

Kindergarten Handbook



NORTHERN
CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Building Brighter Futures





Welcome to Kindergarten at Northern Christian School

Kindergarten is an exciting and rewarding year for children, their parents and teachers.

The Kindergarten year helps children to develop confidence and the ability to concentrate and cooperate with others. It is a year that sets the foundations for developing literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills.

We provide a holistic and Christ-centred Early Years Program, and our Kindergarten curriculum is based on the principles described in the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). There is a strong emphasis on play-based learning, building on children's skills and interests. Throughout the year, we engage in a wide range of learning experiences, including cooking, gardening, woodwork, excursions, gymnastics, swimming and regular bush sessions. We also work to build a strong connection between school and home through regular class updates, open classrooms and parent help.

We hope that this year will be the beginning of a long and enjoyable partnership with you as we journey together in providing high-quality Christian education for your child.

This handbook contains information to answer questions you may have concerning your child's first year at school and offers suggestions to help with preparation for this exciting new adventure.

Samuel Whittle

Kindergarten Teacher

Learning Program

We are a transformative learning community of caring and committed staff working in partnership with our families who share our belief that everyone is created in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, we believe our students have the potential for creativity, relationship, love, longing, dreams, desires, self-sacrifice, and much more of what it means to reflect the Creator.

Kindergarten is an introductory year to formal education. During this foundation year, students learn how to relate to other children and teachers and what behaviours are expected at school. They also learn how to be a part of and contribute to the learning process. It is important for every child to feel safe, secure, happy and confident at school and to start viewing themselves as learners. Much of the learning in Kinder is achieved through play and planned investigations. We want all children to experience success in their first year at school.

Kinder Philosophy

We are all created in God's image as a part of His creation. In Kindergarten, we learn about God's world around us and our place in it. In partnership with parents and families, we provide students with opportunities to explore their gifts and talents by developing their academic, personal and social skills and abilities.

Curriculum

Christian Worldview

Our Christian worldview affects all we do; how we unpack the curriculum with our students and nurture all relationships at school. We plan learning experiences underpinned by a biblical framework that invites students to see and understand the world through the perspective of God's truth. The Early Years framework and the Walker Learning Approach are foundational to our teaching and learning program, all within the context of a Christian worldview.

The Early Years Framework (EYLF)

The teaching in Kinder is guided by the government-assigned curriculum called the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). The EYLF focuses on the preconditions for learning. Each child needs to feel safe, secure, confident and valued to enable them to learn to the best of their ability.

Children should have an active role in the learning process. Learning needs to be something the children do for themselves rather than something a teacher does for them. The students will be encouraged to learn through play and investigation alongside explicit teaching sessions.

Creativity, imagination, curiosity and knowledge transfer from one situation to another are crucial parts of the EYLF. Learning to be communicators and sharing knowledge through speaking, listening, art, photos, drawings or symbols, and starting to understand the purpose of written text, pictures or diagrams is a major part of the Kinder year. Learning about sustainability and connecting with the natural world are also components of the EYLF.

The Walker Learning Approach

The Walker Learning Approach (WLA) is an Australian teaching method (pedagogy) that has a systemised approach that retains explicit instruction of literacy and numeracy, produces positive data in these and other curriculum areas and builds in rich engagement, and pro-social behaviours and life skills. The WLA meets all government requirements for early childhood education and uses the EYLF.

The WLA in preschool and early childhood programs:

- uses play-based learning throughout the day, embracing open-ended play experiences both indoors and outdoors and is culturally inclusive.
- is defined as a learning environment that is set up with intentional learning centres designed to promote many aspects of development, skill and learning through open-ended play.
- provides the platform for the teacher to use a play-based curriculum to instruct and explicitly unpack learning and skills without formal instruction.
- values skill acquisition and process.
- embraces the importance of high-quality preschool education as a significant contribution to combating social exclusion and promoting inclusions, particularly in disadvantaged children and improving long-term educational outcomes.

