

Little Villagers Childcare Centre Parent Handbook

Children's Services Licence ID: SE-00015581



**Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre Inc.
31B Marcus Road, Dingley Village 3172
8512 0505 lvcc@dvnc.com.au**

Inc. No A0016802F – ABN 71 463 442 675

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Contents

Welcome	3
Childcare Policy	3
Key Contacts.....	3
About Us	3
Play Based Learning	4
Session Times and Fees	5
Staff	5
Staff ratios.....	6
Enrolment Procedures.....	6
Absences	8
Arrival and Departure	8
Children Settling In	8
What to bring.....	8
Snack and Lunch Time.....	9
Asthma, Allergies and Anaphylaxis	9
Hygiene.....	10
Accidents and Illnesses	10
Medication Book.....	10
Immunisation.....	11
Infectious Diseases	11
Sun Smart Policy.....	11
Photographs/Video.....	12
Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme.....	12
Emergency Process	12
Equal Opportunity.....	12
Grievance Procedure /Concerns.....	13
Confidentiality	13
Donations.....	13
Policies and Procedures.....	13
Contact.....	13

Welcome

Little Villagers Childcare is a program of Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre Inc.

Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre is a community-based not-for-profit organisation offering a range of programs and services. It is incorporated under the Victorian Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 and is governed by a board elected by its membership.

Childcare Policy

Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre will provide a safe, quality, inclusive childcare service that values children and offers play-based learning so that children can grow and develop their potential.

The childcare service will comply with all current regulations, guidelines, & frameworks relating to the childcare service and where required compliance will develop and implement childcare specific policies and processes.

Representative for the Board of Governance

Trudy Pritchard- Centre Manager

Nominated Supervisor Carly O'Neill

Complaints

Facility and Care Carly O'Neill

Staffing Trudy Pritchard

Department of Education and Training

Children's Services Unit

165 – 169 Thomas Street, Dandenong

PO Box 5 Dandenong Ph. 03 87655787

Little Villagers Childcare

The occasional childcare service operated by Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre has been providing quality childcare services for local families since 1978 when we began as a crèche for those attending activities at the Neighbourhood Centre.

We provide a safe, friendly, and stimulating environment in which young children can learn, play, and explore. We aim to promote and support each child's needs and abilities through age-appropriate developmental programs.

The Neighbourhood Centre has an Occasional Care Service License from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. This license allows us to care for a maximum of 24 children at any one time depending on their age. The care for each child is limited to 6 hours per day.

As per regulations this service will only employ staff who meet the requirements set out

in the appropriate Acts and Regulations

As each child is an individual with unique interests, abilities and needs, it is our aim to create a stimulating, creative, positive, and fun environment for every child. Our program is a play-based program. Children learn through play and planned activities, have the opportunity to meet new people, create new friendships, and develop their social interaction skills.

Our Educators plan the program's experience according to the Early Years Learning and Development Framework, which conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning from birth to five years through to school transition through the following Learning Outcomes.

- 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.

A typical day in care includes:

9am/10am – Children can explore the activities set out for them

10am/10.30am – Pack up/Tidy up and group time – singing, movement and dance

10.30am/11.30am – Hand washing, snack time, toileting, prepare for outside play

11.30am/1.00pm – Outside play (Indoor activities available)

1.00pm – Lunch time

1.30pm – Children's choice, story time, arts and crafts, outside play (weather permitting)

3pm – Home time

(Parent to advise educators if/when child needs to sleep)

Play Based Learning includes

Play dough, drawing and pasting	These encourage greater control over children's small, fine motor muscles. Fosters children's aesthetic and creative development.
Water play, painting and sand play	These are pleasing tactile experiences. Helps to develop children's imagination and creativity. Learning through their sense.
Dramatic play	Encourages social skills, language, and imagination.
Books	Books encourage language, discussions, concentration, and emerging literacy skills.

Home corner	Our Home corner encourages confidence, self-esteem, language, peer interaction and imagination. It also enables children to work together, communicate and act out thoughts/ideas.
Construction, Maths and science activities	These activities provide the opportunity for children to become creative and imaginative. This is also an appropriate area to encourage problem solving and introduce STEM learning.
Music and movement	Promotes language, turn taking, social interaction communication as well as increases confidence and self-esteem.
Group time	Stories, singing, discussions, games, music, and movement are all attributes that make up group times.

