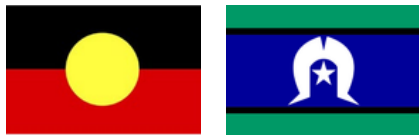




Family Handbook

Early Childhood & School Aged
Education and Care

Acknowledgement of Country



CatholicCare acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country on which we live and work, the lands of the Dharawal, Yuin, Dharug and Gundungurra Nations. We recognise Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islanders continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to Elders both past and present.

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Welcome

Dear Families,

Welcome to our early childhood and school aged care community! We are delighted to welcome you and your child and look forward to sharing this wonderful journey of learning, growth and discovery with your family. The early years are a time of incredible development, and we are honoured to partner with you during this important stage of your child's life.

CatholicCare Wollongong provides Early Learning and Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) services across the Illawarra and Macarthur regions. Our services are located within local communities and school settings, offering education and care that is responsive to the needs of children and families in each area. While each service reflects its unique community, all are guided by CatholicCare's shared values, a strong commitment to child safety, and a focus on high-quality education and care.

Our program is built on a foundation of love, respect and curiosity. We believe that children learn best through play, exploration and meaningful relationships. Our dedicated educators are committed to creating safe, nurturing and engaging environments where every child can thrive.

This Family Handbook is designed to help you become familiar with our program, policies and daily routines. We encourage open communication and value your insights and feedback. Together, we can build a strong, supportive community that celebrates each child's unique strengths and potential.

Thank you for choosing to be part of our program. We look forward to a joyful and enriching year ahead.

The CatholicCare Education and Care Team



We believe that
children learn best
through **play,**
exploration and
meaningful
relationships.

Mission, Vision & Values

About us

As bearers of Christ's love, we are an inclusive Catholic social services organisation committed to providing professional services across the lifespan to individuals, families, and communities in need throughout the Diocese of Wollongong.

We offer compassionate, high quality community services that promote human dignity, connection, and wellbeing. Our passion is supporting people to harness their strengths, thrive in their relationships, and build positive futures.

Vision

For inclusive, thriving communities where human dignity of all is respected and valued.

Values

- **Dignity:** Everyone is worthy of respect
- **Integrity:** Always do the right thing
- **Compassion:** Be empathic and responsive
- **Excellence:** Be the best we can be
- **Solidarity:** Working together for the common good

Code of Ethics and Conduct

CatholicCare employees must comply with the agency's Code of Ethics and Conduct, which provides a set of principles, values, and standards. Employees are also committed to adhere to the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals outlined in the [Early Childhood Australia's Code of Ethics](#).

Our ECE Locations

We deliver support in schools and communities, with offices in Wollongong, Campbelltown and Nowra, ensuring our services are local, accessible and responsive.

16

Locations

2,073

Children

146

Educators



Early Learning Centres



Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)



(Source: Annual Review 2025–2026)

Our Philosophy

At CatholicCare Wollongong, we recognise the lasting impact of early childhood education and care on children's lives. Guided by the values of Dignity, Integrity, Compassion, Excellence, and Solidarity, we provide inclusive environments where every child is welcomed, supported, and able to thrive.

We believe all children are capable, competent, and active participants in their own learning. Through a child-centred, play-based approach, we support children's social, emotional, physical, cognitive, cultural, and spiritual development. Our practice is guided by the approved learning frameworks: Belonging, Being and Becoming: The Early Years Learning Framework v2.0 and My Time, Our Place v2.0.

Our curriculum responds to children's interests, identities, and cultural contexts. Educators use intentional teaching, reflection, and meaningful interactions to support learning and wellbeing, recognising the importance

of relationships with families, peers, and the wider community.

We uphold the rights of all children, ensuring environments that are physically and emotionally safe, inclusive, and respectful. Children are encouraged to share their ideas, make choices, and contribute to decisions about their learning and care, fostering a sense of agency and belonging.



At CatholicCare Wollongong, we recognise the profound and lasting impact of early childhood education and care on every child's life.

We are committed to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, families, cultures, and communities, embedding First Nations perspectives respectfully and meaningfully across our curriculum and practices, ensuring cultural safety and shared learning.

We value families as children's first and most enduring teachers and build

respectful partnerships that honour diverse family structures, cultures, faiths, and languages, supporting continuity of learning and wellbeing.

Our learning environments promote connection to nature, sustainability, and care for God's creation, fostering curiosity, respect, and responsibility for the natural world.

As a Catholic organisation, we work collaboratively with families, communities, and stakeholders, including the Catholic Education Office, promoting the common good and responding to the needs of the communities we serve.



