

CROSSWAYS LUTHERAN SCHOOL EARLY LEARNING CENTRE



PARENT HANDBOOK

2025

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WELCOME MESSAGE

Welcome to Crossways Lutheran Early Learning Centre where your child will embark on an amazing journey towards school. The Early Years are a vital step in a child's education. We aim to make early learning as positive, safe, productive and successful as possible, so that your child will confidently grow into the larger school community that is Crossways Lutheran School.

MISSION AND VISION STATEMENT

"To be a connected community who works Together Towards a Brighter Future whilst sharing and celebrating God's love."

We believe that each child is a unique creation of God and a person loved by God. We aim to encourage meaningful play-based learning experiences to support the physical, cognitive, social and emotional development of children.

Vision Statement: We envision a future where our students thrive in a nurturing environment, becoming compassionate, respectful, and empowered individuals who contribute positively to society.

Mission Statement: We are a Christ-centred, culturally diverse community dedicated to empowering students through a friendly and respectful learning environment. We strive to make positive partnerships with families and encourage children to be confident and involved learners.

Philosophy to Education:

- **Environment as the Third Teacher:**

- Our learning spaces are designed to inspire curiosity and creativity. Both indoor and outdoor areas are carefully arranged to encourage exploration and discovery, making the environment an integral part of the learning process. We acknowledge and value the importance of play and believe children learn best through natural and meaningful play-based experiences.

- **Child as an Active Participant:**

- Children are seen as capable and active participants in their learning journey. They are encouraged to explore their interests, ask questions, and engage in experiences that foster their natural curiosity and creativity.

- **Teacher as a Guide and Co-Learner:**

- Educators at Crossways act as guides and co-learners, facilitating and supporting children's inquiries. They observe, document, and reflect on children's learning to provide meaningful and personalised educational experiences.



**CROSSWAYS
EARLY LEARNING CENTRE**



- **Collaboration and Community:**

We emphasise the importance of collaboration among children, educators, and families. Learning is a shared journey, and we foster a sense of community where everyone contributes to and benefits from the educational process.

- **Documentation and Visible Learning:**

We document children's learning processes through various forms of media, making their thinking and learning visible. This practice helps educators, children, and families reflect on and celebrate progress and achievements.

CURRICULUM

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is a key component of early childhood education in Australia, designed to support and enhance children's learning from birth to five years old.

What is the EYLF?

The EYLF is a national framework that guides early childhood educators in developing quality early learning programs. It focuses on ensuring that children in ELC (kindergarten) settings experience engaging and meaningful learning opportunities.

Key Elements of the EYLF

1. **Learning Outcomes:** The EYLF outlines **five key learning outcomes** for children:

- **Strong sense of identity:** Children feel safe, secure, and supported.
- **Connected with and contribute to their world:** Children develop a sense of belonging and respect for diversity.
- **Strong sense of wellbeing:** Children become strong in their social and emotional wellbeing.
- **Confident and involved learners:** Children develop curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills.
- **Effective communicators:** Children engage in various forms of communication, including verbal and non-verbal interactions.

2. **Principles:** The framework is based on principles that emphasise secure, respectful, and reciprocal relationships, partnerships with families, high expectations, and equity.

3. **Practices:** Educators use a range of practices to support children's learning, such as play-based learning, intentional teaching, and creating supportive learning environments.



How the EYLF Supports Children's Learning

- **Holistic Development:** The EYLF promotes the holistic development of children, addressing their physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language needs.
- **Individualised Learning:** Educators tailor learning experiences to each child's interests, strengths, and needs, fostering a love for learning.
- **Play-Based Learning:** Through play, children explore, discover, and make sense of the world around them, developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- **Family Involvement:** The EYLF encourages strong partnerships between educators and families, recognising that parents are children's first and most influential teachers.

By focusing on these elements, the EYLF ensures that children in ELC settings are provided with a strong foundation for lifelong learning and development.

REGGIO EMELIA PHILOSOPHY

The Reggio Emilia Philosophy is an innovative approach to early childhood education that originated in the town of Reggio Emilia, Italy, after World War II. Developed by educator Loris Malaguzzi and local parents, this philosophy emphasises the potential of children to learn through their interactions with their environment and community.

Our Inspiration

At Crossways, we are inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach and integrate its principles into our Early Learning Centre (ELC). This philosophy aligns with our belief in fostering a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can explore, discover, and express themselves.

Core Principles

The Reggio Emilia approach is driven by three core principles that guide our learning practices at Crossways:

Children as Competent Learners:

The Reggio Philosophy views children as capable and active participants in their own learning journey. They are encouraged to explore their interests, ask questions, and engage in problem-solving activities. This principle fosters independence, confidence, and a love for learning.

