



O'Connor Cooperative School
together we learn, together we grow

It is my pleasure to welcome you and your family to the O'Connor Cooperative School.

The O'Connor Cooperative School has a long history of providing innovative, high quality early childhood education. We believe that all children are unique beings, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge and beliefs about the world and their place in it. We believe that children are capable, confident and creative learners with unlimited potential.

Current research clearly states the importance of the early years and how early experiences and relationships impact significantly on a child's development and growth. Relationships and partnerships with families are critical at the O'Connor Cooperative School. We believe that when you enrol a child, you enrol the family. As a team we work hard to develop positive relationships between children, staff, families and the community.

We use current research and educational theory to inform the learning and teaching that occurs in the school. It is central to our program that our children have many opportunities to investigate, research, take risks, ponder, wonder, experiment, experience, engage and express themselves every day. Through a play-based approach children are able to engage in a wide variety of high quality learning experiences that are supported with explicit teaching designed to meet each child's individual needs. The Arts form a critical component of our program, providing children with many varied opportunities to be able to express their emotions and share their learning. We use up-to-date information communication technologies including laptops, iPads and interactive whiteboards and plasmas to complement and support our hands-on, real life investigations, explorations and quality learning provision.

O'Connor Cooperative School is committed to building productive relationships with Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Through acknowledgement of country at school events, through our environment and through our teaching and learning, we reflect our continuing respect for the custodians of the land in which we teach and learn, the Ngunnawal people, and their ongoing culture and contribution to the Canberra community.

A cornerstone of the school is our commitment to the principles of sustainable education through real life experiences to engage with the world. Through opportunities such as caring for our veggie gardens, feeding the chooks, saving water or being a proactive recycler we support our children to see the impact that we have on the world and how small, incremental changes in this area can have great benefit both at the school level and in the wider Canberra community.

I look forward to getting to know you and your child and ensuring that *together we learn and together we grow*.

Jenny Loudon
Principal

Our school is an ACT Government Early Childhood school catering for students from preschool to Year 2. We have four classes, a preschool group that attends on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and one of each class of Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2.

Permanent staffing positions include a Principal, School Leader C, Preschool teacher and Educator, Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 teachers, release teacher, a part time Business Manager, part-time School Psychologist and part time Building Services Officer.

The school is widely recognised for its committed and actively involved parent and wider community. We are part of the North Canberra/Gungahlin School Network and the North Canberra cluster of schools, and we collaborate with these schools on a range of educational initiatives.

Education and Training Directorate Vision

That all young people in the ACT learn, thrive and are equipped with the skills to lead fulfilling, productive and responsible lives.

Education and Training Directorate Values

Honesty, excellence, fairness and respect.

CONTACT DETAILS

Education and Training Directorate

13 2281 (6207 0494 TTY)

www.act.gov.au

School Contact Details

Principal: Jenny Loudon

Business Manager: Judy Heaton

School Phone number: 02 6205 6340

School Fax number: 02 6205 7084

School Website: www.coop.act.edu.au.

PURPOSE

We work together with our community to develop every child to become a successful lifelong learner.

We support the development of each child to become a confident and cooperative learner who works towards achieving their full potential.

We provide quality education through best practice, within the Early Years Learning framework, the ACT and Australian Curriculum for children from Preschool to Year 2.

VISION

O'Connor Cooperative School is committed to excellence in early childhood education. As a community of learners, we work together to create sustainable connections between each other and within our environment, developing intellectual, personal, social and environmental responsibility.

We value: *(No rank order of importance)*

- A thriving school community where staff and families openly work as willing partners
- A safe, inclusive setting where the strengths and needs of all members of our school community are recognised, respected and valued
- A family-friendly environment where privacy of personal information is respected and safeguarded
- The professionalism of staff as educational leaders committed to play-based best practice in early learning
- A strong focus on a balanced literacy and numeracy program which is embedded in all aspects of learning and teaching in our school
- The importance of social, emotional, physical and cognitive development - all the developmental domains.

We believe that children arrive at our school with a wealth of prior knowledge and experience and use this as a foundation for their learning and development.

We have **secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships** with all members of the community.

At our school the educators:

- ensure that the interests, abilities and culture of every child and their family are understood, valued and respected;
- encourage children to be active participants for sustainability, influencing the quality of life now, and for future generations;
- respect the views and feelings of each child;
- initiate warm, trusting and reciprocal relationships with children;
- provide safe and stimulating environments for children;

OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Positive parent partnerships are a trademark of our school and reinforce quality teaching and learning for students to maximise their potential as the 'whole child.' Parent involvement is welcomed and embraced by the community through volunteering in classroom and school activities, the school board, the annual fete, fundraising and an active P&C.

We develop **partnerships** with families that support the learning and development of all children.