Our Commitment to Child Safety

At CatholicCare, the safety, wellbeing and dignity of every child is our highest priority. We are committed to creating environments where children feel safe, respected, listened to and supported. Children are encouraged and supported to express their views and participate in decisions that affect them, consistent with their age and understanding.

In NSW, all early childhood education and care services are required to make the safety, rights and best

interests of children the paramount consideration in all decisions. This means that every decision made at our service, by educators, leaders and service providers is guided first and foremost by what is safest and best for children.

Keeping children safe is a shared responsibility. We work in partnership with families, communities and relevant authorities to promote strong child-safe practices across all our education and care services.



All educators and staff are carefully recruited, trained and supported to meet child-safe expectations and are mandatory reporters who must act on any concerns about a child's safety or wellbeing. We have zero tolerance for any form of harm or inappropriate behaviour towards children.

Concerns relating to child safety can be raised directly with the Service Director/Coordinator or through **CatholicCare's feedback and complaints process.**

Our Team

- ✓ **Qualified**
- ✓ **Child Safe**
- ✓ **First Aid trained**

At CatholicCare, we employ educators who are passionate about working in early childhood and school-aged education and care. We expect our team to foster responsive, warm, trusting, and respectful relationships with every child, recognising that these connections are foundational to quality care and education.

All staff hold current Working with Children Checks and National Criminal History Checks, undertake child protection training as well as relevant qualifications specific to their role.

All Responsible Persons (placed in charge of the day-to-day running of the service) have current ACECQA approved First Aid, CPR, Emergency Asthma and Anaphylaxis qualifications.



Our Services

Our services provide children with a safe and welcoming environment. The spaces cater to a wide range of activities for children of differing ages, interests and needs.

Early Learning Centres

Our purpose built centres offer a welcoming and nurturing environment with children's learning and play at its core. Our educators are experienced, qualified and passionate, and work collaboratively with families to support the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of the children.

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) – Before and After School Care

CatholicCare Wollongong is an approved provider of Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) in the Illawarra and Macarthur areas currently operating in several schools. We provide varied before and after school care for children aged 5 to 12 years and accept enrolments of children attending both Catholic and NSW government schools.

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) – Vacation Care

We love school holidays! Our Vacation Care program offers a range of activities for primary school aged children. The program runs every school holidays and operates on school grounds. Our fun filled schedule is certain to keep your children entertained, safe and busy during the school holidays.

Your Child's Learning Journey

Early Learning Centres

2 to 5 years
Nurturing from the very start



Early experiences



Growing social and emotional development



School readiness



Developing self-help skills



Forming friendships



Growing independence

Out of School Hours Care (OSHC)

5 to 12 years
Building skills and relationships

Vacation Care

5 to 12 years
Creating life-long memories



Creativity



Connecting with community



New experiences

Learning & Development

Early Years Learning (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework V2.0 (EYLF) guides early childhood educators, early childhood teachers and approved providers to inform educational programs and practices that emphasise play-based learning and extend and enrich children's learning and wellbeing from birth to 5 years and through the transition to school.

The EYLF is made up of learning outcomes, principles and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning.



My Time Our Place (MTOp)

The aim of My Time, Our Place: Framework for School Age Care in Australia (the Framework) is to assist educators to provide children and young people with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for successful lifelong learning. The Framework has been designed for use by approved providers and school age care educators working in partnership with children and young people, their families and the community, including schools. It aims to extend and enrich children and young people's wellbeing, learning and development in school age care settings.



(MTOp, 2022, p. 4)

Educational Programs

As a not-for-profit, community-focused organisation, all decisions about our programs are made with children's and families' best interests at heart, ensuring high-quality experiences that support every child's growth and development.

Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

Our OSHC program provides care for school-aged children before and after school and during vacation periods. The program offers a balance of active play, creative experiences, relaxation and **social connection**.

Children are supported to:

- build friendships and social skills
- develop **independence** and responsibility
- engage in activities that reflect their interests
- relax and unwind outside of the school day.

While OSHC is not a formal education program, educators intentionally create opportunities that support children's wellbeing, confidence and **sense of belonging**. Children are encouraged to have a voice in the program, make choices, and participate in activities that foster cooperation, creativity and resilience.



Early Learning Centres

Our Early Learning Centre offers a nurturing, **play-based program** for children aged 2–5 years. Qualified educators plan learning experiences that support each child's development across physical, social, emotional, communication and cognitive areas.

Children learn through play, exploration and daily routines in our indoor and outdoor environments. Educators support children to build confidence, form friendships, express their needs and develop independence through everyday experiences such as self-care, problem-solving and social interactions.

School readiness is embedded naturally into the program through play and routines. Early literacy and numeracy skills, social learning such as turn-taking and following simple rules, and independence skills including toileting, hand washing, dressing and caring for belongings are developed in meaningful and age-appropriate ways.

