



# Information Handbook 2024



# Minooka Preschool Centre

## Patterns of Attendance

<b>Sunshine Room</b> 	<b>Rainbow Room</b> 
Monday/Tuesday/Wednesday	Monday/ Tuesday/ Wednesday
Thursday/ Friday	Thursday/Friday

Postal Address: PO Box 3 Mortdale NSW 2223

Street Address: Rear 1-5 Woronora Pde

Oatley NSW 2223

Phone: (02) 9570 5299

[director@minooka.com.au](mailto:director@minooka.com.au) (Director)

[admin@minooka.com.au](mailto:admin@minooka.com.au) (Administration)

[www.minooka.com.au](http://www.minooka.com.au)

## Our Preschool

Welcome to Minooka Preschool and thank you for choosing us to be in partnership with you, in the education of your child.

Minooka Preschool, is a 'not for profit' community preschool, and a project of the **Mortdale-Oatley Baptist Church**.

Christian values influence the way our Preschool is operated.

We are looking forward to getting to know you and your child as you spend time with us here at Minooka.

The name Minooka is Aboriginal for "Place of Comfort" and this is the type of environment that our staff endeavour to create.

Our program is based on children's interests, in line with the Early Years Learning Framework.

Our belief is that parents and educators work together to provide the best possible foundation for the growth and development of each child. We therefore welcome family partnership and participation.

In our Preschool community we welcome families of all community and religious groups.

### **Exceeding**

National Quality Standard



Australian Children's  
Education & Care  
Quality Authority

**Minooka Preschool has been rated  
by the NSW Department of  
Education as Exceeding National  
Quality Standards.**

## Our Philosophy

The basis and foundation of Minooka Preschool is our philosophy.

### We believe that:

Every child is created, valued and loved by God unconditionally;

A Christian ethos will be evident in staff interactions, the materials we offer and in our celebrations;

Care and education of young children is a privilege;

Effective programs are based on the establishment and maintenance of relationships between parents, children and educators;

Each child is unique and individual, and brings to the learning environment an individual pattern of development, as well as personality and learning style;

Each child has the right to feel safe and important.

Diversity of age, gender, race and religion, culture, ability and family structure makes our environment rich and stimulating;

Positive reinforcement, praise, recognition, and encouragement assists children to grow with positive self-esteem. This will allow children to explore, learn and develop to their own potential.

## Our License

Minooka is licensed by, and receives funding from, the NSW Department of Education.

The NSW Department of Education provide funds which, along with fees, assist with the operational costs of the Preschool. The Department of Education also has a set of regulations we must follow to maintain our license.

## Our Management

Minooka Preschool is a community-based project of Mortdale-Oatley Baptist Church. The Preschool is an Incorporated Entity. The Management Sub Committee is made up of a group of people who oversee the running of Minooka. This comprises of:

- Our President—the Church Pastor
- Our Honorary Manager
- Two Church representatives
- Two parents of children attending the centre

## Our Staff

The Minooka staff all share the view that we need to be supportive and sensitive to the needs of the children, parents and other staff members. Our educators are valued employees of the Preschool and are here to assist you in anyway we can. Confidentiality is foremost on our minds when dealing with children and their families.

Our staff consists of University trained Teachers, Diploma and Certificate III trained Assistants, Inclusion Support staff and Administration staff.

## The Minooka Staff

<b>Katherine Stogden</b>	Honorary Manager
<b>Deborah Askew</b>	Director
<b>Marianne Horg</b>	Teacher
<b>Florencia Yallouris</b>	Teacher (M-W)
<b>Amity Horneman</b>	Teacher (Th-F)
<b>Sue Rogerson</b>	Child Care Assistant
<b>Jenny Larum</b>	Child Care Assistant
<b>Vicky Hui</b>	Child Care Assistant
<b>Jean Paixao</b>	Child Care Assistant
<b>Lexie Rebecchi</b>	Inclusion Support
<b>Ada Ku</b>	Inclusion Support
<b>Kirsten Hawkins</b>	Office Administration
<b>Robyn Fuller</b>	Bookkeeper

## Our Daily Program

Our program provides play based activities that stimulate: Decision Making, Problem Solving, Creativity, Imagination, Language, Social and Motor Skills.

The program is guided by the principles and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF V2.0) based on children's interests along with input from children, families, educators and the community.

We have a mixture of passive and active, structured and non-structured experiences each day. Group times and routine times form an important part of our day.

Our group times are comprised of stories, language experiences, cognitive experiences, music experiences, literacy and numeracy experiences in small groups.

Our daily routine is displayed on the notice board in each room; it is also displayed by pictures for the children, with any daily changes added.