The Environment as the Third Teacher:

Through the Reggio approach, learning spaces are thoughtfully designed to inspire curiosity and creativity. Natural light, open areas, and accessible materials create an inviting atmosphere where children feel safe and motivated to explore. The environment plays a crucial role in supporting and enhancing children's learning experiences.

The Teacher

Teachers in Reggio Emilia-inspired environments are encouraged to observe rather than direct children. It is essential that children have the freedom to experiment, make mistakes, and discover new solutions on their own. The teacher's role is to gently guide students towards their areas of interest, which can only be achieved through careful and ongoing observation.



PLAY BASED LEARNING

Play-based learning is crucial in the early years as it fosters holistic development in children. Through play, children naturally explore, experiment, and make sense of the world around them. This approach enhances their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical skills, promoting creativity, problem-solving, and resilience. By engaging in play, children develop a love for learning, build strong relationships, and gain confidence in their abilities. Embracing play-based learning ensures that children are well-prepared for future academic and life challenges, making it an essential foundation for their growth and development.

EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

We encourage the involvement of families at all times and will provide announcements about important dates throughout the year.

These include, but are not limited to:

- Family Nights
- Grandparents and Special Friends Day, in conjunction with the school
- Graduation Days
- End of Year Celebration of Learning for ELC
- Sports Day
- Crossways Community Fete
- Excursions throughout the year

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

At our Early Learning Centre (ELC), we prioritise a Christ-centred approach to behaviour management, focusing on problem-solving and restorative practices. We encourage children to be positive and respectful towards one another, fostering a supportive and inclusive environment. Through guided interactions, children develop essential sharing skills and resilience, learning to navigate social situations with empathy and understanding. Our approach helps children build strong relationships and a sense of community. For more detailed information, a copy of our behaviour policy is available through the office.

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE OPERATING TIMES

We are open 5 days a week throughout the school term.

Our hours of operation are 8:30am - 3:15pm (Monday to Thursday) and 8:30am - 11am Friday.

- **Pre-Kindy** attend on Monday and Tuesday.
- **Kindy** attend on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday morning.



DAILY KINDY OVERVIEW

Our day begins at 8:30am. Upon arrival, families/children sign in using the ipad and greet their teachers. To encourage independence, students place their bags in their personalised locker, water bottle on the drinks trolley and lunch boxes on the kitchen bench (to then be placed in the fridge by a staff member).

By around 9:30am, the teacher will gather children for a group welcome and outline the activities planned for the day.

All children are involved in a variety of indoor and outdoor play throughout the day, which includes small group work.

Children will have a healthy snack/fruit around 10am, followed by Recess at 11am.

Teachers and children meet as a group and prepare for lunch around 1pm, followed by quiet indoor activities at 1:30pm. This allows their bodies to rest, ready for the afternoon activities.

From 2pm, indoor and outdoor activities resume. Children are encouraged to help their teachers pack up before organising their own bags in readiness to come together for a story or discussion based on the day's events. The day concludes with gratitude/prayer and ready for home at 3:15pm.

We must love one another as God loves us. (John 15:12)

Meet The ELC Team

Donna Bahr



Head Teacher

Alita Champion



Assistant Educator

Tiarni Degner



Assistant Educator



ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

We ask that you sign your child in and out of the Centre electronically using the iPad provided. If you encounter any difficulties, please inform a staff member for support.

For our 4-year-old children, we offer a convenient bus service using the school's white bus. A staff member will assist the children to the bus. To use this service, please visit the administration office to complete the necessary paperwork.

To ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children, we require advance notice if someone other than a parent will be collecting your child. Additionally, please make sure to collect your child promptly after each session, as late pickups can cause distress. Your child can be collected from 3:00pm - 3:15pm.

Children being collected **after 3:20pm** will be collected from the **school front office**.

When collecting a child, ensure the following is complete:

- Wait quietly until group time is finished and encourage your child to say goodbye to their teacher.
- Support your child in collecting their belongings, including their bag, water bottle, lunch boxes and anything they have made during the day.
- Hats stay in your child's hat pocket

ABSENCES AND COMMUNICATION

We encourage families to maintain open communication with our staff regarding their child. This can be done through email, the SeeSaw app, phone calls to the school, or face-to-face conversations. If your child is **absent** for any reason, please notify the ELC team as soon as possible by calling the **school administration office at 08 8625 2873**. Additionally, please inform us of any important information related to your child. This includes changes in who will be collecting your child from the ELC or if they usually take the bus but will be picked up instead.

SEESAW

SeeSaw is a digital platform that allows real-time updates on your child's learning journey, replacing traditional hard copy portfolios. This platform ensures you stay connected and informed about your child's progress and experiences at the ELC.

For urgent matters, such as reporting an absence or changes in the collection of your child, please contact the school directly via phone. Our staff do not have 24/7 access to Seesaw, so using the school phone ensures that your message is received and addressed promptly.