We support families through the transition to school by offering information evenings and opportunities for children to visit local schools, helping them become familiar with classrooms, teachers and school environments.

Enrolment



**Enrol
Online**



**Submit
Documents**



**Confirm
Booking**



**Start
Care**

1

2

3

4

Getting Started

Before your child commences at one of our education and care services, a completed enrolment is required. Enrolments are completed electronically via Xplor, our child management system. Your service will provide enrolment links and instructions during the enrolment process.

Children must be enrolled under the primary caregiver responsible for their care. Families wishing to claim Child Care Subsidy (CCS) must ensure enrolment details match those linked to Centrelink.

Please refer to our **Enrolment Policy** for detailed information.

Required Documents

To meet regulatory requirements, families are required to provide relevant documentation during enrolment, which may include:

- proof of identity (e.g. birth certificate)
- immunisation information
- medical management plans (where applicable)
- court or parenting orders (if applicable)

Additional documentation may be requested to support your child's individual needs.

Booking Process

ELC:

A place may be secured following acceptance of an enrolment and payment of the required bond and fees. Bond details will be provided by the service.

OSHC:

Children may attend OSHC once all required enrolment information has been received and the enrolment has been processed.

Immunisation Requirements

ELC:

Families must provide a current Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). Under NSW “No Jab, No Play” laws, children must be:

- fully immunised for their age, or
- on an approved catch-up schedule, or
- have a valid medical exemption.

Children who are not immunised due to personal choice cannot attend an Early Learning Centre.

OSHC:

Families must also provide an AIR Immunisation History Statement. Children can attend OSHC regardless of immunisation status. If there is an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease, children who are not immunised may be temporarily excluded to protect their health and

the health of others.

Permanent and Casual Bookings

Permanent and casual care arrangements are subject to availability, and waitlists may apply. Permanent bookings are ongoing bookings for regular days each week and are charged regardless of attendance. Requests for permanent bookings or changes to existing bookings must be submitted to your service.

Casual bookings are one off bookings and are subject to availability. Casual care must be confirmed by the service before your child can attend. Where sessions are full, a casual waitlist may apply.

Keeping Information Current

To support your child’s safety and wellbeing, families must let the service know promptly if any details change, including contact information, health details, authorised nominees or court orders. These updates ensure your child’s enrolment record remains accurate, as required under the National Regulations.

Photographs, Social Media and Promotion

As part of our education and care program, educators may take photographs or videos of children during everyday learning experiences to document learning and share information with families.

Images are only shared within the service unless additional permission is provided.

Families provide written consent for photographs and videos during enrolment. Any use of images for promotional or marketing purposes (such as social media, newsletters or community publications) requires separate, optional consent, which families may decline or withdraw at any time.

To protect children's safety and privacy, educators use service-issued devices only, and all images are stored securely in line with privacy requirements. We ask families to help protect the privacy of all children by not taking photographs or videos while at the service.

If you have any questions about consent or the use of images, please speak with your service leadership team.

Authorisations

As part of the enrolment process, families are required to provide consent for routine and emergency situations, including authorised collection, medical treatment, excursions and emergency care.

If you have questions about authorisations, please speak with the service before submitting your enrolment.

ELC Contact

Phone: 1800 967 894

Email: eceenquiries@catholiccare.dow.org.au

OSHC Contact

Phone: 1800 967 894

Email: eceenquiries@catholiccare.dow.org.au



Inclusion of Children

If your child has a **pre-existing diagnosis, disability, developmental delay, medical condition, learning support need, or behavioural support need** please speak to the education

and care site prior to enrolment. This is so we can identify how best to support the child whilst with us. We provide a supportive and inclusive environment that allows each child to fully participate in quality education and care.

We aim to develop and sustain supportive relationships with families and encourage discussions about how we can support your child to have equitable access to resources and participation. We may discuss with you the option for us to obtain Inclusion Support Funding.

The program provides support for eligible early childhood education and care (ECEC) services to build their capacity and capability to include children with additional needs, alongside their typically developing peers, so all children have genuine opportunities to access, participate and achieve positive learning outcomes.



Getting Started at ELC

Orientation

To help support your child's sense of belonging as they begin their journey with us, please contact the service to arrange an orientation visit. This visit is a wonderful opportunity to get to know our learning environment, understand our daily routines (including sign-in/out and drop-off), and see where your child's belongings will be kept. Together, we can build a strong partnership that supports your child's being and becoming.

Settling in

We know that saying goodbye can sometimes be challenging for children and families. As your child develops a sense of belonging in our environment, it's completely normal for big feelings to arise. If you or your child are feeling worried or upset during drop-off, please speak with the service director or your child's educator. We're here to work in partnership with you and support your child's emotional wellbeing.