At our school the educators:

- work with families to support children's learning and development at home and in the community through conferencing, open door policies, sharing work at key events such as learning journeys and parent information evenings;
- use families understanding of their children to support shared decision making about each child's learning and development;
- create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment where all families have a sense of belonging;
- involve families in active participation which contributes to children's learning and development;
- are open, honest and objective, and provide families with information about their children's learning and development, for example we provide specific ideas on what they can do to further support their children;
- use a holistic approach which respects children as capable, competent, resourceful, curious, imaginative and inquisitive people;
- actively engage children and families in planning children's learning and development; and
- acknowledge the significance of transitions within and across early childhood services and schools, and ensure that children understand the process and have an active role in preparing for these transitions. We use our unique model of a P-2 school environment and strong partnerships with the neighbouring ACT Education and Training Directorate schools, to support children's transitions through their early years of learning.

We strive for **high expectations and equity** for all.

At our school the educators:

- establish high expectations for all children's learning and development;
- support children's learning and development through a combination of child-led and intentional play-based learning;
- link explicit teaching to play-based learning, purposefully designed and driven by the children's interests;
- ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and development;
- maximise opportunities for every child;
- provide differentiated learning for all;
- take advantage of our fabulous outdoor environment to provide stimulating and challenging outdoor educational experiences;
- carefully consider the indoor environment to develop a sense of wonder that is print-rich and readily adapted to accommodate children's learning ideas; and
- encourage children to investigate, creatively examine, trial, cooperate and critically analyse solutions to real problems.

We have **respect for diversity** in our learning community.

At our school, the educators:

- recognise that multilingualism is an asset and ensure that children are supported to maintain their first language and learn English as an additional language or dialect;
- recognise Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the first peoples of this land and support children's understanding of their cultures;
- recognise that children learn in diverse ways;
- develop cultural awareness and respect for the beliefs of others; and
- support children to develop a sense of place, identity and a connection to the land.

We enhance the learning and development of all children by engaging in **ongoing learning and reflective practice**.

At our school the educators:

- gather information that supports, informs, assesses and enriches decision-making about appropriate professional practices;
- have rich professional dialogue around children's learning that informs our practice;
- continually develop our professional knowledge and skills to enable us to provide the best possible learning and development opportunities for all children;
- promote practices that have been shown to be successful in supporting children's learning and development;
- assess children's learning in ways that inform the educator's practice; and
- use evidence to inform planning for early childhood experiences and practice.

COMMUNICATION WITH FAMILIES

Our school recognises the importance of positive parent/staff relationships.

We encourage:

- Sharing knowledge to enhance the growth and development of your child
- Positive relationships with families that are based on mutual trust and open communication
- A sense of belonging to the preschool for the children, parents and staff.

Important notices are given to the students directly or emailed to their parents/carers and dates to remember are placed in the fortnightly newsletter and on the main noticeboard at the front of the school.

Newsletters are produced in weeks 1, 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 of each term containing information about what is happening in the school community. This is emailed to parents and published on our school website. Parents without access to email receive a hard copy. As needs arise notes about special events or reminders are emailed separately.

Teachers appreciate the opportunity to talk with parents and carers both informally and in formal situations. This ensures valuable insights, and understandings can be shared about a child's individual developmental journey. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to ask for an appointment to meet with the teacher. The School Board and P&C meetings are also avenues for parents to provide input and feedback.

OUR PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

With each group of children enrolling in our school we seek input from families and children to develop our preschool philosophy each year.

We acknowledge the Ngunawal People, the traditional custodians of the land upon which the Coop stands.

We belong to the O'Connor Cooperative School along with our families.

Our interests, values, cultures and passions are reflected within this space.

We are a community that spans generations and time.

We recognise those people that have gone before us and helped make the Coop what it is today.

We believe that we are resourceful, capable and that we can make a difference to this place and the world in which we live – both now and in the future.

We work to enrich the lives of those who walk through our gates by developing genuine reciprocal and respectful relationships. These relationships form the basis of all that we do.

We believe that early childhood is

- a time of wonder, joy and reflection.
- a time to problem solve, theorise, make decisions and to take risks.
- a time to build relationships and to cherish moments.
- a time to play and to be.

When we play we learn.

When we learn, we observe, document, share, reflect and celebrate our successes.

We use these processes to build upon what we know and to extend our learning.

We have patience, passion and perseverance to achieve our goals.

We smile, listen, sing, jump, dance, play and create.

We respect our things and we cooperate.

We are proud of the community in which we live, play, work and learn.

Together we draw upon the strengths, talents and abilities of each individual, to establish a dynamic and rich community of learners.

Together we learn, Together we grow.

We are, we are the Cooperative school, small and great.

What do we do at the Cooperative school?

We Cooperate!

FAMILY CONTRIBUTION TO SCHOOL DECISION MAKING

Families are welcome to contribute to the decision making procedures of the school through the School Board or the P&C. Contact details are listed in the school newsletter.