UNIFORM AND SPRIGGY

The Early Learning Centre uniform is compulsory and is based on the School's sport uniform whilst maintaining a sense of uniqueness and belonging within the school.

Uniforms can be ordered through the **Spriggy** app. *Please make sure all items of clothing are clearly named, ensuring you use your child's first name.*

Administration staff will assist with uniform requirements.

See Page 13 for Spriggy QR Code.



ENROLMENT

- Applications for enrolment are received at any time online.

<https://www.crossways.sa.edu.au/enrolment/>

- A non-refundable enrolment fee of \$50 (including GST) is payable on application. The payment of this fee does not guarantee enrolment.
- Parents are encouraged to apply well before the date of admission, as places are limited.
- An interview with the Head Teacher of ELC is arranged soon after the preliminary application and relevant paperwork is received.
- Families are informed as to the acceptance and session times during the term before their child is due to commence at the ELC.
- A pre-requisite of commencement at the Centre is that children are fully toilet trained. (Pull-ups are not able to be used at the Centre). Parents should indicate if their child has a medical condition which makes this requirement difficult or impossible.
- To start in the ELC Kindy program at the beginning of the year (Term 1), your child must turn 4 on or before the 1st of May of that year.
- To start in the ELC Pre Kindy program, your child must be 3 years old, and toilet trained. Your child will begin their journey in the term following their third birthday.

ACCOUNTS AND FEES STRUCTURE

ELC Fees will be invoiced and emailed to families at the beginning of each Term for both programs, with a monthly statement showing payments made and any balance outstanding. Payment options using your family code are bank transfer, eftpos or Centrepay deduction. Payment plans if required can be arranged with our Finance Officer prior to your child's commencement.

Fees 2025:

\$75 per week - 4-year-old program

\$700 a term - 3-year-old program



PHOTOS AND CONSENT

Upon enrolment at Crossways Lutheran Early Learning Centre, families are asked to provide consent for the use of photographs and media images of their child. This consent covers photographs taken by Centre staff for sharing via the Seesaw app and other web-based platforms managed by the school.

If you wish to change any aspect of this consent at any time, please notify ELC Staff and Administrative Staff in the main office.

We kindly ask that you refrain from taking any photos (other than of your child) within the Early Learning Centre building or grounds. Additionally, please do not share images from Seesaw that include other children.

Thank you for your cooperation in respecting the privacy and safety of all our students.



WHAT TO BRING

What will my child need to bring to a session?

- **Fruit:** Fresh or dried fruit for morning and afternoon snack. Please cut small fruits in half (such as cherry tomatoes, grapes and olives) to avoid choking hazards. Please also cut fruit if your child has difficulty eating a whole piece.
- **Drink Bottle:** A water bottle with your child's name on it, filled with water only.
- **Hat:** A Crossways Lutheran School bucket hat with your child's name on it for outside play during terms 1 and 4, in line with our "No hat, no outside play/activities" policy.
- **Spare Clothes:** A set of spare clothes in case of accidents or water play, preferably the uniform or green pants and a yellow top to match the uniform.
- **Sunscreen:** When the UV rating is above 3, children will apply sunscreen in the morning, and again in the afternoon session. If your child needs an alternative sunscreen, please inform staff and provide it labelled/named.
- **Library Bag:** Students will decorate their own library bag (provided by the ELC).

Please remember to clearly **label all of your child's belongings**, including socks! We also ask that children do not bring toys or other personal items from home.

WASHING HANDS AND TOILETING

Children are required to wash their hands after using the bathroom, before eating and at any time they get their hands dirty. We require children to be fully toilet trained before they start at the Centre, which means they recognise they need to go to the toilet and do so.

If your child has frequently occurring accidents, an action plan will be decided upon. (The Centre is not equipped with changing and bathing facilities).

Children must be able to wipe their bottoms independently. Staff are not expected to do this for children.

Staff will model and teach children to:

- Flush the toilet after use
- Wash hands after using the toilet
- Encourage children to tell staff if they need help
- Develop privacy in toileting behaviours and
- Pick up papers and use toilets and bins for appropriate disposal

We understand toileting accidents can happen, so a **spare set of clothing** is required in your child's bag.



SCHOOL CONNECTIONS

At Crossways Lutheran Early Learning Centre, we foster strong connections with the Junior School through various activities:

- **Chapel on Friday Mornings:** Children attend Chapel, promoting spiritual growth and community.
- **Junior School Playground:** After Chapel, children enjoy playtime in the Junior School playground.
- **Buddy Time:** Making connections with Foundation teachers and students to build friendships and confidence.
- **Library Visits:** Friday morning library visits encourage a love for reading.
- **Canteen Visits:** Children visit the canteen to collect lunch orders, accompanied by an educator.
- **Staff Connections:** Inviting various staff to the ELC helps children form meaningful relationships.

