Dear preschool families and caregivers,

Welcome to the 2016 preschool year!

We are very excited to be back and have been amazed with how well the children have settled in to our new environment. They are doing a great job and are starting to make new friends and participate in group experiences.

When you start in a new environment there are many different things to learn that are important and support children to feel they belong to the preschool. We would like to thank you all for:

- Placing your child’s lunch in the lunch trolley and providing your child with healthy food to eat;
- Providing fruit and vegetables in 2 containers labelled for snack. Children often eat all the snack at the first snack time and therefore are hungry in the afternoon;
- Placing a labelled water bottle in the trolley each morning;
- Bringing and picking up your child at the correct time; (Children become anxious at picking up time when they see other children going home especially during the first few weeks.)
- Signing your child in and out;
- Being patient with educators as they learn about your family.

Educators are often busy at the beginning and end of the session but are very happy to talk to families. If you would like to have a chat about your child please approach an educator who can talk to you then. If you would like a private chat, we can make a later time to talk.

All families will have the opportunity to participate in a sharing meeting towards the end of the term (parent/teacher interviews).
**Exit Procedure and Child Safety**

To ensure the safety of all children we ask that all parent/caregivers ensure each child is farewelled from the mat by an educator before leaving the mat. If your child has not said goodbye please send them back to the mat to do so.

Please also ensure that only your child leaves the front gate with you and be aware of other children slipping through the doorway or gate.

It is also important for an educator to know if someone else is picking up your child. Inform an educator and also write this information in the diary near the sign in/out form and sign it.

During the first few weeks of term educators are becoming familiar with family members and may also ask for your name at pick up times.

Thank you for your support to keep all children safe.

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**Fees Box and Cash Payments**

Have you noticed the blue box in the main preschool room? This box is our fees box (if paying by cash) and any money/payments you need to pay can be placed in this box. When paying your fees by cash please show an educator before placing the money in the box, they will document your payment. Write a description of what the payment is for on the front of an envelope (under fees box) and the child’s name. Then pop it in the fees box.

The prompt payment of preschool fees support the smooth operation of the preschool. The preschool relies on fees paid by families to run the preschool. If your are experiencing difficulty paying the fees please speak to Sharron.

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**Illness**

You’ve got what?

This link can be an invaluable when you have a sick child and are wondering how long to keep your child at home or the incubation period of an illness. It is the online version of the book we use at preschool.

www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/youvegotwhat

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**Preschool Photos**

Tuesday 8th and Thursday 10th February

We are happy to inform you that we have a photographer, Bruce Hobby taking preschool photos. Bruce will take photos of the children engaged in play experiences. He takes time to make the children feel comfortable and usually takes photos with a small group at a time. The photos will consist of a group photo and a series of photos of your child.

Bruce allows families to buy as many photo’s as they want, in colour or black and white. He will come in on two dates, which correspond with the children’s different bookings. Bruce will arrive about 9am and the group photo will be taken in the morning around 9.45am. If you do not want your child’s photo to be taken please speak to an educator.

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**Vale Park Preschool Garden Program**

Vale Park Primary School has invited the preschool children to be involved in their Stephanie Alexander Garden Program.

One small group of eleven children will visit the school on a Tuesday and Wednesday morning on even weeks during the term. Some children will go next week.

If you do not want your child to be involved, please speak with an educator.

We see this as part of the children’s transition to school program.

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**Pupil Free Day**

On Monday the 29th of February the preschool will be holding a pupil free day. All educators will participate in a STEM Conference as part of the Morialta partnership. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is a focus of the preschool and the Morialta Partnership which we are a part of.

We will hear presentations from Neil Aitkin (problem solving) and Sally Anne Williams from Google Australia. The educators have booked in to workshops on

- Bee Bots and Robotics (early coding skills)
- Using technology as a tool to demonstrate children’s learning processes
- Teaching STEM through the outdoor environment.

We apologies for an inconvenience this presents.

No children will be able to attend preschool on this day.
Some families ordered t-shirts last year. Unfortunately they have not arrived yet. We will contact families as soon as they come in. The preschool already has some long sleeved t-shirts for sale ($10) in a few different colours. Please speak to a staff member if you would like one.