Session Times and Fees 2026

Fees are reviewed annually and may change for 2027

Program	Session Times	Ages	Fees (per session)
Occasional Care	Monday - Friday 9 am – 3 pm	6 weeks to 5 years	Permanent - \$84.00 Casual - \$99.00

Occasional Care Sessions do not operate public holidays or during annual shut down over late December/January period.

Staff

Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre are proud of their caring, supportive, and professional staff. All childcare staff members hold the required early childhood qualifications, have valid Working with Children Checks, are first aid trained and renew their CPR, anaphylaxis and asthma training annually. Throughout the year, staff attend a variety of in-services, courses, and workshops to enhance their professional development, maintain compliance under the Children's Services Regulations and to keep up to date with new initiatives.

Childcare Manager Carly O'Neill - Diploma Qualified Early Childhood Educator

Educator Carly O'Neill Diploma Qualified Early Childhood Educator
Lorraine Sayers Diploma Qualified Early Childhood Educator

Tina Douras	Children's Services Certificate III Educator
Nicole Edwards	Diploma Qualified Early Childhood Educator
Maria Lazaridis	Diploma Qualified Early Childhood Educator
Sukhi Kaur	Children's Services Certificate III Educator
Lisa Lessware	Diploma Qualified Early Childhood Educator

Staff ratios

The ratio of staff to children also plays a key role in the provision of quality childcare. The Children's services regulations stipulate the minimum ratio of staff to children in an early childhood occasional care setting as being:

Six weeks to 36 months – 1 educator to 4 children
 36 months and over – 1 educator to 11 children

Care is provided in one place with children from six weeks to 5 years old, with a minimum of two staff in attendance at all times.

Enrolment Procedures

Little Villagers Childcare will only allow a child to commence care if all appropriate enrolment forms have been fully completed, which include an immunisation history statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register that shows your child's immunisations are up to date for their age, and any required anaphylaxis/asthma plans and lawful authority orders.

In the case of siblings, each child must have a separate enrolment form completed. In cases where Court orders are in place regarding custody or access, a copy of these orders must be provided to the Childcare Manager.

The Children Services Regulations require all Centres to keep records of lawful authority, contact and residence arrangements for children. During enrolment you will be asked to fill in an authorisation statement regarding lawful authority and contact relating to your child. All sections of the enrolment form must be completed prior to enrolment, as staff will not permit a child to leave the Centre without the appropriate written authorisation from you. Person's unknown to staff will be questioned on their arrival, and lawful authority forms checked. If the person collecting your child is not listed, he or she will be unable to leave the Centre with your child, and we will notify you by phone.

We ask you to ensure your child's records are kept up to date by communicating any changes to your child's pertinent information to our Childcare Manager.

If you have a change in any of the following, please let us know:

- your child's diet
- allergies/asthma
- change of address, phone, or email
- immunisations (please provide updated approved Immunisation History Statement)
- change of work/study address/phone
- change to emergency contacts

We ask you to keep us informed of any changes throughout the year as we need to be able to know your child's needs and be able to contact you throughout the day if the need arises.

When enrolling your child into the Centre the following will be followed:

- our Childcare Manager will determine vacancies.
- an appointment will be made for your family to look through the Centre.
- you will receive a Handbook with information on policies and procedures at the Centre.
- you will be asked to complete the enrolment form and to also supply all required documents such as Immunisation History Statement/Court orders/Asthma and Anaphylaxis plans etc.
- a start date will be discussed and set for your child to begin care.

Enrolment documentation must be submitted prior to using the service for the first time. Children will only be able to attend once all the required documentation has been submitted.

The Enrolment Documentation includes:

- Enrolment Form
- Immunisation History Statement

Occasional Care places are allocated on a first come first serve basis, or from waiting list for available places and we offer both permanent and casual bookings.

Bookings, Fees, and Absences

Little Villagers operates 48 weeks per year. We only close over the Christmas/New Year period and public holidays.

