exclusion table is available at: https://www.health.vic.gov.au/infectious-diseases/school-exclusion-table.

If your child develops any of these symptoms or illnesses while at kindergarten, they will need to be collected. Educators will ensure your child is comfortable and observed until this time. Details of your child's illness will be written in the Illness Record, which you will need to read and sign.

Please inform educators as soon as possible if your child is diagnosed with an infectious illness. Educators will need to alert all families at the service. Your confidentiality will be respected at all times.

No Jab, No Play

Under the **No Jab No Play legislation**, parents are required to provide services with an AIR Immunisation History Statement showing that their child's immunisations are up to date.

When children receive a vaccine or are due to receive a vaccine while attending the kinder, their immunisation status changes. When this happens, parents/carers MUST provide the kinder with a new Immunisation History Statement. Please email all updated Immunisation History Statements to enrolments@maribyrnongkinder.com.au

This is a requirement under No Jab No Play legislation, and also under the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011.

Illness or Accidents during a Session and First Aid

When your child is ill, or has an accident, they will be attended to and made as comfortable as possible. We will telephone you or your emergency numbers so that collection can be arranged if needed.

If contact cannot be made and treatment is urgent, an ambulance will be called.

We will continue to make every effort to contact you.

All educators at the centre hold a current First Aid Certificate. If your child becomes ill or has an accident at the kinder, the staff are required to administer first aid and contact the parent depending upon the incident. An Incident, injury, trauma and illness form will be completed by staff, notifying parents of the particulars of the incident. Child resistant First Aid kits are located at the centre for emergencies.

Anaphylaxis Policy – including Allergies

Maribyrnong Kindergarten has a policy specifically relating to Anaphylaxis – including information and actions for staff and families.

All Maribyrnong Kindergarten staff undergo regular training and updates with anaphylaxis.

Upon enrolment, families will discuss information with staff, with a risk minimisation plan and communication plan formulated. Parents are also given a copy of our policy.

The risk minimisation plan includes information on how the centre and staff will minimise the risk, as well as highlighting different scenarios, and how they will be handled by both staff and families.

IMPORTANT: Parents will be notified at the beginning of the year of the types of allergies present within the kindergarten. Parents may be requested to refrain from sending certain foods with these allergens present if they pose high risks that cannot be reasonably controlled.

Parents, please note, in order to monitor foods at snack time whilst you may be assisting during a session, there is a list in the kitchen of all the children with allergies. This is for your awareness and the health and wellbeing of the children with allergies. In any situation where you are concerned about a child's snack posing a risk to another, please consult with staff immediately.

Asthma

Maribyrnong Kindergarten has a policy specifically relating to Asthma – including information and actions for staff and families. All Maribyrnong Kindergarten staff are required to undergo regular training.

Upon enrolment, families will discuss information with staff, with a risk minimisation plan and communication plan formulated. Parents are also given a copy of our policy

Action Plans

Any child with a diagnosed medical need is required to have an **Action Plan (in colour).** This details the information that educators need to follow in case of a medical emergency. This Action Plan needs to have a doctor's information and signature, the parents' signature, and a review date clearly labelled. All Action Plans (anaphylaxis, asthma, etc) need to be reviewed annually – as per centre Policies. Children are unable to attend kindergarten with out of date Action Plans and/or medications.

Arrivals and Departures

Home Kinder

The time of arrival and departure of each child must be recorded each day as per the Children's Services Regulations.

Arrival and Departure Sign in Sign out

To ensure the safety of all children and to meet Department of Education requirements, all children must be signed in on arrival and signed out on departure using the Department of Education ARRIVAL system. The person dropping off or collecting the child is responsible for completing the sign-in/sign-out process each day. Please ensure your child's attendance is recorded accurately before leaving the service. If you experience any difficulties using the ARRIVAL system, a staff member will be happy to assist you.

It is essential that your child's teacher be informed either by email, letter or phone that a person other than the authorised parent/guardian will be collecting the child. **The child will not be released to any person not known by the staff. A list of people nominated by the parents/guardians will be obtained prior to the commencement of the kinder year.** This list can be added to throughout the year if your circumstances change.

Please ask your child's teacher or email Tania, our Administration & Enrolment Officer on enrolments@maribyrnongkinder.com.au to request an Authorised Collection Notification Form.

On arrival please:-

- Inform staff of any new medication your child is taking;
- Inform staff of a new contact number or early pick up times;
- Inform staff of anything you feel may help in caring for your child that day;
- Please read the notice board at entrance for information and meetings, fundraisings etc; and
- Check named files for notices and newsletters.