These activities encourage a seamless transition and a sense of belonging within the school community.

TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

An additional benefit for your child at Crossways Lutheran Early Learning Centre is the smooth transition into the Junior School. While enrolment in Early Learning does not automatically guarantee a place in Foundation, it does provide a strong foundation for your child's educational journey. To secure a place in Foundation, you will need to complete a separate enrolment form and attend an interview with the Principal and Foundation Teacher. For more information, please contact the administration office staff.

Frequent interactions with Foundation staff and students help build your child's confidence and resilience, making the transition to school a natural extension of the nurturing Christian care experienced in the Early Learning Centre.

REST TIME

All children will participate in some form of quiet time after lunch. Some children may like a blanket and cushion so they can lie down and rest. Other children may prefer to watch educational videos, listen to music, read books, play with puzzles or participate in other quiet activities. If ELC staff feel certain children need a rest or they request it, they will be given this opportunity.



MEDICATION / ILLNESS / ALLERGIES

If a child requires oral medication to be administered throughout the day, it must be handed to an ELC staff member on arrival, accompanied by written and signed instructions from a medical practitioner. Please note that analgesics, including painkillers such as Panadol or aspirin products, will not be provided or administered by the Centre. Please ensure the ELC has been advised of any allergies your child may have and provide a Health Care Plan for their condition.

If your child appears to be or becomes ill, you will be contacted as soon as possible. We do not have facilities to care for sick children, so it is important that they be picked up as soon as possible.

***Please do not send sick children to the Centre.**

ACCIDENT AND INJURY POLICY

In the event of your child becoming ill or injured during their time in the Centre, we will notify family / caregiver as soon as possible. All injuries are recorded using our incident reporting system.

ELC HOME LIBRARY BORROWING

Importance of Literacy in the Early Years

Literacy in the early years is crucial for children's development. It encompasses oral language, communication, and reading, which are foundational skills for learning and social interaction. Promoting literacy helps children develop strong language abilities, enhances their communication skills, and fosters a love for reading.

Home Library Borrowing Program

To support literacy development, we are excited to introduce our Home Library Borrowing Program. Each week, children can borrow books to take home and enjoy. They will receive a special library bag to decorate, making the experience even more personal and fun. Both pre-kindy and kindy children are invited to participate.

We encourage families to read stories with their children. Reading and sharing books together stimulates children's imaginations and expands their understanding of the world. It also strengthens the bond between parents and children.

Tips for Early Literacy (3 and 4 Year Olds)

- **Read Aloud:** Spend time reading aloud to your child every day.
- **Interactive Reading:** Ask questions about the story and pictures to engage your child.
- **Sing Songs and Rhymes:** These help with language rhythm and phonemic awareness.
- **Provide a Variety of Books:** Offer different genres and topics to spark interest.
- **Create a Reading Routine:** Establish a regular reading time to build a habit.

By fostering a **love** for reading early on, we can help children develop essential literacy skills that will benefit them **throughout their lives.**



FOOD AND DRINK

Healthy Eating Guidelines for Parents

Children are required to bring from home a clearly named and labelled lunch box containing:

- A piece of fruit
- Morning Snack (Recess)
- Lunch



This helps children establish eating routines, such as what to eat and when.

Healthy Eating Policy

Our Early Learning Centre (ELC) has a Healthy Eating policy. Please ensure you supply nutritious and healthy food for your child, including a piece of fruit for each session.

Recommended Foods:

- Nutritious snacks and lunches
- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Whole grains
- Protein-rich foods (e.g., lean meats, dairy, legumes)



Foods to Avoid:

- Junk food such as chips, roll-ups, chocolate, and sweet biscuits
- Products containing nuts (e.g., peanut butter, Nutella, sesame seed rolls, muesli bars with nuts)

By sending healthy options, it avoids competition between children as to who has the 'best' lunch and encourages healthy eating habits from a young age.

Nut Aware Centre

We are a 'Nut Aware' Centre. Some children at Crossways may have severe allergies to nuts or nut products. It is important that products containing nuts are **NOT** brought into the Centre. This includes peanut butter, Nutella, sesame seed rolls, muesli bars containing nuts, etc.

If your child comes to the Centre with unsuitable food, it will be sent home with a note indicating why.

Special Dietary Requirements

Please inform staff if your child has special dietary requirements or a food allergy.

Celebrating Birthdays

Birthdays are a very special time for children, and we enjoy celebrating them at the Centre. If providing individual cupcakes or treats, please ensure they follow our policy and are nut-free.

Lunch Orders

Please note, lunch orders are available for all students via the **Spriggy app**.

Spriggy Schools

The canteen has partnered with Spriggy Schools for online lunch orders.

Uniforms are also able to be purchased via Spriggy.

Download the app now. Use the QR Code to set up your account.





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