Permanent bookings (Full year - 48 weeks)

- Parents choosing to book children on the permanent list are required to pay for the place whether or not the child attends. 6-week minimum booking. Any less is charged at casual rate.
- Please note permanent bookings are taken until the end of the year only. Permanent places do not roll over automatically to the following year. Please re-book your place in December.
- You must notify us if your child will be away for any reason. Please update your booking through Xplor. Please notify Childcare Manager via email lvcc@dvnc.com.au for any exceptional or extended absences. You can also request an extra day of care through Xplor. This additional session must be paid prior to the session via the 'Pay Now' option in the Xplor app.
- If your child is absent for 3 weeks without notification, the permanent place will be forfeited.
- Complementary make up days may be arranged at manager's discretion, subject to availability and only considered for current week.
- Casual bookings for extra days are welcome and will be charged at the normal daily fee.
- Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre will not charge for closure over the Christmas period when the centre is closed.
- Fees Day rate 6 Hours - \$84.00 per child - less CCS (Child Care Subsidy) rebate if applicable.
- Payment of fee is charged in arrears. Settlement of your account must be made 14 days from the time of the first weekday session. Payments must be made by setting up Direct Debit through your Xplor account. No cash payments are permitted.
- Overdue payments will incur a \$50 late admin fee.
- If you have any difficulty paying the account, please discuss your situation confidentially with our manager or financial officer. Casual bookings payment must be paid on arrival

when leaving your child in our care.

Casual bookings

Casual occasional care may also be booked if places are available, contact Little Villagers 8512 0509 or email lvcc@dvnc.com.au for casual places.

Casual bookings can only be made up to one week in advance of the date required.

Payments for casual bookings must be made at drop off on the day of care.

24 hours' notice is required for casual booking cancellations or full fee of \$99.00 applies.

Absenteeism/Cancellations of Session/Permanent

If your child cannot attend a booked session, please advise us by using the Xplor app. CCS Allowable absence days per child cannot exceed 42 days per year (except in exceptional circumstances).

For permanent cancellation or any changes to your booking/s, families must provide two weeks written notice. Fees will continue to accrue until written cancellation is received.

Arrival and Departure

It is essential that parents/guardians sign their child in and out of the Centre on arrival and departure using the Xplor home app by scanning the QR code on the Centre iPad.

Staff must be notified if a person other than parents is to collect child.

Any person not named on enrolment record must produce identification before the child will be released to their care. Child will not be released unless Centre is notified. Please contact Little Villagers Childcare on 8512 0509 in case of emergency.

When picking up your child, ensure all belongings are collected and staff are advised of your departure.

Please ensure that your child is picked up on time. If you know you are going to be unavoidably delayed, please contact the Centre. Late pick-up charges may apply.

Children Settling In

Settling your child into a new care situation can sometimes be a difficult time for families. However, young children are very adaptable and usually settle within a short period of time. Building a good relationship with our staff is important and we encourage you to talk to us about your child's achievements, discuss worries, and let us know your child's likes/dislikes.

If a child is distressed due to separation from their parent or guardian after half an hour, or becomes distressed and cannot be consoled, the parent or guardian will be contacted. Should children have difficulties settling in, our staff will support and guide families through the process.

We allow 3 x 3 hour settling in sessions charged at \$42 per session. From the 4th session, full fees apply.

What to bring

- Named bag
- Beanie and coat during the colder months
- Broad brimmed/bucket/legionnaire hat during the warmer months. (Please apply sunscreen before the session for maximum protection)

- Nappies
- Change of clothing, with your child's name on all items
- Appropriate clothing and footwear (no thongs or clothing that children could trip over, i.e., long skirts)
- Healthy snacks and lunch in clearly labelled containers.
- Please avoid sending along any foods that contain nuts or eggs (see below).
- Drink bottle clearly marked with your child's name (water only)
- Feel free to bring along your child's comforter whether that be a teddy, dummy, blankie or favourite toy. Something familiar to help with the settling in period.
- As we are a not-for-profit organisation, we are always very thankful for any donations. If we could start the year with each family donating one box of tissues and one packet of wipes this would be greatly appreciated.

Snack and Lunch Time

Snack and lunch times encourage social interaction with your child and others within the group, it allows for the children to practice their independence, develop friendships and for us all to develop healthy eating habits.

Parents are asked to supply a healthy snack and drink if child will be in care for more than 1 hour. A lunch pack to be supplied with morning and afternoon tea and lunch. Below are some suggestions.

- Fruit
- Vegetable sticks
- Cheese and crackers
- Dip and biscuits
- Yoghurt
- Sandwiches

Please ensure you clearly label your child's snack box, lunch box, and drink bottle.