Arriving to kinder on time

We ask all parents to note the start and end times of their child's kindergarten sessions. We know that mornings can be challenging, especially if you are getting multiple children ready. For this reason we will have the kinder door open and the teacher ready to greet your child for 20 mins after the sessions start time. If your child is going to be later than 20 min for the session we would appreciate a phone call so we are aware and be prepared to welcome your child late. If you are unable to regularly make the session time please talk to your child' teacher.

Regular attendance and on-time arrival are vital for your child's learning, confidence, and sense of belonging. Please help support your child and their class to get the most out of their kinder experience.

Late pick up policy and fees:

There are times when it is simply not possible to arrive on time but we would appreciate a phone call so we can reassure your child. If you are continually late, it will be necessary to impose a late fee. Late pick-ups mean that at least two teachers or educators need to remain with your child. They too have children that need to be picked up, meetings to attend etc so it is imperative you arrive on time or inform the kindergarten in any unforeseen circumstances if you are running late.

Bush Kinder

The drop off point is the home base as designated in the orientation session.

Drop-off (Term 4)

Parents and carers please ensure that you:

- Take your child to Bush Kinder and wait for the session to begin. All children will assemble here with parents until Bush Kinder session formally commences (teacher will coo-ee to indicate the start of the session)
- Sign your child in using the attendance book and record the time of arrival
- Remind your child to place their bag/backpack in allocated area

Pick-up (Term 2 & 3)

Parents and carers need to ensure they:

- Sign the child out using the attendance book and record the time.
- Wait for a staff member to dismiss your child.
- Be mindful of not distracting/speaking with staff until all of the children have departed.
- Be responsible for the supervision of your child once signed out, while still at the Bush Kinder site.
- Ensure your child has collected their belongings (bag, water, hat, wet weather clothing)

Please refer to the main Delivery and Collection of Children Policy for full procedures relating to collection by authorised person, late collection and late collection fees.

Delivery and Collection of Children Policy

Parents/carers are asked to be at the bush kinder site by the session end time for collection of their child. At the end of the session, staff members are required to pack up the site and tend to

other responsibilities; they are not paid to care for children after the end of each session. Late collection fees apply if parents/carers arrive late for collection of a child, as per Maribyrnong Kindergarten delivery and collection of children policy. A copy of this is on our Website and in the Foyer.

Emergency Evacuation

If an emergency evacuation is required, staff take the attendance book, enabling them to check that all children who have been signed in are accounted for.

Different evacuations are practiced each term, as per DET regulations.

Absences due to Illness

If your child is not attending please notify staff by calling the office on 9317 9083 before 8:00 am.

Absences due to Holidays

The kinder year follows the state school year with the same holiday breaks. There are four terms, each of approximately 10-11 weeks duration.

Families taking holidays out of school holiday times are asked to inform the staff in advance of the intended absence of their child. Fees will still be payable for this period to ensure a continuing position for your child.

Punctuality

We require an adult to stay with your child until the session begins as staff members are engaged in preparation and are not always available to supervise an early arrival.

In the interests of your child, please arrive on time at the beginning and end of each session. Children who continuously arrive late to the start of the sessions can experience difficulties becoming involved in activities and those picked up late can become anxious.

When collecting children, parents wait outside the kindergarten. The door will be opened for parents to come in when the session concludes.

Punctuality is very important to ensure staff have their allocated time to pack up and reset for the next session or attend meetings. Planning time is limited and vital to ensuring teachers meet all requirements and can provide a high quality program.

What to Bring/Wear to Home Kinder and Bush Kinder Home Kinder

Clothing

All clothing, coats, hats, shoes etc are to be clearly named.

Please:

- Send children in comfortable clothing;
- Take note of the weather. Children play outside every session regardless of the weather.
- Hats for summer and winter. When the UV levels are 3 or higher, children will only be able to play in the undercover area outside if they are without a sun hat;
- Sunscreen is provided by the Kindergarten for parents to apply. Sun Protection needs to be used from September to the end of April or whenever UV levels reach 3 or more.
- Coats are required in cold weather;
- No long dresses – these are dangerous when climbing;
- No thongs – these are dangerous when running or climbing; and
- Provide a spare set of named clothing for your child in their bag every day. If clothes are soiled or wet, children prefer to change into familiar clothing.

Items that are left at kinder will be placed in the Lost Property box in the foyer. We ask that parents regularly check this box. All items not collected at the end of every term, will be donated to the Salvation Army.

What to bring

Your child needs to bring:

- A bag for personal belongings
- A coat and hat when it is cold
- A wide brimmed hat or suitable hat with back flap, and sunscreen applied (*to apply prior to the session and/or give staff permission to do so when necessary*), as per our Sun Protection policy.
- A change of clothes.
- A lunch and a snack. Ensure it is healthy; they will need lots of energy for the long days. Please clearly name containers and drink bottles.

