

Parent Handbook



Welcome

Welcome to Pinnacles Early Learning Centre. We hope that you and your child enjoy your time with us at the centre.

The information included in this booklet is designed to provide answers to the questions often asked by parents about the day to day running of the centre and the underlying philosophy of education in practice. If you require more detailed policy information, please refer to the Policy Handbook located in the foyer of the centre. A member of staff will be happy to provide copies of any policy.

Open: 7:30am – 5.30pm

About Us:

Pinnacles Early Learning Centre is a privately-owned child care centre for 0 – 5 year olds. The Centre is licensed and regulated by the Ministry of Education and complies with the *Education (Early Childhood Centres) Regulations 2008*.

Education Reviews:

The Education Review Office conducts inspections of ECE services approximately every 3 years. Reviews are available on the ERO website or on request from the office once received.

Funding:

The centre receives bulk funding from the Ministry of Education. Audited financials detailing how this money has been allocated are available on request within 12 months of the close of accounts.

Philosophy:

Pinnacles Early Learning Centre aims to provide a nurturing, supportive learning environment which reflects and values the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and recognises the inherent uniqueness of every child who attends this service.

- We aim to provide a safe, happy, stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment where children are free to play, explore, discover and learn at their own pace with staff providing guidance and encouragement for each child.
- We aim to offer a flexible curriculum based on Te Whariki that is fun, challenging and responsive to both individual and group needs. This curriculum will reflect the interests of the children, aims of parents / whanau and skills of the staff.
- We aim to support kaiako through ongoing professional development because we believe in the importance of careful planning and review of practice
- We aim to be a resource to families by providing information about a range of subjects including children's health and development, support services available within the community and educational issues.
- We believe New Zealand has a unique multi-cultural heritage and we must reflect this at every level of our work. People of all backgrounds and cultures will be welcomed, accepted and respected.
- We believe that each child's learning will have been extended and enhanced by attending this service.

What Happens During the Day

Your child will have the opportunity to participate in a wide variety of play-based experiences whilst at Pinnacles. Children are divided into groups according to age after the morning Karakia. Throughout the day children will be involved in both planned and spontaneous experiences indoors and outdoors. Children will experiment, create, express themselves and make sense of their world as they interact with materials, other children and staff. Te reo Maori and English are spoken by staff throughout the day while interacting with children.

Throughout the day, planned and spontaneous small and larger group experiences will take place giving children the opportunity to participate in music, drama, movement, literature and games. Experiences offered will require children to listen, focus and to develop group awareness.

Children will be given the opportunity to play with a variety of materials including, books, play dough, water, sand, clay, construction sets, paint, collage materials, and dramatic play props. Outdoors, children can extend their skills and confidence through climbing, digging, running, and jumping.

The social and physical environment, including adults and peers with whom children interact have an important influence on self-reliance and self-esteem. Therefore, the programs at Pinnacles aim to provide children with opportunities for both free and guided play with children being encouraged through self-selection of activities to take responsibility for their own actions.

Children will be offered a rest time each day. Babies sleep in individual cots while older children sleep on individual mattresses in a marae like arrangement. Staff will supervise children who are sleeping while older children may be involved in quiet play activities.

See Curriculum Framework Policy and Sleep and Rest Policy for more information

What to Bring

- **Small Bag** or backpack to fit a lunch box, a drink bottle, nappies, change of clothes
- **All Food including Morning and Afternoon Tea and Lunch** – e.g. Sandwich, yoghurt, muesli bar, cheese, fresh or dried fruit (children are not allowed sweet biscuits, cakes, lollies or chocolate) Please remember the Centre operates a **NO NUT PRODUCTS POLICY**. Staff will heat items if required. Please place any food requiring refrigeration in Kitchen for staff to manage.
- **Water** – in a named plastic drink bottle.
- A week's supply of **Nappies** if child is not toilet trained
- A month's supply of **WET WIPES if child in nappies**.
- **Spare clothing** – COMPLETE change of clothes in a named bag. Please make sure these are suitable for the weather conditions
- **Hat or Beanie, Puddle jumpers** and warm waterproof **jacket** depending on weather