In the summer months, Terms 1 and 4, we begin the day outside in line with our sun protection policy. In the winter months, Terms 2 and 3, we start the day inside.

Our rest time is comprised of relaxation, stories and quiet activities.

## Our Inclusion Support Program

Here at Minooka Preschool we are very proud of our reputation for providing support for children with additional needs.

Our aim is for all children to be successfully included in our environment. Some children require additional support to enable them to do this.

Minooka receives funding from the NSW Department of Education for individual children to receive extra support to facilitate this inclusion.

The Seashell Room is our inclusion support room, run by our Diploma Trained Inclusion Support worker, where children are involved in individual programs while working within a small group.

Families are offered support and we liaise with specialist agencies and staff to ensure each child's needs are met.

If your child has a diagnosed additional need or you have concerns about any aspect of your child's development please consult with our director to arrange a time where we can discuss any issues or concerns you have.



## Settling your child into Preschool

You may find that you have mixed reactions when leaving your child at Preschool for the first time.

Staff at Minooka understand that it may not be an easy time for you and hope that some of the following practices will help with this transition.

Please remember that it is natural for children to feel unsettled when separating from you.

After helping your child unpack their bag, accompany them to an activity and stay with them for a few moments. Doing the same activity with your child each day before you leave is a good routine and assists with settling.

Always say 'goodbye' to your child and tell them that you are going and that you will be back to pick them up. Being honest with your child will help develop a trusting relationship.

Take cues from the staff as to the best time to leave.

All children are different in the length of time they take to settle – our experienced staff can support you through this.

You are welcome to ring through the day to check on your child. If you get the answering machine, please leave a message as it is checked frequently.

## Our Hours

Minooka's hours of operation are strictly 9am - 3pm. Children on the premises outside these hours places us in breach of our licensing agreement.

Collecting your child on a regular basis after **3pm** may incur a late fee and put your child's position at risk.

## Arrival and Departure

In our entry foyer there is an arrival /departure sheet. This must be signed each morning and afternoon that your child attends Preschool. These attendance sheets are legal documents and will be used in the event of an evacuation emergency.

Please try and bring your child as close to 9am as possible so they don't miss out on time to play and socialise with other children.

If someone who has not been given authority on your enrolment form and white enrolment card is going to pick up your child, you must fill in an 'Authority to Collect' form available on the sign in desk. You must sign it. **We will ask an unfamiliar person for some form of Identification.**

## Access and Custody Issues

Please arrange a meeting with the Director if your family is affected by any Court Orders. We need to sight and copy any relevant paper work and make you aware of our legal<sup>8</sup> position.

## Child Protection

The Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 came into effect in December 2000.

Preschools, like Minooka, are mandatory reporters. This means we must report to the Department of Education and Communities any child we believe might be at 'risk of harm' *ie current abuse the child is experiencing and the likelihood of future harm occurring.*

Another requirement of this act is the law that makes background checking mandatory for all people who wish to work in education and care services. At Minooka every adult working or volunteering with children require a NSW Working with Children Check.

## Sunscreen & Outdoor Play

In term one and four and for part of terms two and three we begin our day playing outside. At this time of the year we ask that you apply sun cream to your child before you leave home. We also have a pump pack available for you to use if you forget. We use Cancer Council Everyday Sunscreen 30+.

In the middle part of the year when we go outside later in the day we will apply sunscreen to the children before taking them outside.

If your child is allergic to this sunscreen you are asked to supply an alternative.

## Daily Needs

Our Policy is to encourage children to eat a variety of healthy foods.

**Children's lunch and healthy snack is refrigerated.**

**Healthy Snack:** (morning tea) We encourage all children to eat fruit at this time. If your child particularly dislikes fruit; raw vegetables, crackers (not those high in sodium) or cheese are a good alternative. Please put their healthy snack in a separate small container, as it is stored separately to the lunches.

**Lunch:** Some ideas for lunch are sandwiches, another piece of fruit, vegetable sticks etc. **Please do not send** lollies, chips, cakes, sweet muffins, popcorn, biscuits, rollups (fruit straps), muesli bars, chocolate and the like. Unsuitable foods will be returned home to you. You are welcome to send a cake for your child's birthday.

*As the children's lunch and healthy snack are refrigerated we ask that you send these in separate suitable small containers to help us fit them all in the fridge. Large lunchboxes make it difficult to store all the children's lunches.*

**Water:** Clearly labelled, refillable drink bottles are best. In warmer weather it may be necessary to send a larger drink bottle. Children's drinks are freely available in an esky. We encourage and recommend children drink water.