What to pack

- ☐ Sun-safe clothing that covers shoulders (T-shirt style)
- ☐ A sun-safe hat (broad-brimmed, bucket, or legionnaire style)
- ☐ Comfortable play clothes that can support active, messy learning
- ☐ Spare clothing
- ☐ Closed-in shoes (no thongs or crocs, please)
- ☐ All items clearly labelled with your child's full name to support their independence and sense of agency
- ☐ A drink bottle: we will refill your child's drink bottle with water throughout the day to support their wellbeing

Please note: CatholicCare is not responsible for lost or damaged items.

Here are some ideas that can help your child settle and feel secure in their new environment:

- **Spend a little time playing together during the first day (or first few days).** This helps your child feel safe as they explore and build confidence in their new surroundings.
- **Pack a comfort item, such as a favourite toy or a family photo.** Familiar objects can support your child's sense of being and help them manage their feelings.
- **Always say goodbye, even when it's hard.** Predictable, honest goodbyes help children build trust and strengthen their sense of security.
- **Keep your drop-off routine consistent.** Familiar routines support children's self-regulation and help them feel more confident in their morning transition.
- **Connect with our educators during drop-off.** When your child sees positive, caring relationships between families and educators, it supports stronger connections and a deeper sense of belonging.
- **You're welcome to call us throughout the day if you'd like an update.** We value our partnership with families and want you to feel reassured and informed.

Bottles / Breastfeeding

We support families who choose to breastfeed or bottle-feed.

Rest Time

Rest time is a valued part of the day and supports children's wellbeing. We work in partnership with families to support each child's individual rest routine. Families are asked to provide a cot-size fitted sheet and blanket for rest times.

As children settle into the service, changes to usual sleep patterns can occur and are a normal part of adjusting to a new environment.

Drop off and pick up time

We ask families to be mindful of safety when arriving and departing from our education and care service and to closely supervise children. To help keep everyone safe:

- Always hold young children's hands while in the car park area.
- Be alert for reversing vehicles in the car park.
- Ensure entry doors and gates are securely closed when entering and exiting the service.

By working together, we can maintain a safe environment that supports children's wellbeing and allows them to explore confidently.

Getting Started at OSHC

Information for individual services is available through the relevant school or via our website.

Before and after school care

Each service will have a designated collection point for children transitioning to/from school and before/after school care and will be signed in via the electronic roll.

During Term 1, we'll help our Kindergarten children get settled by collecting them from their classrooms until they're confident with the routine. If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to chat with your service's Coordinator.

OSHC Quiet Space

A quiet space is available for children during OSHC sessions to rest or participate in calm activities.

What to pack for Vacation Care

- ☐ Enclosed shoes
- ☐ SunSmart clothing (covering shoulders)
- ☐ Hat
- ☐ Drink bottle labelled with your child's full name
- ☐ Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea*
- ☐ Medication if applicable (See Medical Conditions)

***Please check with your individual service.**



Daily Care & Wellbeing

Health & Wellbeing

At CatholicCare, your child's health and wellbeing are our top priority. We work hard to maintain a clean, safe, and welcoming environment for everyone. Our team follows simple but effective hygiene habits like regular hand washing, proper sneeze and cough etiquette, and frequent cleaning of surfaces that little hands love to touch!

We kindly ask that all children and visitors wash their hands or use hand sanitiser when they arrive – every little bit helps. Our educators also make hygiene a fun part of the day, teaching and modelling good habits to help stop the spread of germs and keep everyone feeling their best.

✓ **Wash hands and use sanitiser when you arrive.**

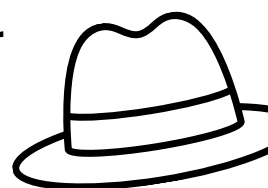


Sun Safety

To keep everyone sun safe, children and educators wear hats and sun-safe clothing when playing outside. We encourage sunscreen use (SPF 30+ or higher), which is reapplied as needed. A Sun Smart station is available for children to use on arrival and before outdoor play.

Please pack a sun-safe hat in your child's bag every day, no matter the weather. If a hat isn't worn, children will need to stay under shelter or play indoors – no hat, no outdoor play. Refer to our **Sun Safe Policy** for further information.

✓ **Remember to pack a sun-safe hat.**



Food & Nutrition

We support healthy eating and safe food practices across our Early Learning Centres and Out of School Hours Care services. Our food practices are guided by the Australian Dietary Guidelines and the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, and we support NSW Health's Munch & Move program. We also use trusted resources such as Get Up & Grow and Eat for Health to guide our approach to nutrition and wellbeing.