Clothing

- Please send your child to child care in 'play clothes'. Clothing should be easily washable, and easy for children to manage by themselves. Please no long dresses or tricky fastenings.
- On warmer days please ensure you provide extra clothing as children will be encouraged to play with lots of messy / wet activities
- Classrooms are heated but children will play outside most days so please send along appropriate clothing
- Footwear should be easy for children to manage by themselves – bare feet will be encouraged where possible

Birthdays:

- If you would like your child to celebrate their birthday at child care, please provide a plain iced cake or patty cakes. The cake will be shared at morning tea time with your child's own group. If your child has a food allergy, please provide alternatives (e.g. Gluten free biscuits) that can be kept at the Centre for use on these occasions.

Toys:

- Generally, children are not allowed to bring toys, lollies or money from home
- The Centre has a **NO GUNS / WEAPONS** policy which includes toy guns, swords and other toy weapons
- Books may be brought in on occasion but please ensure all items are clearly marked with child's name. All care no responsibility policy operates.

Photographs:

- Informal photographs of children at play are taken regularly for Storypark, children's portfolios and group learning story displays. Please notify staff if this is an issue for you.

Parent Participation

Pinnacles Early Learning Centre relies upon the co-operation and support of all parents for successful functioning. As a parent you know your child best. We would like you to share relevant information with us so that we can provide a program that suits your child's individual needs, interests and skills. Anytime you wish to have a chat to staff about your child or just spend time at the centre feel free to do this although obviously some times are more convenient than others. If you have specific concerns, please make an appointment time with your child's teacher or the Centre manager.

Parents aid in program evaluation through day to day observation of activities at the centre and in talking to their child about his/her involvement in the program. Such evaluation serves as feedback to the staff and helps with future planning. Scheduled parent/ teacher meetings will be held twice per year.

Individual Portfolios are maintained for all children. At times staff will send these books home for parent input. They are always on display / available for your perusal.

See Parental Involvement Policy for more information

Complaints

Any parent who has a complaint / concern / query should follow the guidelines listed below. Every effort will be made to resolve the issue in a fair and informed manner without prejudice.

STEP 1: APPROACH QUALIFIED STAFF

Parents with a potential complaint / query should find an appropriate time (an appointment may need to be made) and approach your child's teacher to discuss your concerns. If the teacher is not able to find a solution for your concern than he/ she will approach the Centre manager on your behalf (Step 2) or you may approach the Centre manager yourself. It is recommended that disputes / complaints be handled as close to the source of the issue as possible.

STEP 2: APPROACH THE CENTRE MANAGER

Make an appointment with the Centre manager to discuss complaint / query. Hopefully some solution or compromise may be reached, or an explanation provided which satisfies both parties. However, if you are still concerned or have a genuine complaint which is not covered by existing Pinnacles policy, the matter will proceed to Step 3. Please put any specific complaints in writing.

Contact details for the Licensee are available from the Administration Coordinator.

STEP 3: APPROACH THE LICENSEE

Any parent who wishes to make a complaint including complaints about non-compliance with licensing conditions should contact the Service Provider by phoning or leaving a message at the following phone number or by leaving a letter with the Centre manager.

(Service Provider: Jenifer Hood @ 0210 797855)

See Complaints policy for further details.

Positive Guidance

For children to be treated consistently and master their environment, staff at Pinnacles implement a positive approach to guidance which:

- Helps children learn what to do and why
- Minimises the number of 'rules' so that those enforced are the important ones
- Differentiates between the child and the behaviour
- Allows staff to handle consistently normal challenging behaviour
- Includes strategies for ongoing problems
- Balances the right of the individual child against the good of the group as a whole
- Enables parents and staff to work together on issues of concern
- Deals with threatening or dangerous behaviour

See Positive Guidance Policy for more detailed information

Nutrition

Parents are encouraged to send healthy foods and drinks for their child's snacks and lunches to the centre as appropriate. A list will be circulated to all parents and reminders provided in monthly newsletters