**Clothes:** Durable play clothes are most suitable. Minooka Preschool t-shirts are available to purchase for \$15 each, in a variety of colours, in sizes 4 and 6.

*It is a requirement under our Work Health and Safety Policy that:*

All children wear closed in shoes – thongs and slip on shoes are not allowed (including ‘crocs’) as they are not appropriate for safety reasons.

All children wear a hat when playing outside – a hat will be provided to each child when they begin. They will remain at Preschool for the year.

All children must have shoulders covered when outside – singlet tops are not considered appropriate under our Sun Protection Policy.

**Backpack:** to keep all your child's belongings in. Please make sure that your child can easily open and close all the fittings.

**Allergies:** To protect the children who attend our Preschool and suffer severe allergic reactions to particular foods:

**Minooka Preschool has a “Nut Free” Policy.**

**The following foods are therefore banned:**

**Nuts**

**Peanut Butter**

**Nutella**

**Tahini**

**Sesame Seeds**

**Muesli Bars**

**Chocolate**

## Our Policies

Minooka holds policies developed in consultation with the parents, management and staff. We are constantly updating our policies. You are invited from time to time to comment on our draft policies.

The policy folder is kept in the foyer. Included in this booklet are our policies on Fees and Health.

## Birthdays

We would like to help your child celebrate their birthday and make their day special.

Please feel free to send a **cake or cupcakes** with candles on the day closest to their birthday. A slab cake suitable for 20 children with **no** custard or cream is appropriate as it is easy to cut and easy for the children to manage or if you prefer, cup cakes.

**Please be aware we have children enrolled who are allergic to nuts and nut products.**

**There is also no need to send lollies or lolly bags.**

## Parent Involvement

We make it our aim to get to know each family. There are several activities during the year where parents are encouraged to come and participate.

We have an open classroom policy - as such you are invited to spend time in your child's room. Even if it's just an hour or two, you would be most welcome. Just speak to your child's teacher.

If you have a skill or interest you would like to share with the children this may be a means of spending time at Minooka.

### **We communicate with families in a number of ways:**

Informal conversations morning and afternoon;

Notice boards in the foyer;

Notice boards in each room;

Newsletters;

Emails;

Short notes explaining upcoming events;

Newsletters, reminders, fee statements and fee receipts are emailed to you using the email address you provide on your enrolment form.

Each child has a named pocket in the foyer. Into these pockets we place notes, invitations, surveys as well as fee statements and fee receipts if you requested a paper copy. Please check your pocket each day.

Formal interviews as required.

# Complaints

Complaints are handled in the following manner:

## 1. Informal

This is for simple and straight forward complaints.

Most complaints come under the informal level, most likely concerning individual children, dealing with health issues, teaching practices or behaviour management strategies.

Parents are encouraged to address these issues as soon as possible so they can be quickly handled and resolved for everyone's benefit.

Parents are encouraged to speak to the child's teacher or the Director.

The staff member will communicate any complaints and the outcome to the Director.

If after the informal procedure outlined above, families are not satisfied with the outcome, then they are encouraged to follow a more formal procedure.

## 2. Formal

Families may request a meeting with the Director and the Honorary Manager.

If you wish you may put the complaint in writing where it will be read by the Director, Honorary Manager, and where appropriate the Management Committee. A form is available from the office.



The Manager will ensure the complaint is documented, any staff involved are made aware of the complaint and if appropriate an action plan devised to handle any issues that arise from the complaint.

The complainant will be made aware of the outcome.

### **3. External Review**

When complaints cannot be resolved internally, the Director or Honorary Manager will contact the N.S.W. Department of Education and request an independent mediator.

Similarly, parents are able to contact the Department of Education at Parramatta on 1800619113, fax; 028633 1810, or email [ececd@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:ececd@det.nsw.edu.au) if the complaint cannot be resolved to their satisfaction.

Minooka holds a comprehensive Grievance Procedure Policy; available in the Preschool foyer.

## Illness and Absence

Please phone the Preschool in all cases of illness or absence.

It is very important you let us know if your child contracts any infectious disease.

***“Please do not send a child suffering from vomiting, diarrhoea or heavy cold or if they have had a temperature in the last twenty four hours or if they are unwell.”***

Please refer to our policy on exclusion and illness which is included in this booklet.

If staff consider a child not well enough to remain at Preschool you will be asked to take them home or phoned to pick them up through the day. Staff will act in the best interests of all the children.