Asthma, Allergies and Anaphylaxis

For the safety and wellbeing of all staff and children we are allergy aware.

- On enrolment it is vital to let childcare staff know if your child suffers from any life-threatening illnesses.
- Parents of children who suffer from these are to provide the Centre with their child's Management Plan not more than 12 months old.
- Communication between staff and parents regarding changes/concerns to the child's health is vital.
- Medications supplied must be in the original container, with a written plan, for staff to follow.
- Parents must ensure that their child always has an adequate supply of appropriate medication, such as relievers, tablets or an EpiPen.

We are a nut safe Centre. Please do not send nuts as a snack for your child, this includes peanut butter, hazelnut spreads (e.g., Nutella) muesli bars containing nut products, cakes etc. Our main concern is the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and families within our

Centre and community.

If you have any doubts about food, you provide for your child please talk to staff.

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction. It is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response.

The key to preventing anaphylactic reaction is to avoid exposure to the trigger. To minimise the risk factors, please **do not** send any nuts or eggs in your child's snack box or foods containing nuts or peanut products, eggs, or egg products in particular:

- Peanut butter sandwiches, dips, or crackers
- Egg sandwiches or hard-boiled eggs
- Hazelnut spread (Nutella) sandwiches or dips
- Biscuits and cakes containing nuts/eggs
- Muesli bars with nuts
- Chocolate bars containing nuts (e.g., snickers)
- Dried fruit and nut mix snack packs

As anaphylaxis is a treatable condition, all staff have regular training that includes the use of an EpiPen if emergency treatment is required. Parents of children who have a known allergy to nuts and/or eggs must notify all staff about the severity of the child's allergy before attending the Centre.

Hygiene

Please ensure children have washed their hands prior to arrival. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating as well as before and after going to the toilet. This is a great way to encourage the independence of our children.

Please be aware that we may have children with life-threatening allergies and your assistance is greatly appreciated.

Accidents and Illnesses

The Centre is only able to care for well children. Any child who is not able to join in the day's activities should not attend the Centre. If the child becomes ill whilst attending the session, the staff will notify the parent/guardian, and the child must be collected immediately. Only a parent/guardian or emergency contact person can collect the child.

If an injury occurs that is not serious, it will be recorded on an accident sheet. You will be asked to sign this sheet indicating that you have been made aware of the incident and what action was taken by staff. Parents need to inform staff of any illness that their child has had over their absence from the Centre. (ie. since their last session)

Medication Book

If your child requires medication, it must be clearly written in the Medication Book. All the medicine must be clearly labelled. Prescription medicine must be in the name of the child. A medication book is located in the childcare room. If medication has been administered to a child prior to entering the Centre a parent must record the details in the space provided in the Medication Book.

Immunisation

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, evidence of up-to-date immunisation must be provided prior to your child commencing at our service.

An Immunisation History Statement from the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (AIR) is the only form of evidence that can be used to show your child's vaccinations are up to date for their age. No other forms of documentation, for example a letter from a GP or local council, can be accepted.

The quickest way to get your statement is by using your Medicare online account through myGov or the Express Plus Medicare mobile app. Alternatively, you can request an Immunisation History Statement in person at your local medical service centre, contact Centrelink or call the AIR enquiries line on 1800 653 809 to request a statement is posted to you. It can take 14 days to get your statement in the post.

If you are short of time, you can ask your GP or immunisation nurse if they can print your child's Immunisation History Statement directly from the AIR. Note, not all immunisation providers can do this. If you are experiencing difficulties accessing vaccinations or required related documents, please contact us for assistance as soon as you are able. In some cases, children can commence at the service while the required documents are obtained. This obligation continues after enrolment.

Infectious Diseases

In relation to infectious conditions such as conjunctivitis, gastro-enteritis, worms, head lice etc. it is advised that parents seek treatment from their child's family doctor and keep the child home until they have been treated and are well enough to attend again.

Most contagious diseases require a child to be excluded from the Centre for a period of time. A list from the Health Department is posted on the noticeboard in the Childcare room and the Centre follows their recommendations.

Sun Smart Policy

Please ensure that sunscreen is applied at least 20 minutes before your child arrives to maximise protection against the sun's harmful rays. Each child is encouraged to apply sunscreen and to wear a hat during outdoor play time. We aim to encourage a **no hat, no play** policy. Sunscreen is available if you have forgotten, and the staff are happy to apply it if required.