SCHOOL BOARD

Each government school in the ACT is administered by a school board whose membership comprises the school principal, two elected staff members, three elected members of the parent body and a nominee of the Education and Training Directorate. Elected members normally serve for a two year period.

The Board is the policy-making body of the School. Its major functions are to:

- determine the educational policies to be implemented at the school
- assess, from time to time, the needs of the School in relation to the provision of buildings and facilities, equipment, funds and teachers and other staff, and make recommendations to the Chief Executive (of the Education and Training Directorate) with respect to the meeting of those needs
- determine the purposes for which funds made available for the School are to be expended
- make recommendations to the Chief Executive in respect of the use of the buildings, facilities and equipment of the School for purposes other than school purposes
- develop relationships between the School and the community and between the school and community organisations
- make recommendations to the Directorate on matters relating to the School

Responsibility for the implementation of policies established by the Board rests with the Principal and staff. For further information please contact the Board Chair

PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (P&C)

The P&C plays an important role within the school. Meetings are generally held twice a term and are advertised in the Newsletter. All parents are encouraged to attend the meetings. As well as its more official activities, the P&C provides an informal meeting ground for parents and teachers and serves a fundraising function for the school. For more information please contact the P&C President.

SEEKING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES

At the beginning of each year family members are given the opportunity to share information about their child at an interview. The interview takes place with the classroom teacher and is usually organised within the first 3 weeks of Term 1.

ADVICE ABOUT LOCAL SERVICES, BUSINESSES AND ACTIVITIES/EVENTS

Parentlink - www.parentlink.act.gov.au is a website which parents can use to access information such as Parents guides, a directory of local parenting services, upcoming community events and parenting courses, further readings in relation to the parent guides and links to other useful websites.

Canberra Connect - www.canberraconnect.com.au is your access point to local government services.

Communities Online - <http://communitiesonline.org.au/> is a website outlining local community events.

Kidsmatter - <http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families> is a website containing information for families about mental health in the early childhood years.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

HOURS OF OPERATION

Preschool - Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 9.00am to 1.00pm and Thursday 9.00am to 12.00pm.

Kindergarten – Year 2 Monday to Friday 9.00am to 3.00pm

Information about ACT school terms and public holidays is available from www.det.act.gov.au.

ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

Children seeking to enter school at the preschool entry point should be four years of age on or before 30 April in that year.

Applications for enrolment in preschool **in the following year** will be accepted between Weeks 1 and 6, Term 2 (dates will be displayed on the School Notice Board). Enrolment is completed online and information and access to a computer if required is available from the Front Office at the O'Connor Cooperative School 35a Macpherson St O'Connor or online at www.det.act.gov.au. To be eligible to enroll, you will need to provide your child's birth certificate, immunisation details and proof of residence, i.e. utilities bill, mortgage document, lease or tenancy agreement.

Early Entry and Early Intervention: Early enrolment for children under compulsory education age is also available to children eligible for entry into Early Intervention (Special Education) programs and English as an additional language or dialect programs. Children requiring Special Education support may be enrolled upon meeting certain eligibility criteria. An application may be made through the school psychologist or through the Student Support section of the Directorate. Full information will have to be provided to the Principal at the time of application. Further information is available on the Directorate's website at www.det.act.gov.au.

CHANGES TO CONTACT DETAILS

Please keep staff and the school informed of any changes to address, home/work phone numbers, child care arrangements, medical information and emergency contact phone numbers. Details can be updated with the Business Manager on Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday.

ARRIVING AND GOING FROM OUR SCHOOL

Regular attendance and punctuality is important as this allows the children to settle into routines and establish themselves as part of the group. In accordance with the National Quality Standard, collection of children in preschool must be by a parent or authorised nominee.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE BEGINNING AND THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY

School starts at 9.00 am for all students. We ask that you do all you can do to ensure that the learning for your child and the others in the class can start at 9.00am. Should you be late please sign the book at the Front Office, collect a late pass to hand to your child's teacher and assist your child to enter the room quietly and not disturb the learning in progress.

Please ensure that gates are closed as you enter and exit the school grounds and ensure that children do not swing on the gates. To ensure the safety of all children, the following procedures are in place for the end of the school day.

School finishes at 3.00 pm for K-2 students. Parents are urged to collect children promptly at 3.00 pm and leave the school grounds. Parents are reminded that teachers' duty of care finishes at 3.00 pm and that parents/carers are responsible for their children from that time. Please supervise your children carefully in the playground.

Parents who have difficulty arriving by 3.00 pm to collect children are encouraged to make alternative arrangements. If you would like to enrol your child in the YWCA After School Care please call 6175 9900.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR PRESCHOOL

At 1.00 pm Monday to Wednesday and 12.00pm on Thursday preschool children are to be collected from the verandah outside the preschool classroom. Should you be delayed for any reason, please call the front office. The YWCA staff collect the long day care children. We encourage all families to enrol in the YWCA program, so in the case of an emergency, children can be taken to the program where they will be looked after until you arrive. Please note a fee will be charged.