**The final decision will be at the discretion of the Director.**

**Proof of your child’s immunisation must be presented before your child begins preschool and updated as needed. We require the Immunisation History Statement issued from Medicare by phoning 1800 653 809 (Please allow a minimum of 7 days) If there is an outbreak of an infectious disease and your child is not immunised then your child will be excluded, at your expense, until the risk of infection no longer exists.**

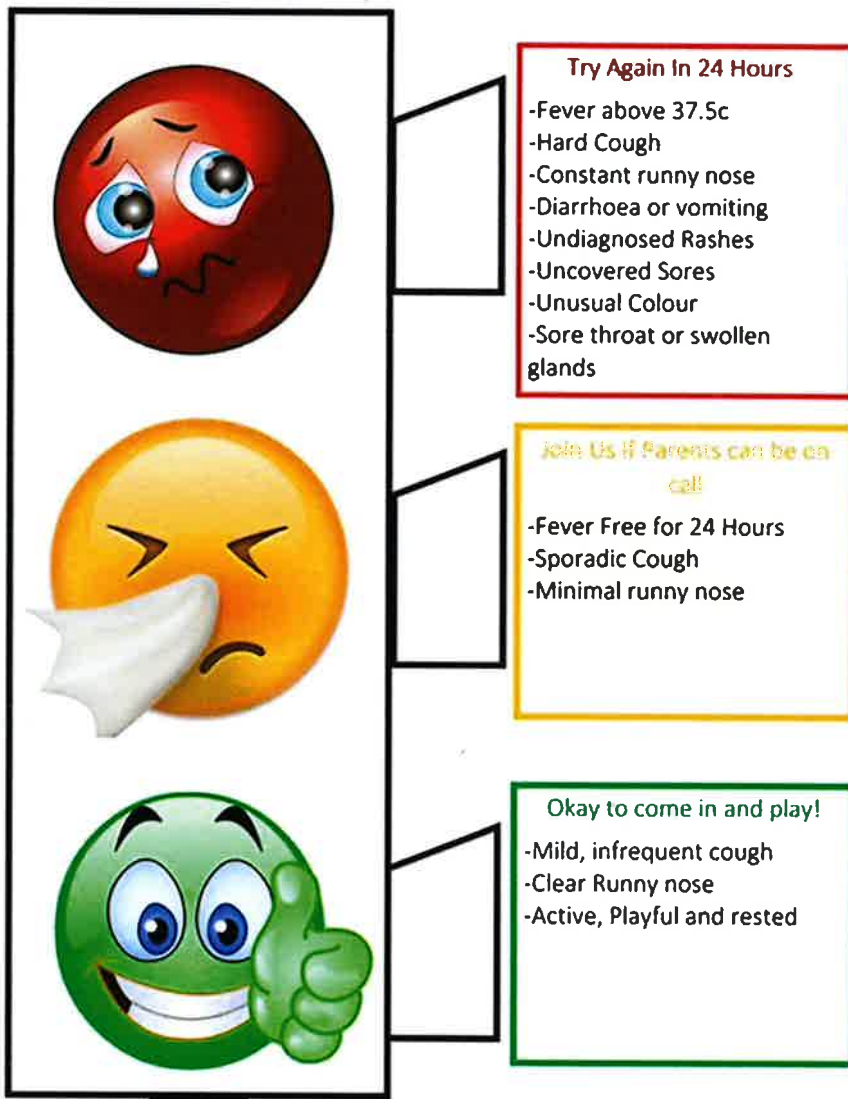
## Medication

If your child requires medication while they are at Preschool, it must be recorded on a Medication Sheet, available at the sign in desk. Please give this completed sheet and the medication to a staff member. Do not leave medication in your child’s bag.

We will only give medication prescribed by a Doctor. **It must come to Preschool in the original bottle, tube or packaging it is dispensed in and must be labelled with your child's name, dosage and expiry date clearly visible.**

If your child is an Asthmatic, Anaphylactic, Diabetic, or suffers from Epilepsy or Eczema, we require an emergency action plan signed by a Doctor with the appropriate medication, (e.g Claratyne, Ventolin or Ep-iPen) before they start at the preschool. This medication must be kept at the preschool at all times.

## Exclusion Periods for Illnesses



## Exclusion periods for Illnesses

### Illness spreads quickly among young children.

The National Health and Medical Research Council recommends:

“ that children who are physically unwell (eg. thick green mucous, coughing, sneezing) should be excluded from attending school, preschool and child care centres. “

<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF CASES</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF CONTACTS</b>
Chicken pox	Exclude for at least 5 days AND until all blisters have dried.	Any child with an immune deficiency (e.g. leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded.
Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased.	Not excluded.
Diarrhoea	Exclude until diarrhoea has ceased for 24hours	Not excluded.
Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Until blisters have dried.	Not excluded.
Herpes (cold sores)	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible.	Not excluded.