This policy has been developed to ensure that all children are protected from our sun's harmful rays. A healthy balance between too much and too little UV radiation from the sun is important for everyone's health.

From Mid-August to end of April in Victoria

The average UV Index levels reach three, which is above the recommended exposure levels, which can be harmful. During this time, all children must wear hats that protect their face, neck, and ears whenever they are outside. When outside appropriate clothing also be considered, such as T-shirts and longer style shorts (singlets are not recommended).

All parents are responsible for applying SPF 30+ to their child during the summer and daylight-saving months. It is recommended that it be applied 20 minutes before attending childcare. Sunscreen will then be re-applied by staff every two hours while children are in the sun.

Children will be encouraged to use available areas of shade for outdoor play activities. Staff will act as role models by wearing appropriate hats and clothing outdoors, using a 30+

sunscreen and seeking shade whenever possible.

The Sun Smart policy will be reinforced in a positive way through information on noticeboards and print material for all users of our Centre. SPF 30+ broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen is provided for all staff and children.

From May to mid-August in Victoria

The average UV Index levels are below three. To help maintain winter vitamin D levels, sun protection is not required during this time.

Photographs/Video

Please refer to the Enrolment Form for details relating to photography at the Children's Centre. Photographs may be used to assist with programming, and for promotional purposes. Written parent/guardian permission signed on Enrolment Form is required before any photographs can be taken and used for promotional purposes. Please note parents are not permitted to take photographs inside the Occasional Care rooms.

Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme

Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre complies with the Child Safe Standards introduced by the Victorian Government in January 2016 which also includes the Reportable Conduct Scheme which came into effect on 1 January 2019 for Neighbourhood Houses that provide licensed children's services.

The Child Safe Standards are designed to ensure that organisations that work with children take steps to create a culture of child safety and protect children from all forms of abuse. The aim is to drive continuous improvement so that protecting children from abuse is embedded in everyday thinking and practice of leaders, staff, and volunteers.

The Reportable Conduct Scheme aims to improve how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct. The scheme ensures independent oversight of workplace investigations into allegations of child abuse, facilitates information sharing between key organisations and builds on existing workplace misconduct and child safety systems.

Emergency Process

A full Emergency Management Plan has been developed with the Dept. of Education and Training (DET) and is reviewed and updated as necessary annually. Please ask to see a copy.

Detailed evacuation procedures are located in the childcare room. This includes a map of the Centre building with exit and assembly points clearly marked. The staff and children practice regular evacuation procedures, so everyone is familiar with the process. If children are evacuated, families/carers will be contacted as soon as possible.

Equal Opportunity

Staff treat all children equally, regardless of gender, religion, race, or ability. Staff provide equal opportunities for all children to develop their full potential. This means that all learning experiences provided are accessible to all children.

Grievance Procedure /Concerns

As a parent of young children, you may have issues/concerns that you wish to raise. The following guidelines have been developed to assist you to deal openly with any issues that may arise.

If the problem is in relation to your child or their daily routine, then the childcare room leader is your first point of call and should be approached. All discussions will be confidential and dealt with in a professional manner.

The Childcare Manager is also available to discuss issues that you feel strongly about regarding your child. If the Childcare Manager is unable to assist with the matter, or your concern relates to the Childcare Manager please address your issue in writing to the President of the Committee of Management.

Complaints and concerns about issues such as security, staff, health, and safety should be directed immediately to the Centre Manager.

Complaints and comments forms can also be downloaded from our website homepage.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is of paramount importance, all the information provided to us by you, such as addresses, phone numbers, and custody information, is seen and recorded only by our Childcare Manager and the staff responsible for the care of your child. At no time will information be given out without your consent, and any individual meetings that take place between you and our staff will be undertaken with the highest degree of professionalism.

Donations

As we are a not-for-profit organisation we are always very thankful for any donations.

Policies and Procedures

Information regarding our policies and a range of regulations is available for families to view by request to the Childcare manager.

We are here to provide a service to families and a positive experience for all children in our care. We welcome feedback from families that may help us improve this.

Contact

Dingley Village Neighbourhood Centre Inc.
31B Marcus Road
Dingley Village 3172
manager@dvnc.com.au 8512 0505

Little Villagers Childcare
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Dingley Village 3172
lvcc@dvnc.com.au 8512 0509