Parents must leave children in the care of a staff member at the beginning of the session and ensure that staff know when the child is leaving. Children must not be left at the gate or in the building.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR KINDERGARTEN

At 3.00 pm all Kindergarten children will remain inside their classroom. The teacher on class will dismiss children only after a parent/carer is seen waiting on the Kindergarten veranda. Children who have not been collected will be taken to the front foyer where they will stay until collected.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR YEARS 1 AND 2

At 3.00 p.m. all Year 1 and Year 2 students will wait outside their classroom until collected by a parent.

ABSENCES

Class rolls are marked each morning and afternoon. Under the ACT Education and Training Directorate (ETD), it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to report their child's absence to the school. You may do this by phoning the school on the day of the absence or recording it on an absence slip located in the front office or near the classroom entrance. If your child arrives after 9.00am or needs to leave school prior to the end of the day, parents must sign the **Late Arrival or Students Leaving Early** book in the foyer and a note should be given to the classroom teacher.

TRANSITIONS

COMMENCING PRESCHOOL

The preschool families attend an information session held in November of the year prior to the child starting preschool. Parents are invited to an interview with the principal / teacher and at another time the children are involved in a *stay-and-play* session, where they can meet the staff, become familiar with the physical surroundings and participate in preschool activities.

PRESCHOOL TO KINDERGARTEN

By enrolling your child into the O'Connor Cooperative School preschool group your child will automatically move on to kindergarten in our school. As with all transitions the staff will ensure that the move from preschool to kindergarten is successful. To do this we have implemented a transition program for our preschool children. This involves the children spending a number of sessions exploring in the kindergarten room, familiarising themselves with the physical environment and routines. These occur during normal school hours.

YEAR 2 TO OTHER SCHOOLS

The schools in our local area have strong links with the O'Connor Cooperative School. We work together to ensure all children transition into Year 3 successfully. In Term 4 the children participate in visits to Lyneham Primary School or Turner Primary School where they meet teachers and Year 2 children. If your child is intending to enrol in another school, then we welcome families to organise a time to visit their new school.

All children will be able to transition into Year 3 of an ACT public school if they live in the Priority Placement Area (PPA) for that school. Further information about PPA's can be found on the Directorate website at

www.det.act.gov.au/school_education/enrolling_in_an_act_public_school/priority_placement_areas

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

Public education is free. Our school may offer or facilitate some specific optional items, activities and services for which parents may be asked to pay if they want their child to access them. Such activities may include excursions, class photos and visiting performers/presenters. The School Board asks families to contribute a voluntary contribution to enable it to continue to provide a quality learning environment for our children. Purchases rely upon the commitment and generosity of our parent community.

Voluntary contributions are spent on the advice of the school community through the P&C. In the past the funds have been spent on items such as books, listening stations, playground equipment and physical education equipment. They are also used for books and other equipment for the Library. If you choose to make your contribution to **O'Connor Cooperative Primary School Public Library** your contribution will go entirely to the Library and will be **fully tax deductible**.

Naturally if you are unable to contribute the suggested amount, we would welcome a smaller contribution. We hope, however that all families who can afford to do so will contribute the full amount requested in order to help the school provide the richest possible educational environment for your children. The payment of this financial contribution is voluntary. The Education Act 2004 states that your child will not be refused benefits or services if you do not choose to contribute. Individual records of contributions are confidential.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING DIRECTORATE POLICIES

To view Education and Training Directorate policies visit www.det.act.gov.au

OUT OF HOURS SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

The YWCA of Canberra provides before and after school care and long day care at the O'Connor Cooperative School for children from preschool age to Year 2. It also provides care for children after preschool. Child Care Benefit and Rebate is available to eligible families.

Enrolment Process - Please email childcareaccounts@ywca-canberra.org.au for bookings and enrolments. For further information please contact the YWCA at email: www.ywca-canberra.org.au or phone: 0408 287 518. YWCA regularly liaise with the O'Connor Cooperative School staff to ensure their programs complement the school's curriculum.

Arrangements - Long Day Care staff will collect those preschool children who are booked in at the end of each preschool session. At 3.00 p.m. After School Care staff will accompany any Kindergarten children from their classroom to the Redgum Forest. Year 1 and 2 children enrolled in After School Care will be sent from their classroom at 3.00 p.m.

OUR CURRICULUM

Learning through play is a term used in education and psychology to describe how a child can learn to make sense of the world around them. Through play children can develop social and cognitive skills, mature emotionally, and gain the self-confidence required to engage in new experiences and environments.

Programs for Preschool, Kindergarten, Year 1 and Year 2 include integrated units of work and investigations based on the Early Years Learning Framework and the Australian Curriculum. In addition, any learning considered specific to and worthwhile for the cohort of children at this school is offered through a range of programs and activities throughout the year. These may include swimming, gross motor and the Arts.