- If unsuitable foods are included in children's lunches, children will be allowed to eat them, but a note will be sent home to parents reminding of the Centre's policy
- Children will have access to drinking water whenever they need it.
- Where a child is excluded from eating certain foods due to allergies, religious or cultural reasons, the parent's wishes will be respected and conveyed to other staff.
- All children will be encouraged to develop independence in managing own food (opening plastic wrap, drink containers) using utensils, pouring own drinks and eating.
- Children will be encouraged to eat their morning tea/ lunch / afternoon tea. If they do not like what has been provided they will be encouraged to taste each item. No child will be forced to eat what they do not want
- Children are not to walk into or out of the centre eating food

See Nutrition Policy for more information

NO SMOKING ON CHILD –CARE PREMISES – staff, parents or visitors

See Smokefree Policy for more detailed information

Accidents/Illness

Procedure for caring for sick / injured children at the service:

- The sick or injured child will be kept under adult supervision until the child recovers or a parent (or some other responsible adult) takes charge of the child.
- Every reasonable attempt will be made to notify a parent of the accident or illness as soon as is practically possible.
- If there is a **fever above 37.2 degrees** staff will attempt to lower by the application of tepid wet cloths while waiting for collection of children by parent.

- In the case of an accident not requiring immediate medical treatment, First Aid trained staff will administer First Aid treatment if required.
- If the child requires medical aid all reasonable attempts will be taken to secure that attention.
- Payment for all medical and ambulance expenses are the responsibility of the parent
- Parents must inform the centre at the time of enrolment, of any allergies or illness which require medication or specific treatment should they occur, or which may be of a life-threatening nature e.g. Asthma, allergies, febrile convulsions.
- Staff will need to be informed by parents or a relevant medical practitioner in the proper techniques for administering such treatments. In the case of diagnosed asthma an ASTHMA FORM must be completed on enrolment (or at time of diagnosis) and an Asthma Management Plan completed by your child's Doctor must be provided.
- In the case of minor injuries, the Centre will not notify parents, however an accident record will be kept at the centre and parents are to sign as required. A copy of the report will be provided to parents.
- Head Injuries are reported to parent as soon as possible and a note sent home with details around the incident

See Accident/Illness Policy for more information

Parents must keep their child at home if they are suffering any of the following:

- Infectious diseases as per Second Schedule Health (Infectious & Notifiable Diseases) Regulations as attached
- Gastroenteritis – vomiting or diarrhea (during previous 48 hours)
- Fever above 37.2 degrees in the last 12 hours
- Respiratory infection – including, green/yellow nasal discharge, productive cough
- If child has been prescribed and administered antibiotics during the last 48 hours
- Eye and/or ear discharge
- Unidentified skin rash
- General lethargy

See Exclusion Policy for further information

Medication

If prescribed or over the counter medication, including creams/lotions/drops are to be administered to a child at the centre, written parental authority or written Doctors approval must be given on arrival.

The following information must be filled out correctly in the Medication Register (in writing by parent/caregiver)

- the child's full name
- name of medication
- expiry date of product
- dosage (specific amount e.g. 'mls' NOT spoonful)
- times to be given/administered (specific times – e.g. 'lunch time' NOT acceptable) □ nature of illness
- time of last medication
- PARENT SIGNATURE and DATE

The following guidelines will be adhered to:

- In the case of prescription medicine this must only be administered to the child for whom it has been prescribed, from a container bearing the child's name and with a current use by date.
- Staff will only administer medication to a child from its original packaging
- A specific administration time **MUST** be provided or a reason for administration e.g. if rash is itchy
- Medication must be given to a permanent staff member on arrival. **MEDICATION MUST NOT BE LEFT IN A CHILD'S BAG OR LOCKER**
- If there are anomalies between the instructions attached to medication and instructions provided by the parent, staff are to adhere to original instructions marked on medication
- Medication must have been recently prescribed by a medical professional– i.e. within the last 4 weeks.
- Your child must have been on antibiotics for 48 hours before returning to pre-school
- Herbal, Naturopathic or Homeopathic medication will require the same protocol as prescribed medication including instructions for mixing herbal remedies