In our **Early Learning Centres**, meals and snacks are provided and planned to meet children's nutritional needs. Menus are displayed for families to view, and we welcome feedback from children and families.

In **OSHC and Vacation Care**, food arrangements vary by service. Families will be informed of what food is provided and when lunchboxes are required.

Early Learning Centres (2–5 years)

Meals provided:
breakfast, lunch,
snacks



Outside School Hours Care (OSHC)

Meals provided:
Breakfast +
afternoon tea

Vacation Care

Lunchbox
required (unless
stated)



We work in partnership with families to support children with allergies, medical conditions, cultural or religious dietary needs. Please ensure any dietary or medical information is kept up to date so we can support your child safely and appropriately.

Further information is available in our **[Nutrition and Food Safety Policy](#)**.

We work with the children to develop a guide to positive behaviour

Behaviour Guidance

Educators follow our **Behaviour Guidance Policy** that extends across all education and care sites providing a consistent approach to support our enrolled children. This policy allows children to develop self-discipline, respect for others, for property and respect for self, whilst learning to regulate their behaviour in different environments.

Each education and care site develops Rights and Responsibilities within their space which have been developed with the children. We use these as point of reference to guide children's behaviour in a positive manner. This ensures that children have a clear understanding to make the right choices and understand their own rights within their environment.

Digital Technology Use

We use digital technology as a learning tool to support children's learning and creativity. Any use of technology is age-appropriate and always supervised by educators.

Children may use service-provided devices only for planned learning experiences. Parent or guardian authorisation for the use of digital technologies is obtained as part of the enrolment process.

To protect children's safety and privacy, personal devices capable of taking, storing or transmitting images or videos (including mobile phones and smart watches) must not be used at the service and must remain switched off and stored securely.

Approved exemptions may apply where a device is required to support a child's health, disability or individual needs and will be documented on the child's enrolment record.

Age-appropriate movies may be shown as part of the program. All media is classified G or PG and supervised by educators.

Further information is available in our **[Safe Use of Digital Technologies and Online Environments Policy](#)**.

Safety & Procedures

Arrival & Departure

For everyone's safety, children **must be signed in and out each day using our service iPads** (linked to Xplor) by a parent, carer, or someone you've authorised.

Children can only leave with someone listed on their enrolment form. If someone else is picking up, please let the Centre know in writing and make sure they bring photo ID.

To keep children safe, they can't travel home or to other activities on their own. See **[Delivery of Children to, and Collection from Education and Care Services Premises Policy.](#)**



Emergency and Evacuation Procedures

We have emergency and evacuation procedures in place to help keep children, families and educators safe.

Emergency procedures and evacuation plans are displayed throughout the service, and educators are trained to respond to a range of emergency situations. Regular drills are conducted so children and staff are familiar with what to do in an emergency. Further information is available in our **[Emergency and Evacuation Policy.](#)**

Infectious Diseases

The National Health and Medical Research Council outlines minimum exclusion periods for children with infectious diseases in early childhood education and care settings. If your child is diagnosed with an infectious illness, please notify staff immediately so we can follow the appropriate protocols, including informing the Public Health Unit if required and communicating with other families where necessary.



Please refer to the National Health and Medical Research Council website for information regarding exclusion for common or concerning conditions.

Further information is available in our [**Infectious Diseases Policy**](#).

Medical Conditions

It is vital that we are aware of any medical condition, example: diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, eczema, asthma (everyday or seasonal), risks of anaphylaxis of your child including any potential triggers. Families are required to indicate any medical conditions on the enrolment form.

Our Service requires a Medical Management Plan or ASCIA Asthma/Anaphylaxis Action Plan to be completed by your General Practitioner to assist in managing your child's needs. This must be provided prior to your child's commencement. In consultation with the Coordinator/Director, families will be asked to develop a Risk Minimisation Plan and Communication Plan to support educators in meeting your child's health and safety needs. Any prescribed medication required by your child must be provided to the service prior to use. All medication must be supplied in its original packaging with a prescription label clearly displaying your child's details.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of your child, your child's Medical Management Plan/ Action Plan will need to be updated every 12 months, or whenever a change in their medication, plan or treatment occurs. (Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy) (ASCIA).

Please refer to [**Medical Conditions Policy**](#) and [**Administration of Medication Policy**](#).