CURRICULUM DIRECTIONS

Learning experiences are planned, flexible and dynamic and reflect the children's interests and needs.

These experiences are designed to:

- recognise individual development , learning styles, diversity of prior experiences and is inclusive
- foster and promote cooperative learning practices and social skills development
- promote continuous appropriate assessment and evaluation of each child's educational needs
- promote learning as fun and encourages creativity, critical thinking and development of self confidence
- integrate all learning areas

Some of our additional focus areas include:

- Balanced Literacy Program
- Count Me In Too Numeracy Program
- Music, Drama and Creative Arts
- Fundamental Motor Skills
- Social Skills – Cooperative Learning
- Circle Time
- Restorative Circles
- Multi-Age activities
- Environment Program
- Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)



EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

The Early Years Learning Framework has been developed to ensure your child receives quality education programs in their early childhood setting. This is a vital time for them to learn and develop.

The Framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

It is a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to five years. They will use the Framework in partnership with families, children's first and most influential educators, to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and to recognise that children learn through their play.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of *belonging*, *being* and *becoming*.

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they *belong* because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- **Being** is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun.
- **Becoming** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

The Framework and supporting documentation can be found at

<https://education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>

THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM ASSESSMENT, CURRICULUM AND REPORTING AUTHORITY

The Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) is the independent authority responsible for the development of a national curriculum, a national assessment program and a national data collection and reporting program that supports 21st century learning for all Australian students.

ACARA's work is carried out in collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including teachers, principals, governments, State and Territory education authorities, professional education associations, community groups and the general public.

ACARA is responsible for:

- A national curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 in specified learning areas.
- A national assessment program aligned to the national curriculum that measures students' progress.
- A national data collection and reporting program that supports:
 - analysis, evaluation, research and resource allocation; and
 - accountability and reporting on schools and broader national achievement

For more information please visit www.acara.edu.au

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AND DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM

At O'Connor Cooperative School we believe that everyone is an individual and that we all have the special qualities that make us who we are. It is important that students are treated with respect and that we value their uniqueness and what they bring to the school. We provide a supportive, welcoming and culturally inclusive educational environment where children feel safe and happy.

REPORTING TO FAMILIES

Reporting is the process of communicating about individual student achievement and progress. Throughout the year, teachers will gather information using a variety of assessment strategies, enabling them to accurately report on a child's progress to parents/carers. It is the aim of our teachers to make reporting meaningful, relevant and a reflection of individual development across the curriculum.

At O'Connor Cooperative School, assessment and reporting will take the following forms:

- **Beginning-of-Year Interviews** – an opportunity for parents to share important information with class teachers.
- **End of term one** - social development and attitude to learning report
- **Investigation Journals/ Workbooks** – a record of each child's individual progress, reflecting their term's work and personal growth.
- **Semester one and two written reports** – Written reports provide feedback about the student's progress. They include information on academic achievements and social skills. A-E grade report against the Australian Curriculum for students in Years 1 and 2
- **Student reflection and goal setting** - Students are able to reflect on their learning and achievements, and make commitments to future efforts.
- **Learning Journey** – Each student invites parents/carers to visit the class on a set day so they can share their learning experiences. Parents/carers are able to see their child in the classroom context and share and celebrate learning experiences and achievements.

Parents or teachers may request an interview at any time during the year, when a concern or a need for more information arises. An interview may be conducted by phone or at school at mutually convenient times.

OUTDOOR NATURAL PLAY SPACES

The parent community play an active role in ensuring our outdoor learning environment is made up of creative and interesting spaces. Garden beds have been built near the Kindergarten classrooms, where children have been involved in the process of planting, looking after and harvesting a variety of plants. We encourage all families to be involved in our regular working bees to keep the grounds looking wonderful for the children.

SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL PRACTICES

At O'Connor Cooperative School we are committed to developing lifelong learning, health and well-being. Therefore we are an accredited Waste Wise school. We promote recycling and composting and aim to have minimal waste for landfill. Given this policy, we request good choices in food containers to



minimise the use of food wrappings such as glad-wrap, greaseproof paper and zip-lock bags. Reusable drink containers are also recommended. All uneaten food and wrappings will be returned home.

Children are actively involved in composting. Food scraps are regularly deposited into the compost bins and teachers ensure all children are aware of this important process.

Initiatives that support the emotional and physical wellbeing of our children include:

- play and daily physical activity – Fun, Safe, Play
- healthy “rubbish free” lunchboxes
- daily fruit time
- Sunsmart Policy
- Reduce, Recycle , Reuse – a Waste Wise program
- links to other health promoting activities.

RISK MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

EXCURSIONS

Excursions are part of the educational program at O’Connor Cooperative School. On enrolment, parents are asked to give permission for their child to go on incidental excursions e.g. walk to the shops or local park. If children use any form of transport, parents will be advised in advance and asked to give permission, in writing, for their child to participate. The preschool adult/child ratio is 1:5 on major excursions or less as required.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

Emergency evacuations and lock down procedures are practised regularly throughout the year. All staff, children and any visitors on site at the time participate in these drills.