Bag

Children need a bag large enough for their belongings and work, such as paintings and pastings. Lockers are located inside the kinder entrance and your child will be encouraged to independently put their bag and store their belongings in it.

Spare Underwear/Clothing (all articles must be named)

Comfort is the name of the game here. Remember these clothes WILL GET DIRTY. We want clothes that will move and not restrict the child in play. Tracksuits and leggings are great. Long skirts and tight short skirts can inhibit movement. Tight jeans, overalls or braces can make it

difficult for toileting unless your child is used to them and can manage independently. Thongs, crocs, etc make climbing, running and turning difficult so **should not** be worn to kinder.

Please keep a spare set of underwear, socks and a change of clothes in your child's bag at all times and ensure that all your child's belongings are named. If your child needs to use spare clothing from the kinder supply, please wash and return them promptly.

Children come to kindergarten to have fun, explore and learn. Smocks and waterproof clothing are offered at messy activities however it is not always possible for children to keep clean (as you no doubt already know!). Please ensure your child comes to kindergarten in clothes that are easily washed, easily managed at the toilets and comfortable to play in.

Identification

Ensure all items of clothing, tops and hats are clearly named. Check the lost property box regularly – you may find things you didn't know were lost yet!

Bush Kinder Day

Clothing

Parents are required to determine appropriate clothing based on the weather forecast appropriate to their session time.

Children will not be allowed to attend a Bush Kinder session if they arrive with inappropriate clothing and without suitable clothing to change into.

It is important that Bush Kinder participants wear appropriate and protective clothing and footwear which:

- allows children to move freely and undertake activities such as climbing, balancing, running
- keeps children warm and dry in cold/wet weather
- protects children from the damaging effects of the sun, UV rays in warm weather and high UV conditions.
- prevents sunburn, bites, scratches and stings. *(Even in warm weather, long sleeve tops and long pants are recommended - this clothing should be loose fitting and light).*
- Where possible, clothing should be made from natural fabrics which allow the body to breathe and is comfortable against the skin
- In the case of footwear, **it needs to keep feet and toes covered** and have a flexible sole to allow children to climb and balance on uneven surfaces

The following table provides examples of recommended clothing, clothing which is not recommended and unacceptable clothing:

	Warm Weather	**Cold Weather / Rain** .
Recommended clothing and footwear	Light loose fitting long sleeve tops and long pants, broad brimmed hat*, closed toe shoes	Wet Weather Gear*, long pants, long sleeved top, beanie*, waterproof gloves, thermals in very cold weather
Not recommended	.Short sleeved tops, shorts, skirts or dresses..	Skirts, dresses (incompatible with Rain sets)
Unacceptable clothing and footwear	Open toe shoes, sandals, thongs, crocs, singlet tops .	Non-waterproof outer clothing. (A rainset on top of non-waterproof clothing is recommended).

***Change of clothes:** All children participating in Bush Kinder are required to bring a change of clothes and footwear as these may become wet and muddy. It is recommended that the spare clothing include:

- Spare top and bottoms of appropriate thickness/weight for the weather on the day
- Spare underpants (and singlet in winter)
- 2 pairs of socks
- 1 pair of gumboots (it is not recommended that gumboots are worn at all times due to the restriction of movement they impose, however, they are necessary during the winter months).

On high UV days, please ensure that you apply sunscreen prior to the session commencing. Sunscreen is provided next to the sign in book and will be available for re-application during sessions.

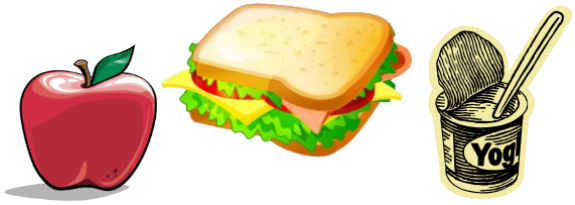
Wet weather clothing- On rainy days children must have access in their bags to light rainproof suit, which includes a jacket with a hood, and pants to wear over clothing. Families are encouraged to provide their own, however Maribyrnong Kinder is able to provide a wet weather suit on loan if required.

Bush Kinder identification with Maribyrnong Kindergarten contact mobile number will be provided

by the Kindergarten. All children must wear the provided Bush Kinder identification bracelet. This clearly identifies them as belonging to the kinder, without identifying them to strangers.

Healthy eating at Maribyrnong Kindergarten

Snack/lunch time for the children at kindergarten should be an enjoyable experience. As we have a healthy eating policy at our kindergarten, we ask that you please assist in this process by making wise and nutritionally healthy food choices for your children.