<b>CONDITION</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF CASES</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF CONTACTS</b>
Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing.	Not excluded.
Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after onset of rash.	Immunised contacts not excluded. Unimmunised contacts should be excluded until 14 days after the first day of appearance of rash in the last case. If unimmunised contacts are vaccinated within 72 hrs of their first contact with the first case they may return to school.
Whooping cough	Exclude the child for 5 days after starting antibiotic treatment, or for 21 days from the onset of coughing.	Contact public health unit for specialist advice. Exclude unimmunised household contacts aged less than 7 years for 14 days after the last exposure to infection or until they have taken 5 days of a 14-day course of antibiotics. (Exclude close child care contacts until they have commenced antibiotics).
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude if diarrhoea present.	Not excluded.

A more comprehensive list is available at  
<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/reports/clinical%20guidelines/ch55-staying-healthy.pdf>

## Fees

Minooka Preschool is a 'not for profit' service.

All monies that are collected as fees or fundraising are used to run and resource the Preschool. Fees are necessary to ensure a service maintains the best of staff and equipment. Fees are set by the Committee and are subject to change at its discretion. Fees must be paid in advance as per fee statement. Fees must be paid either by the term or half term, or by an arrangement discussed with the Director.

To secure their child's position each family is asked to pay four weeks fees in advance on enrolment. This bond is used as the child's last four weeks fees of attendance at Minooka Preschool.

The fee statement for terms 1, 2 and 3 are issued prior to the beginning of the term and will show fee weeks as:

**Monday Week one – 5 weeks fees due**

**Monday Week five – the remainder of term fees (usually 5 weeks) due.**

This differs in Term 4 depending on whether your child is returning to Minooka or going to big school. If not returning, your original bond payment will be applied to the last weeks of attendance. More specific information is supplied to you with Term 4 fees.

Four term weeks notice in writing is required of a child's withdrawal from Minooka Preschool. Provided four week's notice is given the bond can be applied to the remaining weeks of attendance.

The exception to this is term four - If a position is to be vacated during term four, and that position cannot be filled, the parent will be required to pay fees for the remainder of the term. Filling a vacancy in term four will be at the discretion of the Management Committee.

**Fees can be paid in the following ways:**

- **Direct Deposit into Minooka's account via the internet.**  
The child must be clearly identifiable on our Bank Statement; it is advisable to give a copy of the deposit receipt to Minooka's office. Fees will not be receipted until the payment has appeared on the bank statement.

**Account Name:** Minooka Preschool Centre

**Our BSB is:** 032 167

**Account number** 62 1083

- **Cheque:** please identify your child's name on the envelope and the back of the cheque.

## **Minooka Preschool does not accept cash or card as fee payment.**

Payments must be made promptly.

If a payment is missed for any reason, the child's position may be placed in jeopardy.

Fees must be paid if children are absent for any reason, including vacation or illness.

Fees are **not** charged for Staff Development days, public holidays or school holidays.

## **Fee Subsidy**

Subsidies may be available for families who meet the criteria specified by the NSW Government and hold a current Low Income Health Care card. To be eligible for this, a form must be filled out and returned together your health care card which we will copy and keep on file at the preschool.

## **Centrelink Claims**

Minooka Preschool is a 'Registered Service' with the Family Assistance Office , Centrelink, which means families are **NOT** eligible for any Child Care Benefit or Rebate.

All fees must be paid in full.



## General Information

- Please **clearly label all belongings**. This includes clothes, healthy snack, drinks and lunch items.
- Please do not send toys, books or jewellery to Preschool as they can become lost or damaged and the centre can accept no responsibility.
- You will be notified if your child becomes sick at Preschool. Your mobile/home numbers will be contacted first and then others on your contact card will be called if contact cannot be made with you.
- It is very important that the information on your enrolment form and contact card remain up to date. This includes phone numbers (incl. mobile phone numbers), emergency contact numbers, and authority details.
- The enrolment form and contact card is a legal document. As such, any changes made to it must be made by you and those changes signed and dated.
- In the event of serious injury or illness, a staff member may seek medical treatment if a parent/guardian is not available. The expense will be incurred by the parent or guardian. The Preschool accepts no responsibility for injury. School accident insurance is available.
- Open, honest communication is essential if families and staff are to work together to ensure each child's needs are met.
- We love to hear any comments you may have about the Preschool, our Educators or the program.
- We happily accept donations of usable paper or card for collage or craft.



*Building the next  
generation.*