CHILD PROTECTION PRACTICES

All employees in schools are mandated to report any case of suspected child abuse. Failure to notify suspected physical and /or sexual abuse of children is a criminal offence. Staff will deliver lessons to children in protective behaviour and safe behaviours. Staff will also deliver lessons to enhance social and emotional skills.

PARTNERSHIPS WITH OUR COMMUNITY

VISITORS TO OUR SCHOOL

All visitors to our school are required to sign in at the front office on arrival.

PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Families are welcome to share their special skills, interests and diverse family cultures with the school. Families are encouraged to participate in social activities to enable families to meet each other and form a sense of belonging to the school.

Families can help in the following ways:

- participating in opportunities to learn more about what your child is learning
- sharing knowledge and expertise of craft, cooking, music, story telling, job skills etc.
- interacting with the daily program
- assisting with laundry
- working bees in the outside learning environment etc.
- joining the O'Connor Cooperative School Parent Association

BEING A VOLUNTEER

Volunteers have a special place in schools and assist in many ways. This may include interaction with individuals and small groups of students in a range of different activities.

WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE To assist schools in providing a safe environment and a positive educational climate, volunteers are asked to comply with the Code of Conduct for Volunteers. We also require all regular volunteers to complete a Working with Vulnerable People Check (WWVP). The school will provide forms on request. [Working with Vulnerable People Forms](#)

The volunteers code of conduct has been formulated to clarify the type of conduct that is expected of volunteers when participating in programs and activities in ACT public schools.

- Observe similar standards of behaviour and ethical conduct to that required of staff. For example you are expected to act within the law, be honest and fair, respect other people (including students), and work to the best standard of your ability.
- Appreciate that teachers have a special duty of care for students, that cannot be delegated or transferred to others. Appreciate also that the principal is the spokesperson for the school.
- Appreciate that students have rights and aspirations. Treat students with dignity and respect.
- Observe confidentiality in respect of all information gained through your participation as a volunteer. All information held by schools should be handled with care. Some information is especially sensitive. Sensitive and/or personal information requires additional caution in the way it is treated. For example, volunteers should not discuss nor disclose personal information about students, staff or students' parents/carers to others.
- Accept and follow directions from the principal/supervisor and seek guidance through clarification where you may be uncertain of tasks or requirements. You may need to familiarise yourself with the Directorate's policies and guidelines on particular issues.
- Observe safe work practices which avoid unnecessary risks, apply reasonable instructions given by supervisors and report to the supervising staff and school administration any hazard or hazardous practice in the workplace.
- Report any problems as they arise to your supervisor including incidents, injury or property damage.
- Avoid waste or extravagance and make proper use of the resources of the school/department.

PARENT ROSTER

We value having helpers in the classroom to assist with cutting fruit, displaying children's work, supervising an activity, reading with and to the children, cleaning etc. It is essential that you sign in on the board provided within the classroom each time you volunteer for our safety records. Your assistance by being on roster allows us more quality teaching time. It also enables you to have a closer connection to your child's learning and assists with bridging the gap between school and home. Young

children love to have their parents visit them at school. Talk to your child's teacher for more information. We require all volunteers to complete a form and apply for a WWVP card. Both of these forms can be found in the information pack.



CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

If you have a concern about your child's education please have a conversation with your child's teacher. You are also welcome to make contact with the Principal on 02 6205 6340.

Should the need arise the ACT Education and Training Directorate has a policy for complaints resolution. This policy can be accessed at

www.det.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z.

If you need assistance or would like to compliment us contact the ACT ETD Liaison Unit 6205 5429 or visit www.det.act.gov.au/contact_us

STAYING HEALTHY AT SCHOOL

SUN PROTECTION

We encourage all children to wear a hat and appropriate protective clothing when playing in our outdoor environment. This is in line with the SunSmart guidelines which are outlined on www.sunsmart.com.au

CLOTHING FOR SCHOOL

O'Connor Coop clothing is an option available for purchase. During class, your child will be involved with some hands-on experiences both inside the classroom and in the outdoor area. These activities can, at times, be very messy. Please ensure your child is dressed appropriately, to minimise sun damage (shoulders covered in the warmer months) and so that they feel confident to participate in all the challenges provided throughout the session. We encourage children to wear appropriate shoes and sandals. **Thongs are not suitable.** A warm coat and the school beanie is required in winter. The children will be challenging themselves on the climbing equipment so sensible footwear is essential and long dresses and skirts can be dangerous. Please label all of your child's clothing and pack a spare set in case of extremely messy play or accidents.

HYGIENE PRACTICES

Staff, children and volunteers must adhere to the hand-washing procedures.

All children are encouraged to wash their hands:

- on arrival
- before and after eating or touching food
- after toileting
- after blowing their nose and wiping tears and dribbles
- when leaving the centre.