Our preschool team consists of both full time and part time staff.

Director: Sharron Octoman
Teachers: Danielle Francis
Dan Adams
ECW: Christine Chambers
Alisa Laden
Livia Williams
Preschool Support: Rasha Tabet, Alisa, Livia, Christine
Bilingual Support: Kinnari Bhavsar, Frannie Liu, Sally Choo
Our photos are on the Parent Notice Board (above the sign in/out table)

One of the creative experiences we provide for children involves using wood. This experience invites the children to problem solve and create as well as further developing their motor skills and hand strength required for literacy development. Woodworking also provides an authentic and meaningful way to develop mathematical concepts such as measurement and spatial concepts.

Sunbed Outdoor Products at Windsor Gardens kindly supply us with wood.
We require families to help us by offering to take and collect two small crates.
If you can help can you speak to Danielle or Dani.

At preschool there are children who are anaphylactic when they come into contact with nut and milk products.
We are asking for your support to help us keep all children safe at preschool.
It is important that the children eat fruit/vegetables for snack and have yoghurt/cheese at lunch time. The yoghurt/cheese also needs a cold pack to keep them at the right temperature for consumption. No nut products please.

Women’s and Children’s Health Network, through Child And Youth Health Services offers free child health checks at key ages between birth and 5 years. As part of this service, CAYHS nurses visit pre-schools throughout SA to offer health checks to all children between 4 & 5 years of age.
The health check includes a discussion with you about your child’s growth and development, immunisation status and they will also assess your child’s distance vision, hearing, height and weight and oral health.
Once a term we have available a number of appointments for our children. These checks take place at the preschool. Appointments will be offered according to the age of the child. (ie oldest to youngest.)
The first round of appointments will be on Wednesday the 6th of April, 2016. If your child is identified as being eligible for the first the term 1 appointments we will put a note in your communication pocket in the next couple of weeks to organise your appointment time.
If you are concerned about your child’s development or would like to speak with the CAYHS nurse please speak to Sharron or Alisa.
If your child has already had a health check or you do not want an appointment please speak to Alisa.
We believe these health checks are extremely useful and well worth your time to attend with your child.

At the end of each week we have a small bag of washing that requires washing. All families are put on a roster to complete this task once during their time at preschool. We understand that family life can be busy and if this roster does not suit, can you please speak with another parent on the list and swap with them or speak to Alisa. The roster for term 1 is on the noticeboard and will be put in your pocket.

Thank you to:
Aditya Arora—week 1
Andie Belanger—week 3
Arihaan Chauhan—week 5
Rohan Sadineni—week 2
Anna Wong—week 4
Aarvi Rana—week 6
SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE

All babies, children and young people under 18 years are welcome to attend the School Dental Service. Dental care is FREE for most children.

SA Dental Service participates in the Child Dental Benefits Schedule. A small fee may apply for children who are not eligible for the Child Dental Benefits Schedule.

All dental care provided is FREE for preschool children.

To locate your local School Dental Clinic, or for more information about the Child Dental Benefits Schedule, please visit www.sadental.sa.gov.au

Governing Council Meeting

Our first meeting for the term is on Tuesday 9th February at 7pm. Joining the Governing Council provides a special opportunity to be involved in your child’s learning and the decision making process of the Preschool. All families are welcome to join.

We meet twice a term and will decide when we will meet for the rest of the year at this meeting.

The meeting is held at the front of the preschool and you can enter the building from the staff car park.

Please speak to Sharron if you are interested or require more information.

Curriculum

Literacy and Numeracy Indicators

The Department for Education and Child Development began a new state-wide Literacy and Numeracy initiative last year called the Indicators of Preschool Literacy and Numeracy. This means there will be specific areas within the topics of Literacy and Numeracy (indicators) that we will use to inform the planning and teaching program, monitor children’s numeracy and literacy development and inform the Statement of Learning for discussions with and reporting to families. At the end of the term we will provide information on specific indicators in your child’s statement of learning. These Indicators were developed from the practices, principles and learning outcomes in the Early Years Learning Framework, our curriculum document.

The following definitions of literacy and numeracy are used by the preschool to guide the learning program.