What To Bring

Water Children are required to have a water bottle. Parents/carers are required to provide a bottle with fresh water each session. There will be access on site to supplement drinking water when required.

Food Parents/carers are required to provide a healthy lunch in a sealed container. We ask you to consider the environment by including unpackaged foods. We also ask that you consider the importance of a Healthy snack/lunch (eg. Fruit / vegetable / sandwiches).

Parents and children are asked not to bring toys along to Bush Kinder, we want to encourage children to engage with each other and their natural environment and explore their surroundings.

Toileting

We understand that some children attending kinder may not be fully toilet trained on their commencement. We encourage all children to attend kindergarten wearing underwear, however understand some children may be having difficulties with toilet training and are at different stages of development. Please discuss this with your child's teacher to discuss strategies to support your child with this transition.

Educators remain very aware of the toileting needs of all children and regularly remind the children to go to the toilet throughout the session. We encourage all parents to pack a spare pair of clothes for their child should an accident occur.

Sun Protection

Maribyrnong Kindergarten is a SunSmart centre. This means that on days with a UV reading of 3 or above, all children need to wear appropriate clothing and a named sun hat each day as per the kindergarten *Sun Protection* policy and SunSmart recommendations. We highly recommend your child has a hat which covers their neck and ears as well as their face (baseball style caps are not recommended). Children without a hat will not be able to access the same outdoor play activities as their peers. As per the Sun Protection policy, children are asked to wear clothing that covers their shoulders, i.e. no singlets, strappy dresses, etc.

Parents are requested to apply sunscreen to their children each day prior to attending kinder. Please speak to staff if you have any concerns or requests regarding the application of sunscreen to your child.

Tips for starting kindergarten

There are lots of things you can do to prepare your child for kindergarten.

Over the summer holidays

- Be positive - talk to your child about what they will do at kindergarten.
- Borrow library books about kindergarten to read together.
- Encourage your child to dress themselves, so they can manage tasks like taking their jumper on and off.
- Visit the kindergarten or travel past it on your route home.
- Label all belongings that your child will take to kinder.
- Read over the family information the kindergarten provided to ensure everything is prepared.
- Talk to your child and establish a goodbye routine together.
- Establish a routine for kindergarten mornings – this could include a chart with pictures outlining the different steps for getting ready.
- Organise holiday play dates with friends or children who will be going to the kindergarten.
- Create a routine around sleep - at this age, children need 10 to 12 hours sleep each night. Practice sticking to bedtime and wake up schedules in the weeks leading up to the start of kinder.

On the first day of kindergarten

- Talk to your child about what to expect and when you will pick them up.
- Follow the kindergarten's instructions about what to bring (e.g. sun hat, spare clothes).
- Prepare the night before, lay out clothing you both agree on and pack their bag together.
- Encourage your child to follow your morning routine and remind them of next steps.
- Talk to the kindergarten teacher about how or what might help your child to settle
- If you are having trouble separating from your child, ask the kindergarten teacher or educators to help you.
- Make sure you say goodbye – disappearing quietly can cause greater distress and mistrust.
- Ensure you are on time at the end of the session to pick up your child.
- Be enthusiastic and positive.
- At the end of the day talk to your child about what happened during the day.

2027 Term Dates and Public Holidays

Date(s)	Event
Friday 1 January	New Year's Day (Public Holiday)
Tuesday 26 January	Australia Day (Public Holiday)
Wednesday 27 January	Kinder closed
Thursday 28th January	Student Free Day
Friday 29th January	Student Free Day
Monday 1st February	Week 1 Orientation
Monday 8th February	Week 2 Orientation
Monday 15th February	Week 3 Orientation
Monday 8 March	Labour Day (Public Holiday)
Thursday 25 March	Term 1 ends
Friday 26 March	Good Friday (Public Holiday)
Saturday 27 March	Saturday before Easter Sunday (Public Holiday)
Sunday 28 March	Easter Sunday (Public Holiday)
Monday 29 March	Easter Monday (Public Holiday)
Monday 12 April	Term 2 begins
Sunday 25 April	ANZAC Day (Public Holiday)
Monday 14 June	King's Birthday (Public Holiday)
Friday 25 June	Term 2 ends
Monday 12 July	Term 3 begins. TBD- Student Free Day in Term 3 or Term 4.
Friday before AFL Grand Final	Public Holiday
Friday 17 September	Term 3 ends
Monday 4 October	Term 4 begins
Tuesday 2 November	Melbourne Cup Day (Public Holiday)
Thursday 16th December	Student Free Day

** Child Free Days to enable staff to undertake professional development will be confirmed in 2027.