All scratches and cuts must be covered.

FOOD AT SCHOOL

Healthy lunches and snacks are important for children and help with their concentration and learning. At O'Connor Cooperative School we follow current nutrition guidelines and discuss with children about 'always' food, food you can always eat and should eat every day and 'sometimes' food, food that is a treat and is OK to have sometimes but perhaps not every day.

School lunches are particularly susceptible to food poisoning, especially in the summer heat. Parents and care-givers are reminded of a few simple food safety rules to prepare safe and healthy school lunches and avoid the growth and contamination of food poisoning bacteria.

- Before handling food, wash hands with soap and warm running water and dry thoroughly. Lunch boxes and eating utensils should also be washed thoroughly before reuse. Children should also be encouraged to always wash their hands before eating.
- Foods that are prepared the night before, such as sandwiches, should be frozen overnight and then taken out for each day's school lunch. Suitable foods to freeze are: bread, cooked meat, cheese, baked beans or vegemite.

Because food is normally stored in a child's lunch box for several hours, the lunch box needs to be kept cool. This can be done by:

- choosing an insulated lunch box or one with a freezer pack, or include a wrapped frozen water bottle to keep the lunch box cool
- perishable foods such as dairy products, eggs and sliced meats should be kept cool, and eaten within about four hours of preparation. Do not pack these foods if just cooked; first cool in the refrigerator overnight
- if including leftover meals such as meats, pasta and rice dishes, ensure you pack a frozen ice block into the lunch box
- healthy drinks, such as water and milk can be frozen overnight and then stored in your child's lunchbox, helping to keep it cold.

At school children keep their lunches in cool places, away from direct sunlight and other heat sources that facilitate the development of food poisoning bacteria.

FRUIT - Please supply your child with a piece of fruit every morning which they place it in the basket as they enter the classroom. This is cut up by a parent volunteer and shared amongst all of the children. Acceptable alternatives to pieces of fruit are vegetables, dried fruit, rice cakes and rice crackers. Please speak with the teacher if your child has any special dietary needs or food allergies.

LUNCHES AND SNACKS

At approximately 11.00am and 1.00pm each day the children will all sit down to eat. We promote healthy choices at our school. Suitable lunch box options include bread rolls with meat, cheese or salad filling, vegetable sticks, crackers and cheese/vegemite, rice cakes, fruit and yoghurt. We recommend that cake, sticky buns, muesli bars, chips, fruit sticks, chocolate or similar stay at home.

WATER - The children's individually named water bottles will be stored in a class container and we encourage the children to drink regularly throughout the day. We promote water to be used as part of healthy choices. We have two water fountains installed in our school grounds for the children to access fresh water. **Our school is an anaphylaxis-friendly environment. To ensure the safety of all, we ask**

that children do not bring to school any food containing nuts. This includes peanut butter, nutella and nut snacks.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

If you would like to supply a cake at school to celebrate your child's birthday, we find that cupcakes are easy to manage and enjoyed by all.

IMMUNISATION

The ACT Department of Health advises that all children attending school in the ACT should be immunised against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and HIB (Haemophilus influenza Type B). We would ask that you check your child's present immunisation status to see whether it is complete for his/her age. ACT Public Health regulations require schools to request proof of up to date immunisation when enrolling. Failure to provide this may result in your child being excluded from school should an outbreak of an infectious disease occur. A copy of exclusion periods for students with infectious diseases is available. Parents are asked to adhere closely to these requirements unless medical advice to the contrary is provided in writing.

MEDICAL CONDITION MANAGEMENT

INDIVIDUAL MANAGEMENT PLANS

In the event of a diagnosis of asthma and some other serious medical conditions, parents/carers are required to provide an action plan to be followed by the school. This is generally made in conjunction with the child's GP. If necessary please see our Business Manager to ensure we have the correct plans in place for your child.

WRITTEN AUTHORITIES

If a child is to take a **prescription medicine** while at school, written directions and medicine must be left with staff. Information on a child's health status, e.g. epilepsy, diabetes, should be given on enrolment or on diagnosis. If the health problem is serious please provide an up to date photograph of the child so it can be placed on our Medical Alert board.

ADMINISTRATION OF PRESCRIBED MEDICATION

The Education and Training Directorate is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for students. While school staff have a duty of care to students to provide first aid assistance when required, parents will be aware that schools cannot be responsible for the general management of medical conditions. In special circumstances, staff may be able to assist with the administration of medication. In these cases the Directorate requires the Principal to ensure that a comprehensive written authority is obtained from the student's parents and also seek from them a written statement from the student's doctor authorising a member of staff to administer the prescribed medication. Students requiring medication during the day need to have them labelled (name, dose and time of administering). Parents need to inform the teacher and the front office staff of the medication children are taking. A record book is located at the front office and medications are stored there at all times. In

the event of a diagnosis of asthma and some other serious medical conditions, parents/carers are required to provide an action plan to be followed by the school.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Children who have been diagnosed with an infectious disease will need to comply with the exclusion periods set out in the Education and Training Directorate policy. For more information please visit www.det.act.gov.au. Also EXCLUSION PERIODS for infectious diseases such as mumps, German measles, measles and chicken pox are provided at Appendix A at the end of this handbook.