Incidents & Injuries

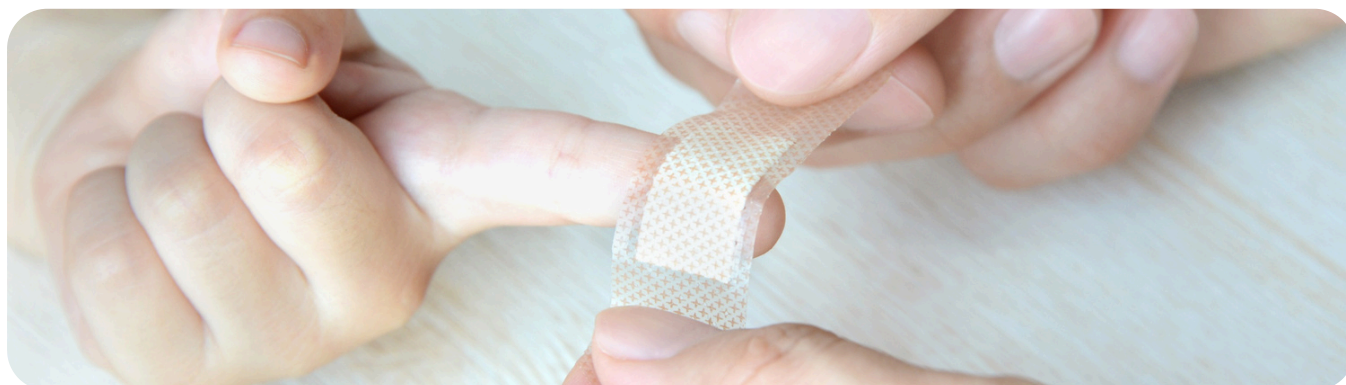
We aim to minimise the risk of accidents and injury as much as possible however, through play, exploration and adventure, children sometimes have accidents. We always have an educator with a first aid, emergency asthma, anaphylaxis management and CPR qualification on shift at all times.

In the event of a **minor injury, first aid will be provided** as required. An Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will be completed and when you collect your child, you will be notified about the injury and asked to acknowledge and sign the record. If your child injures their head, even if it is a small bump, you will be contacted to advise you of the injury. Our educators will continue to monitor your child closely and advise if you should come and collect them.

If an injury or incident is serious and we believe **urgent medical attention is required, the Nominated Supervisor will contact an ambulance immediately**. We will then attempt to contact a parent or guardian or an authorised nominee to advise of the situation.

If you are unable to meet the ambulance at the care site, we will send one of our educators/staff members to accompany your child in the ambulance. Please note that Ambulance cover is the responsibility of each family.

An Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record will be completed, and a parent will be required to acknowledge and sign this record. A copy of any documentation from the hospital or treating doctor will also be requested. CatholicCare will also be required to notify the Regulatory Authority in the event of any serious incident or injury. In these circumstances, you may be contacted by our Nominated Supervisor of the care site or the Regulatory Authority to follow up the incident and actions taken by our Service.





When to Keep Your Child Home

We aim to minimise the spread of infections and diseases, and maintain a healthy environment for all children, educators and staff. As such, we implement recommendations developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) – Staying Healthy in Childcare.

Please monitor your child's health and do not bring your child to our care sites if they are suffering from an infectious disease/illness or are generally unwell.

If your child becomes ill

1.

CONTACT

We will contact a guardian or emergency contact to collect your child.

2.

RECORD

You will be provided with a details about your child's illness, symptoms, general behaviour and any action taken.

3.

SIGN

You will need to sign this document.

For certain illnesses, a medical clearance certificate may be required before your child returns.

Please refer to our **Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Policy**.

Excursions

As part of our program, on occasion we will plan excursions within the local community and incursions at the education and care sites. These activities enhance the program, children's learning experiences and involvement in the community. Safety is an essential part of all incursions/excursions and they are only undertaken after risk assessments have been conducted and risk management strategies implemented.

Written authorisation will be requested from parents prior to any activity and must be received by the applicable site before any child can participate in the excursion.

During any excursion, attendance records are maintained accurately, a qualified first aid officer is always present, staff ratios based on the risk assessment are strictly adhered to as a minimum and children are supervised at all times. **See Excursions / Incursions Policy.**



Safe Transportation

As part of our organisation, at times, Services provide transportation between our care sites, primary schools and other locations during school holidays whilst participating on excursions.

The safety of children enrolled in our service is paramount and we take every reasonable precaution to protect children from any hazard that could cause injury or harm. We undertake comprehensive risk assessments and ensure adequate supervision at all times. Educator to child ratios are strictly adhered to at all times. For regular transportation, written authorisation will be required once every 12 months unless circumstances change. Any other forms of transportation will require individual written authorisation. Please see our **Safe Transportation Policy** for further information.





Fees & Bookings

Fees overview

Fees undergo regular review and notice will be provided to families where changes occur.

ELC: Fees are required to be paid two weeks in advance, estimating the childcare subsidy.

OSHC: Fees are required to be paid one week in arrears to capture childcare subsidy.

