Preschool Information
Welcome to Vale Park Preschool

Our Mission
We will provide this by:
- Creating a welcoming, eclectic and stimulating environment
- Working in partnership with families and our community
- Planning for children’s learning and responding to their needs
- Monitoring children’s progress and providing information for families
- Reflecting on our practice and understanding the importance of professional learning and its relationship to the improvement agenda.

Our Vision
Is to provide a nurturing environment where children’s development is fostered and enriched and in which children are inspired to learn and develop skills, dispositions and creative thinking through play.
Educational Philosophy

At Vale Park Preschool we believe that Learning is Lifelong. We believe that optimal children’s learning occurs with a play-based curriculum that encourages active participation and provides meaningful experiences where children are supported as decision makers and are viewed as strong and capable. We believe that children’s learning is co-constructed with their peers, parents and educators.

At Vale Park Preschool we aim to create a collaborative, challenging and inclusive environment where children:

- Learn through Play
- Have fun
- Feel valued, confident and have a sense of belonging
- Develop positive and respectful relationships with peers and adults
- Respect diversity in the community
- Celebrate successes
- Are involved in the daily decision making process
- Respect the environment
- Develop skills necessary for life including, risk taking, problem solving, empathy, resilience, independence and persistence

As educators at Vale Park Preschool we plan to:

- Respond to children in a caring, positive and thoughtful way
- Observe and listen to children and respond to their learning, building on and extending their current skills, abilities and interests
- Provide opportunities for children to collaboratively participate in inquiry based projects
- Provide an environment that is safe, challenging and inclusive
- Work in partnerships with families, the community and colleagues
- Have high expectations for children and ourselves
- Regularly reflect on our practise and participate in ongoing Professional Training and Development
Welcome to our preschool. The centre opened in 1976 and is located on the corner of Ascot Avenue and Tonkin Street, adjacent to the Vale Park Primary School. In 2008 a major upgrade resulted in relocating our children’s outdoor play environment to the rear of the building.

**Preschool Groups**
The preschool offers half day and full day sessions. Children are eligible to attend 15 hours of preschool per week. This is achieved through vacancies and in negotiation with parents and staff at the preschool.

**Enrolment**
Enrolments are accepted for preschool after the age of 3 years. A Pre Enrolment Form will need to be completed by parents or by phone to guarantee a place at the preschool and parents will be contacted in the term prior to their child’s entry into preschool to confirm a place.

**Pre-entry/ Transition into Preschool**
Children are eligible to attend 4 Pre-entry/Transition sessions during the term prior to their commencement at preschool.

**What do children need to bring to preschool on their first day?**
- Bag - big enough to put their lunch box in easily
- Hat - legionnaire or broad-brimmed (in terms 1 and 4)
- Cup for water
- Lunch and/or Snack - healthy food to be brought in a small lunchbox (please refer to our Food Policy)
- Spare clothes in case of accidents and getting wet whilst participating in messy play

Please ensure that your child’s name is on all personal items.
**Preschool t-shirts**
Long sleeved and short sleeved t-shirts with the Vale Park Preschool Logo are available at the preschool, please see a staff member if you wish to purchase these for your children to wear whilst attending preschool.

**Clothing**
Children attending preschool participate in a wide range of activities and experiences including painting, finger painting, climbing and playing in the sandpit. Children need shoes and clothes that are comfortable, washable, easy to move about in and safe for climbing and participating in active play. (Footwear such as Thongs and Crocs are not regarded as safe footwear for preschool). We provide smocks for messy activities at preschool however it is a good idea to send your child in clothes that are suitable for a variety of messy activities.

**Encouraging Independence**
At preschool we encourage children to be as independent as possible. Children are encouraged to carry their own bag and look after their own belongings including their hats, jackets and lunch boxes etc.
To assist children with their independence it is important to keep a few things in mind e.g.
- When purchasing a bag and lunch box for your child’s year at preschool please give consideration to the ease with which they can independently manage the zips and clips on their own.
- When buying shoes it may be worth considering the ease with which your child can put them on their feet by themselves and whether or not they safe for active play and climbing.

**Toys From Home**
Please do not allow children to bring toys from home. They may become lost or damaged and tend to cause disputes amongst the children.
Health Examinations
These are generally carried out at the centre in children’s last term of preschool. Children must be at least 4 years and 3 months of age to have a Child and Youth Health Check which includes hearing and vision testing. A reminder that your child is due for this visit will be placed in your child’s information pocket.

When children need Medicines whilst at preschool
If your child needs to take any type of medication whilst at preschool parents need to complete an Administration of Medication Form which must be signed by the child’s Doctor and include the details of the dosage and name of medication. The medication must be supplied in its original packaging and not exceed the use-by date.
At no time will medicines of any type be administered without the above authorisation. It is important for parents to keep staff updated and informed of any changes to their child’s health and/or medications.

Health and Wellbeing
Precautions against the spreading of colds, viral infections and contagious diseases are necessary at preschool. Parents should keep a child at home who is running a temperature or showing signs of being unwell.
Children who have had vomiting or diarrhoea must be kept at home for 24 hours after the last episode.
Children will often say that they are well enough to come to preschool but in this instance it is up to the parent to judge the suitability of the child’s attendance.
If an outbreak of an infectious disease occurs parents will be notified via a note in the children’s individual information pockets.
When your child is reluctant for you to leave

It can be quite distressing if your child is upset or angry when it is time for you to leave. Children may be a little anxious when you leave them after a break or for the first time. Generally calm reassurance is all that is needed.