It is important that sick children are kept at home for their own comfort as well as the comfort of other children and staff. If a child becomes ill or is injured at school appropriate First Aid will be given and if necessary parents will be notified and asked to take their child home. If emergency treatment is required parents will be notified immediately and the child will be transferred by ambulance to hospital. In such cases ambulance services and treatment are free. All students who have an ongoing condition (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy) must have a treatment plan completed by parents and their GP and lodged at the school. Plan proformas are available from the Front Office.

HEAD LICE are extremely contagious but easily eradicated. Children with either eggs or live lice will be excluded from school until written evidence of treatment is produced. Please report any cases of head lice to the School Office.

APPENDIX A

DISEASES - OUTBREAK PROCEDURES AND EXCLUSION PERIODS

Personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, covering weeping sores, not sharing food or drinks and not attending school when ill or suffering from diarrhoea are important means of limiting the transmission of a number of common infectious conditions.

The *ACT Public Health Regulations 2000* require children with the following conditions, and children who have been in contact with the following conditions, to be excluded from school, preschool, child care or family day care for the periods specified.

Condition	Exclusion of person with condition	Exclusion of persons in contact with condition
Amoebiasis (<i>entamoeba histolytica</i>)	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*Campylobacteriosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Chicken pox (varicella and herpes zoster)	Exclude until the last blister has scabbed over. The child should not continue to be excluded by reason only of some remaining scabs.	Not excluded Any child with an immune deficiency (eg with leukaemia, or as a result of receiving chemotherapy) should be excluded for their own protection and seek urgent medical advice and varicella-zoster immunoglobulin (ZIG), if necessary.
Conjunctivitis (acute infectious)	Exclude until discharge from eyes ceases.	Not excluded
*Cryptosporidiosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Diarrhoea	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*#Diphtheria	Exclude until— (a) at least 2 negative throat swabs have been taken (the first not less than 24 hours after cessation of antibiotic treatment and the second not less than 48 hours later), and (b) a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Exclude family and household contacts until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer.
Giardiasis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*# <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> Type B (Hib)	Exclude until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude if— (a) child is unwell, or (b) child is drooling, and not all blisters have dried or an exposed weeping blister is not covered with a dressing.	Not excluded

*Hepatitis A	Exclude for at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice and a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Herpes (cold sores)	Exclude young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices while the lesion is weeping. Lesion to be covered by a dressing in all cases, if possible.	Not excluded
Impetigo (school sores)	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced and sores on exposed surfaces are covered with a watertight dressing.	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses	Exclude until well	Not excluded
*Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer.	Not excluded
*#Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after the rash appears.	(a) Immunised contacts not excluded. (b) Exclude non-immunised contacts until 14 days after the first day of appearance of the rash in the index case. (c) Non-immunised contacts immunised with measles vaccine within 72 hours after their first contact with the index case are not excluded after being immunised. (d) Non-immunised contacts who are given normal human immunoglobulin (NHIG) within 7 days after their first contact with the index case are not excluded after being given NHIG.
Meningitis (bacterial)	Exclude until well	Not excluded
*Meningococcal infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has commenced.	(a) Not excluded if receiving rifampicin or other antibiotic treatment recommended by the Chief Health Officer. (b) Otherwise, excluded until 10 days after last contact with the index case.
*#Mumps	Exclude for 9 days after onset of symptoms, or until parotid swelling goes down (whichever is sooner).	Not excluded
*#Poliomyelitis	Exclude for at least 14 days after onset of symptoms and until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (lice), trachoma	Exclude until effective treatment has commenced.	Not excluded
Rotavirus	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded

*#Rubella (German measles)	Exclude for 4 days after the appearance of the rash.	Not excluded Female staff of child-bearing age should ensure that their immune status against rubella is adequate.
*Salmonellosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*Shigellosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the person has recovered or has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours.	Not excluded
*Tuberculosis	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer.	Not excluded
*Typhoid and paratyphoid fever	Exclude until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	(a) Not excluded unless the Chief Health Officer notifies the person in charge of the school. (a) If the Chief Health Officer gives notice, exclusion is subject to the conditions in the notice.
*#Whooping cough (pertussis)	Exclude for 21 days from start of cough, or for at least 5 days after starting a course of antibiotics recommended by the Chief Health Officer.	Exclude non-immunised household, home based child care and close child care contacts under 7 years old for 14 days after the last exposure to infection, or until 5 days after starting a course of antibiotics recommended by the Chief Health Officer (whichever is sooner).
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded

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