Please see **Fees Policy** for further information.

Families can access their account details through Xplor, individual login details will be provided to each family. A weekly statement is emailed ahead of the scheduled debit.

We recommend regularly reviewing your statements and invoices to stay informed of any changes. Please check that all details are correct and if you have any questions, feel free to contact our accounts team.

Payment Methods

Direct debit is our only payment method. Primary Carers are required to

complete an online Direct Debit form upon enrolment via Xplor, prior to commencing care. Fees will be deducted weekly via Debit Success on **Thursday**. Please ensure there are sufficient funds in your account to cover your weekly fees.

Please note: Debit Success will charge per failed transaction; this is charged separate to your childcare fees.

Unnotified Absences

A Non-Notification Fee will be charged to your account when a parent or guardian does not inform the service directly that the child will not be attending.

Overdue Fees

It is the account holder's responsibility to ensure fees are paid on time and remain up to date. If an account falls more than two weeks in arrears, a Late Payment Fee will apply.

Families experiencing financial difficulties are encouraged to contact our accounts team to discuss available support.

CatholicCare Wollongong may suspend or withdraw your child's enrolment if fees remain unpaid after

four weeks. In such cases, the account will be considered high risk, and a \$150 bond per child will be required before your child can return.

Please note: If fees remain outstanding at the end of term, access to OSHC Vacation Care will not be available until the account is settled. Further information is available in the **Fees Policy**.

Late Collection Fees

Families are responsible for collecting children by their centre's closing time, which may vary by location. Late fees apply if children are picked up after closing, as educators are required to remain on site until all children have been collected. If running late, families must notify the centre and, where possible, arrange for an authorised person to collect their child. If no contact can be made with parents or authorised nominees, the centre may involve the Police or other authorities.

Please refer to the **Fees Policy** for full details.

ELC Accounts

Phone: 1800 967 894

ELC accounts via email:

elcaccounts@catholiccare.dow.org.au

OSHC Accounts

Phone: 1800 967 894

OSHC accounts via email:

ooshaccounts@catholiccare.dow.org.au

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Childcare subsidy (CCS) is administered by the Australian Government.

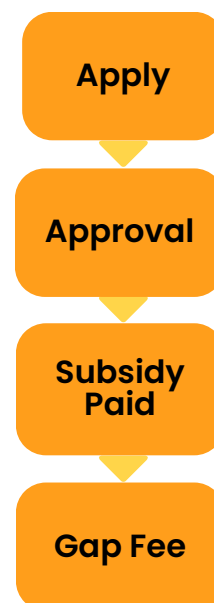
Families who wish to access CCS must apply through the Services Australia (Centrelink) website. This includes completing the Child Care Subsidy activity test. Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to our Service to be passed on to families as a fee reduction.

Families will contribute to their childcare fees and pay the difference between the fee charged by our Service and the subsidy amount received. This is called the 'gap fee'.

On enrolment we will require the Customer Reference Number (CRN) of the person linked with the child (typically Mother or Father), along with the child's CRN and dates of birth.

Complying Written Arrangement (CWA)

A Complying Written Arrangement (CWA) is an agreement between our Service and Primary Carer to provide childcare in exchange for fees. The CWA includes information about your child's enrolment including your child's full name and date of birth, the date the arrangement is effective from, session details and details of the fees to be charged.



Before Child Care Subsidy can be paid, you must sign the CWA section on Xplor and confirm the enrolment information through your MyGov account.

Absences

Families must notify the education and care site via Xplor if a child will be absent. If the child attends OSHC this notification must be advised by 1:30pm for an after school care session. This is so that staff aren't searching the premises for a child that has been collected or was not at school. Please note that fee applies for failure to notify us of your child/ren's absence.

Child Care Subsidy will be paid for up to 42 absences, per child for each financial year. Full fees are payable for absences after the initial 42 days, unless a medical certificate is supplied. You can access your child's absence record on your online statement by selecting "View Child Care Details and Payments" on your Centrelink online account.

If your child has not attended our Service for 14 continuous weeks, your child's enrolment will automatically be ceased by Centrelink, and your subsidy will be removed. If after 26 weeks of non-attendance Centrelink will cancel your CCS.

Starting or Ending on an Absence

In alignment with the Family Assistance Legislation a child must attend the first booked day of their enrolment and the last booked day of their enrolment.

If your child does not attend the first or last day of their booked enrolment childcare subsidy (CCS) cannot be applied and you will be charged the full fee. CCS can only be applied to your child's first and last physical day of attendance. If your child ended their booking on an absence Centrelink will reclaim the CCS already paid to your account leaving a balance owing.