If not:

- Keep everything as low key and ‘normal’ as possible
- Try to remain as calm and in control as possible yourself
- Be clear, truthful and consistent. eg ‘I’ll start you off with this painting and then I have to go.’ .... And then do just that - go.
- Don’t wait until they finish, leave once they have started
- Always say goodbye and tell them when you will be back
- You might want to leave something of yours behind so they will have a physical reminder that you will be back
- Always follow through with what you have said
- Don’t be late coming back as the children can become anxious when they see the other children leaving with their parents
- Make positive comments about their success.

Remember, staff are here to help you and your child. We will reassure your child and assist them in managing their feelings.
If they don’t settle, we will ring you and of course if you are worried you can always ring to check on their progress.
**Children’s Lending Library**

Children can borrow books and literacy packs from our lending shelf. They can borrow one book and/or one literacy pack for one week.

Please assist us by:

- **For library books** - recording the name of the book, the date the book was borrowed, and the date you bring it back on a card in the orange box.
- **For literacy packs** - recording the name/number of the pack, the date it was borrowed, and the date you bring it back on a card in the white box.

**At home:**

- Please encourage your child to care for our books and literacy packs, however if a book becomes damaged or pieces from a literacy pack becomes lost please don’t hesitate to let us know as then we are able to make repairs and quickly place the book/literacy pack back into circulation for borrowing.
- Please bring a library bag to preschool to borrow books as it helps to protect the books and is a good way of transferring them to and from preschool.
- Please keep the book/literacy pack away from younger siblings unless they are supervised.

**Book Donation**

At the end of your child’s last term at preschool, parents are invited to donate a book to our library to commemorate their child’s time at preschool. Staff have purchased some books that are needed for our library for you to select from if you wish to make a donation.
Parental Involvement

We look forward to your involvement in your child’s year at preschool. You are welcome to spend time during any sessions with us.

You can be involved through:

- Talking with children about what they are doing, reading to them, playing board games and supporting them to use the computer etc.
- Sharing your skills and resources for example, cooking or gardening with the children, coming into the centre to talk about your hobby or occupation or playing a musical instrument etc.
- Sharing your cultural heritage and celebrating festivals and celebrations with us
- Joining the Governing Council
- Assisting with fundraising.
- Helping children exchange library books.
- Attending parent meetings and open nights.
- Providing resources relevant to the Educational Program.
- Assisting with cleaning up at the end of the session e.g. washing down tables and easels, putting chairs up at the end of the day, packing up outdoor equipment, sweeping and raking outdoor areas and helping with dishes.
- Taking a turn to assist us in the laundering of smocks and dress-up clothing. The roster for this is on the whiteboard near the entry to the preschool.

Assisting with the clean up at the end of each term.

As part of your child’s attendance at this preschool all parents are expected to help with the cleaning and maintaining our environment and equipment including assisting with the end of term clean up. Parents will be notified of jobs that need to be done at the end of each term that your child attends preschool.
Governing Council

Governing Council is made up of interested parents who meet twice a term to assist in the smooth running of the centre.

The Governing Council works together with staff to:
- develop and discuss site improvement plans
- develop and monitor strategic directions of the centre
- and allocate finances so that the directions and outcomes for the centre are achieved.

Social networks develop within the centre’s community when parents participate on the Governing Council together with the planned social functions and fundraising events.

If you are interested in joining this Governing Council and would like to become more involved in your child’s preschool year please see staff or join us for one of our meetings which are always advertised.
Parent Responsibilities

- **Send your child regularly.** Regular attendance is vital for your child’s learning.
- Please accompany your child into the preschool at every session to be greeted by a staff member and to daily sign your child into preschool.
- Do not allow any other children out of the gate.
- An information diary is provided so that any changes to pick up arrangements or any other information relating to children can be documented. **Please include the phone number of the person collecting your child on this occasion and your signature to verify the change in pick up arrangements.**
- Please notify staff if your child will be absent from preschool.
- **Please stay with your child if you arrive at preschool early.** Staff are not responsible for children before and after stated session times. Please pick up your child promptly as staff have meetings and other commitments and children can become anxious when they see all the other children going home and they are left.
- If you have an emergency and are unable to collect your child punctually, please telephone the centre so that we can reassure your child as this can be upsetting for them.
- Please check your child’s information pocket regularly for notices so you know about what is happening in the preschool including coming events, any changes that might be occurring and important dates etc.
Educational Program

We believe that children learn through play. The staff provide an environment that supports children’s learning through play, which is the basis of our curriculum. Using observations and assessments of individual children, staff plan for play situations that are meaningful to children and therefore maximise opportunities for children’s skill development and consolidation.

Our program is displayed on the whiteboard. The program is based on observations of children, building on their strengths, interests and needs. The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia is the curriculum document we use when planning a program for children. It is a curriculum framework, which facilitates us to support, stimulate, and structure children’s learning in order to bring about a progression of development appropriate to individual needs and abilities. The curriculum is designed to promote key areas of learning for an integrated approach.

The Learning Outcomes for children birth to 5 years include:
- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators.
Assessment and reporting

We acknowledge that parents are the children’s first and most important teachers and as such we endeavour to communicate regularly and assess the children’s progress in a variety of ways including:

- Observing the children and recording their learning via photos, articles of work and the comments they make
- Formally and informally gathering information from parents about family culture, history, interests and special events including, festivals and celebrations relevant to the children
- Informal conversations with parents about children’s progress and achievements
- Learning Stories: Staff write stories which include photos, that document and analyse the child’s learning. The Learning Stories are sent home for parents and family to add their comments and input. The Learning Stories are displayed and also kept in the child’s Learning Folder. We encourage children and parents to look at the Learning Folders at any time.
- Ongoing assessments and observations occur during the child’s year at preschool in literacy, numeracy, gross motor, social and emotional development. We also focus on the children’s learning dispositions including, their resilience, persistence and problem solving skills.
- A written Report is provided in your child’s second term of preschool and at the end of your child’s time at preschool.