Procedure for Long Term Medication:

Conditions requiring on-going treatment such as asthma, eczema etc. will require a signed, dated, doctor's letter stating the following:

- why the medication is necessary
- dosage required and times for administering

In addition, a dated, signed covering letter must be provided by the parent giving permission for medication. This is to be reviewed every 3 months. If a child is diagnosed as asthmatic, then an Asthma Management form will need to be completed by the child's Doctor and parent giving accurate details of the child's condition, triggering factors and treatment..

If over the counter medication is requested to be administered on a regular basis i.e. on 3 consecutive days, a doctors authorisation letter will be required.

See Medication Policy for more detailed information

Fees Policy

- Fees are set on an annual basis by Pinnacles Early Learning Centre Management and will consider,
 - the running costs of the centre
 - affordability to parents
 - requirements related to ensuring MoE licensing regulations are met (e.g. equipment, safety, resources required)
- Fee collection is mandatory, and Management has the discretion to withdraw service for nonpayment of fees.
- Parents will be given one month's written notice of any increase in fees.

Procedure for Fee Collection:

- Fees are to be paid weekly by Automatic payment, EFTPOS or cash. Please pay promptly as we rely on fee payments to cover staff wages and do not want to have to 'chase people up' for fees. Fee invoices are provided weekly.
- Pinnacles is open throughout the year except for statutory holidays. Fees will be charged at the standard rate for statutory and absence days.
- No fees are charged for Emergency Closure Days
- Receipts will be issued weekly, either on payment or once a year for tax purposes
- Parents should approach the Administration Coordinator if they are having difficulty with payment of fees.

WINZ Child Care Subsidy:

Some families may be eligible for Child Care subsidy payments from WINZ to assist with the payment of fees. The Administration Coordinator has the relevant forms and is available to assist parents in completing them if required.

Non-Payment of Fees:

- The Administration Co-Ordinator will issue 1 (one) arrears letter before instigating appropriate legal proceedings of fee collection.
- Parents may negotiate to pay fees by installment
- Pinnacles Management has the final decision to withdraw the service from a family

See Fee Policy for more information

Children's Arrival

- As soon as children arrive at the centre, the accompanying adult is required to sign the attendance record located in the classroom. Each child's name is listed – parents are to sign beside their child's name with the time of arrival.
- Children are not to be left in the playground. Parents are required to escort their child into the playroom where they will be welcomed by a staff member. The child's belongings are to be placed in their named locker and the child's lunch box placed on the food trolley.
- A member of staff will welcome and receive each child on arrival
- Parents are encouraged to say goodbye to their child when leaving. They will be encouraged to remind children that they will be back later in the day to collect them.
- Please notify staff of the following:
 - Physical restrictions – stitches, burns, injuries
 - Ongoing conditions -asthma, epilepsy, allergies
 - Emotional trauma – recent death in the family, separation / divorce

Collection of Children

Collect all belongings, say good-bye to staff. Ensure staff have a chance to say good bye to your child.

- Sign your child out of the centre using the attendance records in the classroom. Sign in the space beside your child's name as you LEAVE the building.
- ONLY the people nominated on the enrolment form at the time of admission (or added later) have the authority to collect children from the centre. Any other person MUST have written authorisation from the parent. If this is not possible the parent MUST telephone prior to departure time to notify staff.
- Written proof of identity must be provided before children will be released into the care of persons unknown to staff – e.g. drivers licence
- Minimum age of persons able to collect children from the centre is 16 years of age

Sun Protection

- Parents are to provide children with hats which protect the face, neck and ears whenever they are outside
- SPF 30 (or higher) broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen will be provided for the use of staff and children as necessary
- Children will be encouraged to use areas of shade for outdoor play activities
- Learning about skin and ways to protect skin from the sun will be incorporated into programmed activities

See SunSmart Policy for more information