The key principles that guides WLA practice:

- All teaching is intentional.
- Not all children are ready to learn the same thing at the same time in the same way. Children's interests are used not for the interest alone but as a catalyst for engagement.
- Children's interests, culture and context are respected and used as a springboard to facilitate further understanding and skill development in all areas of learning, including literacy, numeracy, the sciences, the arts, language, cognition, social, psychological and emotional development.
- Child development is used as a basis for guiding practices as well as the principles of culture, community and family.
- Learning is personalised and uses the children's interests alongside additional exposure and concepts and experiences for children to explore their world, concepts, skills and environment.
- The process of learning and skill acquisition is valued - not just, or always, the focus of the end product.
- Intrinsic (not extrinsic) motivation is valued and embedded in practice.
- The adult/child relationship is highly valued, and the relationship is a scaffold in the learning alongside the child.
- Relationships with the child, families and communities are integral components of the approach.
- The WLA does not require topics or themes but does include opportunities for teachers to include specific concepts.
- Child development is used as a basis for guiding practice.
- Relationships are developed and deepened through a range of key practices, including Focus Children.
- Learning is real, relevant, meaningful and contextual to the child, family and community.

Getting Ready for School

Starting school is a significant step in a child's life. Here are some tips that can assist your child in getting ready.

- Prepare yourself and your child for the separation. If your child is not used to being away from family, then you might like to organise some play dates or visits with friends or relatives where your child can spend time without you.
- Talk with your child about what they might expect at school, including friends, activities and games.
- Talk about your morning routines and practice getting ready for school. This can be a good opportunity to ensure you have everything prepared for the first day of school.
- Encourage your child to be independent in routines and daily tasks needed for school. This can include:
 - putting on or taking off clothes and shoes;
 - eating and drinking without help (this includes opening/closing/unwrapping lunchbox, lids or food wrappers);
 - getting things out of their bag (such as a lunchbox, drink bottle or library bag);
 - carrying their bag;
 - putting items away or tidying after play; and
 - going to the toilet independently.
- Answer any questions that your child might have about school.





The First Day

The first day at school is a significant day for all children. Each child reacts differently to the experience as they try to process emotions around this event. With this in mind, there are a few things that you can do to help make the day a successful one.

- Be prepared for the day beforehand so that you have one less thing to think about in the morning.
- Talk to your child about the initial routine they will do once they get to school: put bag away, drink bottle in the tub and sign in at the welcome table - then play.
- Once the initial routine is completed at school, you can assist your child in settling in with an activity in the classroom.
- It is normal for many parents to feel emotional when leaving their child at school for the first time. However, presenting a confident appearance for your child when you drop them off is more helpful.
- If a child becomes upset, prolonging the process of leaving can worsen the situation. Leaving promptly with a positive word can be an appropriate way of handling these situations.
- Being punctual at the end of the day also helps children feel safe and settled at the start of the year.
- After their first day, talk about the positive experiences your child had and ask what they are looking forward to doing next time.

General Information

Communication

There is a Communication Book located inside the classroom. This is for leaving notes or reminders for the teacher. In addition, a Kinder Update is sent home with your child each Wednesday and emailed to parents and carers. This is separate from the School Newsletter and shares specifically about what students have been learning, and contains helpful tips or information relevant to the Kinder class.

Open Classroom

Kinder Open Classroom occurs every Wednesday from 2.45pm. We invite all parents and carers to come and spend time with their child, finding out what they have done that week or joining them in an activity. A photo slideshow of the week is displayed at this time. We do not have Open Classroom happening on the days when we are out for excursions. Please note that parents and carers are always welcome to visit the classroom from 8.30am or for a short time at the end of the day.

Uniform

In Kinder, the Sports Uniform is recommended to be worn daily; however, they are permitted to wear Formal Navy Pants, Formal Navy Shorts, Formal Knitted Jumper or School Dress if they wish. The Sports Uniform consists of:

- Polo Shirt (long or short sleeve)
- Rugby Jumper
- Soft Shell Jacket
- Trackpants
- Skort
- Sports Shorts
- Navy socks (no logos or other colours permitted)
- Black sports shoes

In addition, all students must have:

- School Bag
- Bucket Hat (must be worn in Terms 1 and 4)
- School Beanies are allowed to be worn in Terms 2 and 3.

Additional information about uniform expectations for students can be in our [Uniform Policy](#).

Smocks

Children are encouraged to bring a smock to use for painting, gluing or other messy activities. A full-body smock is preferred.