Numeracy is the capacity, confidence and disposition to use mathematics in daily life. Children bring new mathematical understandings through engaging in problem solving. It is essential that the mathematical ideas with which young children interact are relevant and meaningful in the context of their current lives. Spatial sense, structure and pattern, number, measurement, data argumentation, connections and exploring the world mathematically are the powerful mathematical ideas children need to become numerate (EYLF p. 38).

Literacy is the capacity, confidence and disposition to use language in all its forms. Literacy incorporates a range of modes of communication including music, movement, dance, storytelling, visual arts, media and drama, as well as talking, reading and writing. Contemporary texts include electronic and print-based media. In an increasingly technological world, the ability to critically analyse texts is a key component of literacy. Children benefit from opportunities to explore their world using technologies and to develop confidence in using digital media (EYLF p. 38).
Literacy and numeracy capabilities and learning is demonstrated within children’s play in social contexts and in individual explorations. Educators observe and analyse children’s play scenarios through the lens of literacy and numeracy. From these observations, educators will identify, plan for, assess and monitor and report on each child’s learning and growth.

For example, to begin the year, we have collected data on how many boys and girls attend, as well as how old everyone is (3, 4 or 5). This is relevant data collated by the children showing information about their group.

Another example for this term is painting a portrait or picture. Painting allows educators to observe children’s understanding of pencil grip, use of white space, the ability to write a name, representational drawing, use of descriptive language (colour, shape, size, quantity, sequence, etc) and connections to home or life experiences (symbols) through communication and use of language.

Child Protection
The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum has been developed by child protection experts and experienced educators from South Australian schools and preschools. The state-wide curriculum is based on two key concepts: We all have a right to be safe and we can do something to keep ourselves safe.

In an age appropriate way and through play based experiences the children will be involved in discussions and experiences where they will further develop their awareness and understanding of feelings, what is a safe/unsafe experience, fair/unfair with a focus on strategies they can use when they are not feelings safe.
Inquiry Learning
Children are naturally curious about themselves and the world they live in. By asking questions and investigating they are able to make connections and understandings.

Inquiry based approaches to learning harness the spirit of investigation by creating interesting, engaging and meaningful curriculum that uses children’s interests and questions as a starting point for effective learning.

To begin the Preschool year, the educators will pose an inquiry question for children to explore about ‘Belonging’. We will ask questions such as:

What does belonging mean?
Where do we belong?
How do we know we belong?
How do we care for each other and our world?
Does everyone belong at Preschool?
Who belongs in your family?
Who do we know that lives and belongs in another country?

From the children’s responses, other inquiry questions will be formed as educators observe, listen to and follow children’s interests, questions and conversations. Small groups will be created so that children can work together on a project, to solve a problem or investigate an interest. Small group work exposes children to the ideas and perspectives of their peers and helps to broaden individual understandings. Relationships will also be strengthened due to shared interests and working together.

Additionally, inquiry based approaches help to create a culture of investigation and active learning while developing the dispositions for learning while participating in relevant and meaningful experiences.

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Family Picture
As a way to continue to develop the children’s sense of belonging here at Preschool we invite families to bring in a picture of your family, special person or animal that we can place near our dolls house. Homes and families are the foundation to children’s identity, therefore we would like to create the feeling of a family home through the dolls house with images of all of the Vale Park Preschool families.

If you would like, we can take your family picture for you when you come into Preschool. Please speak to Danielle or Dani for more information.

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Would you like to help us celebrate Chinese New Year?

Celebrations are an important element of our preschool program. They provide an opportunity for children to broaden their understanding of the world and to learn about other cultures and traditions.

Celebrating important cultural events relevant to the children and families attending our preschool contributes to a feeling of belonging and a sense of community.

Would you like to help us celebrate?

If you have any ideas for Chinese New Year or would like to help us celebrate, please speak to Danielle, Dani or Sharron.

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Preschool and Speech Partnership in Early Language Development Project

Vale Park Preschool is involved in a joint project with Michelle Moody, a DECD speech pathologist in terms 1 and 2 this year. Together we will provide a rich literacy learning environment and conduct a joint research project analysing and co-designing learning environments for our children.