

Dear Parents

We hope you and your family are keeping well and are adjusting to the changes at this time. We would like to inform you of the current plans for our 4 year old Kinder program this term. Ascot Kindergarten will continue to make changes according to the requirements set out by the Victorian Government and Education Department in order to keep our educators, children and families safe. If we can't meet the obligations of hygiene and social distancing we will need to reconsider how we deliver our program. The Victorian Government has offered four-year-old children free kindergarten throughout term two. If you have already paid for the term in advance you will be refunded the full amount as soon as possible. To be eligible for this additional funding the kindergarten must continue to operate the usual 4yo Kindergarten program as in Term 1. This funding will mean sessional kindergarten providers stay financially viable, even if attendance numbers drop as parents decide to keep their children at home. All children will retain their place regardless if they are attending or not at this time.

We fully support parents who choose to keep their kindergarten aged children at home during this period (in line with advice for school aged students).

The educators have been working collaboratively to ensure the necessary steps are in place to comply with the current advice provided by Victoria's Chief Health Officer and the Department of Education & Training to ensure our Kindergarten is a safe place for the staff, children and families. They have also dedicated significant time considering how they can offer support to both the children who attend and also to those who stay at home during this time - to enable all students to continue to stay connected to their teachers and friends at this time.

The following is a message from the educators at Ascot Kindergarten:

Important Information on Changes to our Program –

Hi All,

We ask that you please allow us to make these temporary but necessary changes to our programs. We will need your complete support to do this to minimise any risks.

This will include:

Parents to drop their child off at the front door – Staff will collect your child from the front door and ensure all children have washed their hands before engaging in the program.

Indoor/Outdoor program will commence as soon as the children arrive:

This is to avoid group congestion.

No Mat sessions:

All group mat times to be cancelled. This is to avoid children sitting in close proximity to one another for long periods of time.

Staggered snack and lunch times:

Provide different areas for the children to eat lunch. This is to limit the number of children eating at the same time and in the same location.

Indoor environment:

- *Some tables will be removed to allow more floor space and less congestion in the room.*
- *There will be limited chairs around each table.*
- *Chairs will be placed at 1.5 meters away from other chairs.*
- *Visuals will be placed around the room to show the limit of how many children can access each play area.*
- *Only two children in home corner, two children in block corner, two children playing with construction.*
- *A limit to two children per table, unless at the making table where the limit will be four children.*

Parents to wait outside when collecting children at the end of the session – Children's bags will be packed and ready to go at the end of the session. Parents to collect children promptly and exit the kindergarten quickly.

Staggered pick up times:

Parents and caregivers can arrive 15mins before the end of the session to pick up their child. This is to avoid congestion at pickup times. A staff member will stand near the gate to ensure each child is safely collected.

Programs will be modified such as:

- No community walks.
- No shared fruit platters or cooking experiments.
- No play dough and/or other sensory experiences.

Increased hygiene measures will continue.

- Outdoor equipment/climbing frames to be wiped down at the end of each session.
- Puzzles and other table top activities wiped down.
- Toys washed in hot soapy water at the end of each session.
- Door handles, table tops disinfected.

Verbal Discussions/Reminders and Posters will be on displayed to remind children to:

- Cover mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing, or cough into your elbow.
- Dispose of the tissue in a bin and then wash your hands thoroughly afterwards.
- Wash your hands regularly, after using toilets, and before eating.

Program Simplified:

The program over the next four weeks will focus on children's health and safety. We will simplify the experiences and activities offered to ensure children are adhering to social distancing practices as best as they can. The educators are aware that children need to be comforted; we as group of educators are prepared to offer comfort and emotional support when it is needed to all children.

These are temporary measures to assist us to provide a healthy environment for children and educators during this time of uncertainty.

Online Learning:

There will be a platform for on-line learning through zoom for those families who chose not to send their child. On the days your child would attend kindergarten, the educators will invite children at home to join a zoom meeting. This will consist of stories, songs, poems, group discussions, show and tell and experiments. Details will be sent out next week as well as additional information to support at home learning.

Thank you for your continued support and understanding.

Kind Regards, The Educators at Ascot Kindergarten

We are so grateful for the outstanding job our educators are doing to ensure our children continue to be involved in early childhood education during this challenging period. To assist the educators to plan ahead it would be beneficial for them to gain a sense of the numbers of children that will be attending each group next week. We understand some families may still be undecided about their decision to send their child/children to attend Kindergarten however it would be helpful to share your thoughts.

We ask that you please reply to this email with your intentions in regard to Kindergarten attendance for your child/children next week. Please reply to this email by Tuesday 14th April . On this Tuesday the educators will be planning for the term and it will be helpful for them to have this information to enable them to develop the online and physical programs for the term.

We appreciate it is a difficult time for everyone and will be so grateful for your quick response to this email.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please feel free to email us if you require further clarification about any matters noted. With many thanks.

Ascot Kindergarten Committee of Management