Withdrawal from Care/Reducing Enrolment Days

Four weeks written notice is required during January and December and two weeks written notice is required from February to November to withdraw your child from care or reduce days of care. One weeks notice is required to change book days for your child/ren from any permanent booking. To provide your notice, an email must be sent to the education and care site email address and confirmation of action will be returned to you.

Please note: as listed above your child must physically attend on their last day of care so you receive your CCS entitlements.

ELC: Public holidays will be counted as an absence if they fall on your child's booked day.

Communication & Family Partnerships

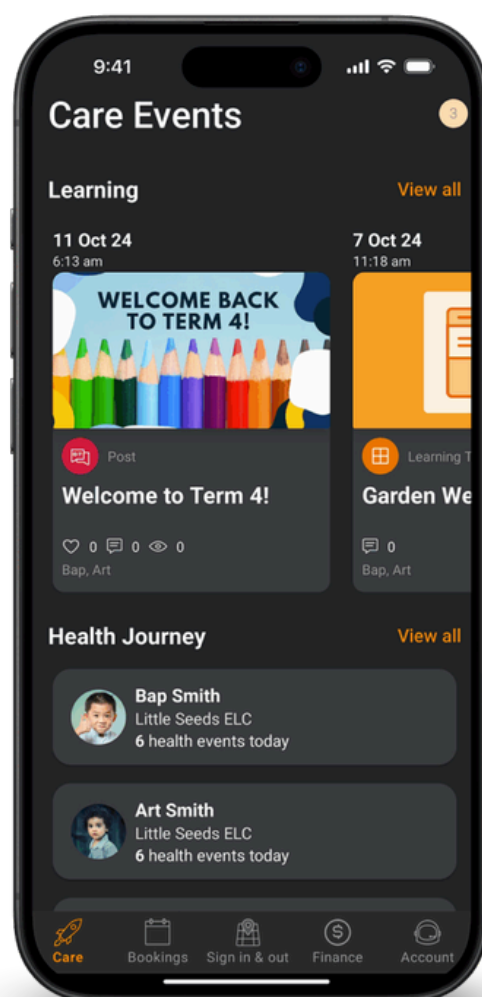
Staying Connected with Xplor

We use **Xplor** as our main platform to share and record your child's learning journey with us.

Xplor Home is a safe, private app that helps you stay connected and involved in your child's day. Through the app, you can:

- Receive updates about your child's learning, development and experiences
- See photos, videos, and fun moments from their day
- Communicate directly with your centre and connect with other families
- Easily manage bookings and payments
- Keep track of important health details

We encourage families to download the Xplor Home app from the **App Store** or **Google Play**.



Family Engagement & Feedback

Our Service has an open-door policy and actively seeks and encourages families to be involved in the Service. This can range from evaluating and adding input to your child's program and observations, volunteering within the Service and sharing skills and experiences that the children and the program will benefit from and providing feedback.

We have a **Client and Stakeholder Feedback Policy** that supports all stakeholders in our community, if you would like to provide feedback or raise a concern you have regarding an education and care site or employee you can utilise the **CatholicCare Wollongong Website feedback**. If a concern cannot be resolved at service level, families may contact CatholicCare's leadership team through the feedback process outlined on our website.



Privacy and Confidentiality

We are committed to protecting the privacy of all children, families, and staff. Our Service follows strict confidentiality policies in line with the Privacy Act 1988, Australian Privacy Principles, and relevant education and care legislation.

We only collect personal information (e.g., contact details, health information) to support your child's care and development. This information is kept secure and is not shared without your written consent, unless required by law.

Families are asked to not share personal information, data, or images of other children, families, or staff.

Our educators are also bound by confidentiality and will not share information about other families or staff members without written consent.

You may request access to your child's file at any time. Records are securely stored and maintained in line with national regulations and must be kept for prescribed time periods (e.g., enrolment, attendance, health and incident records).

For full details, please refer to our **Privacy Policy**. Any privacy concerns will be managed promptly under our **Client and Stakeholder Feedback Policy**.

Regulatory Authority

Our organisation is regulated by the national body for early education and care – the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) as well as the state licensing department in New South Wales. To contact our Regulatory Authority, please refer to the contact details below:

NSW Early Learning Commission for Childcare (Law and regulations)

Phone: 1800 619 113
email: ececd@det.nsw.edu.au

Locked Bag 5107 PARRAMATTA NSW 2124
www.education.nsw.gov.au

Contact Us

Illawarra | Shoalhaven | Macarthur | Southern Highlands

Visit: catholiccare.dow.org.au

Email: enquiries@catholiccare.dow.org.au

Call: 1800 967 894

Instagram

@catholiccarewollongong

Linkedin.com

catholiccare-wollongong

Facebook

CatholicCareWollongong