Rest Time

Each day after lunchtime, we have set aside a block of time for resting. This is a quiet part of the day where we can settle back into the classroom after our busy time outside. During rest time, children can quietly look at books, listen to stories and music, or generally relax before we move on with the remaining afternoon activities. Children are encouraged to bring a small pillow that they can use to either sit or lie on during this time. A Pillow Pet or something similar is often a popular choice for students.

Gumboots

We like to spend as much time outside as possible - including on wet or muddy days. While we do have some gumboots available for children to wear, they may like to bring their own pair of boots to keep at school.

Coats and Jackets

The Soft Shell Jacket is part of the school uniform; however, students are welcome to wear additional warmer coats, especially when we move into the colder seasons when it can get very cold in the mornings. A warm coat is recommended to put over the top of our school uniform.

Bag

A School Backpack (with the school logo) must be purchased at the Office. Students can provide their own Library Bag.

Drink Bottle

We are a 'water only' class. In the classroom. Children have access to their drink bottles throughout the day. We have designated tubs to place drink bottles in when arriving at school. Please ensure that your child can open/close the drinking mechanism themselves. We also request that you do not send drink bottles with a water spraying feature.

Lunchbox

When choosing a lunchbox, it is important that your child can open and close it by themselves. We are unable to provide cutlery or heat food. Having a well-balanced lunchbox with enough food for the day can positively impact how well your child is able to learn. It can be helpful to talk with your child about the different foods you might be packing for them, and include your child when preparing their lunchbox. If you want ideas on what to pack, visit the Tasmanian Government's [Move Well Eat Well](#) website.

Fruit Break

It can be a long time between breakfast and recess for some children. Having a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable can help increase concentration and improve learning retention. We have a break in the morning around 10.00am where children may have a snack of fresh fruit or vegetables if they wish to. A general guide to this break is no packaging: items that are packaged can be consumed at recess or lunchtime.

Toilets and Toileting

We want all children to be independent with their toileting. Getting used to the toileting routine can be a challenge for some children. We have regular times in our daily routine when the students are encouraged to use the toilets, especially before eating. It is strongly advised that children have a spare set of clothes including underwear in their bag in case of a toileting accident. Please talk to the teacher if you have any questions about this.

Library

We visit the Library each week where students can both read and borrow books. A Library Bag is required if a child wishes to borrow books, which can be purchased from the Office or elsewhere.

Visiting the Bush

Being outside and engaging with God's creation is an important part of our Kinder experience. Starting from Term 2, the students have regular visits to designated places in the bush surrounding the school. These sessions align with, but are not a formal part of, our Forest School Program that commences in Prep. On these days, we encourage children to dress appropriately for being in the bush and for the weather.

Toys

We do not encourage children to bring toys to school. However, children are welcome to bring a doll, teddy or similar soft toy as a comfort item if needed. If a child does bring a toy, they are requested to either keep it in their bag or to hand it over to the teacher until the end of the day.

Reporting on Your Child's Progress

Throughout the year, we aim to keep parents and carers informed on how their child is progressing. A portfolio of work for each student will be compiled throughout the year and will be presented to each student at the end of the year. There will be opportunities for parents to view these portfolios throughout the school year. Additionally, an Interim Report is provided at the end of Term 1 that outlines how students have settled at the start of the year. A similar update will be sent home towards the end of Term 2 with Parent/Teacher interviews providing an opportunity to elaborate on each child's progress.

Helping Out

We encourage parents and families to actively participate in their child's education and school community. Starting in Term 2, we have a parent help roster for the Kinder class. Parents, grandparents or carers are welcome to be involved in this roster.

We consider the health, safety and wellbeing of all children and young people to be our highest priority. We strive to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and young people, in particular, through our [Safeguarding Children & Young People policies and procedures](#). We have various excursions and school events where we would encourage parents and carers to volunteer to help out as required. We will require all volunteers have a current [Working With Vulnerable People card](#). A copy of this card will be retained on file at the Office.

Homework

In Kinder, we value the love of reading and nurture this through daily activities at school and by encouraging parents to read with students at home.

Further Information

Please refer to our *Kinder - Year 6 Parent Handbook* on our [website](#) for more detailed information to answer questions you may have concerning your child's schooling and life at Northern Christian School.





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