Early Learning Centre Handbook 2027



Yarragon Primary School and Early Learning Centre

65 Loch Street Yarragon
Ph: 5634 2375

Welcome to all the families of Yarragon Early Learning Centre.

We feel privileged that you have chosen to send your child to our centre and we look forward to joining with you on this journey of learning.

The following handbook has been created to help explain some of the underlying principles and regular practises of our service. While this book covers many areas, it is not exhaustive so please feel free to contact us with clarification or queries that you may have.

We look forward to working with you soon,

The Yarragon ELC educators.

Contact Details:

Yarragon Primary School and Early Learning Centre

- **65 Loch Street, Yarragon 3823**
- **03 5634 2375**
- **Yarragon.ps@education.vic.gov.au**
- **www.yarragonps.com**

Centre Philosophy

The Yarragon Early Learning Centre strives to provide a friendly and open environment where families feel welcomed and valued. We are inclusive of all children and families including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Community.

We acknowledge the importance of forming successful relationships with children, families and the community which optimizes positive outcomes for each child enabling them to reach their full potential. Promoting the implementation of the child safe standards so that each child feels safe and connected is embedded in our services everyday practice.

We endeavour to provide a play based learning environment that reflects the children's interests and ideas, provides open ended and creative experiences and caters for children's individual needs. An environment that is child centred, rich in a range of materials, resources and opportunities in which children can engage and excel as confident learners and become valuable members of the wider school community.

What We Offer

4 year old group
Our program offers 3 groups over 3 days in a rotational kindergarten session model. Pre-school aged children with each group attend 2 x 7.5 hours days

Blue Group: Monday / Wednesday 8.30 am – 4.00 pm
Red Group: Tuesday / Wednesday 8.30 am – 4.00 pm
Green Group: Monday / Tuesday 8.30 am – 4.00 pm

3 year old group
Our program runs for 15 hours over 2 days

Yellow Group: Thursday / Friday 8.30 am – 4.00 pm.

Enrolments

- Children must turn 4 years of age by 30th April 2027 to attend.
- Children must turn 3 years of age by 30th April 2027 to attend and can only attend once they have turned 3 years of age.
- Children can only attend **ONE** funded kindergarten program. This means your child **cannot** attend another kindergarten or child care centre that offers a funded kindergarten program. Please complete the enclosed Funded Kindergarten Place Declaration in your pack and return to kinder on Tuesday 8th December 2026.
- Children **cannot** attend two years of 3 year old kindergarten

Term Dates for 2027

Term 1: 27th January to 25th March *
Term 2: 12th April to 25th June
Term 3: 12th July to 17th September
Term 4: 4th October to 17th December

** The first session of the year is designated as a 'set up day' (which means there are no kinder sessions). Individual letters regarding arrangements for the start of the year are included in your Parent Information Packs.*

Centre Program

At Yarragon Early Learning Centre (ELC), we believe that kindergarten is a time of growth, discovery, and learning for every child. Our learning spaces are thoughtfully designed to support the development of social, physical, emotional, and cognitive skills.

Children in the year before school are enrolled in a funded kindergarten program through Yarragon ELC. This program provides 15 hours of funded kindergarten each week, offered over two days. Please note that each child is eligible to attend a state-funded kindergarten program at one service only.

We believe that children learn best through direct, hands-on experiences with the world around them. Our Centre provides a rich environment where children can develop confidence, independence, problem-solving skills, analytical thinking, and a deep curiosity about how things work.

To foster this, we offer open-ended activities that allow children to explore at their own pace and follow their individual interests. Some areas, such as the book corner and box construction table, remain consistent

throughout the year to provide a sense of security and familiarity. Other spaces are regularly refreshed to reflect the children's evolving interests, ensuring the program stays engaging and relevant.

Our educators work in collaboration with children, guiding their explorations and encouraging reflection on their learning experiences. Key learning moments are often documented to capture the many meaningful outcomes of play.

As professionals, we connect these observations to the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), which identifies five key areas of learning and development essential to children's growth and wellbeing.

These areas are as follows:

Outcome 1: Identity

- Children feel safe, secure and supported
- Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and sense of agency
- Children develop knowledgeable and confident self-identities
- Children learn to interact in relation to others with care, empathy and respect

Outcome 2: Community

- Children develop a sense of belonging to groups and communities and an understanding of the reciprocal right and responsibilities necessary for active civic participation
- Children respond to diversity with respect
- Children become aware of fairness
- Children become socially responsible and show respect for the environment

Outcome 3: Wellbeing

- Children become strong in their social, emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- Children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing

Outcome 4: Learning

- Children develop dispositions for learning such as curiosity, cooperation, confidence, creativity, commitment, enthusiasm, persistence, imagination and reflexivity
- Children develop a range of skills and processes such as problem solving, inquiry, experimentation, hypothesizing, researching and investigating
- Children transfer and adapt what they have learnt from one context to another
- Children resource their own learning through connecting with people, places, technologies and natural and processed materials

Outcome 5: Communication

- Children interact verbally and non-verbally with others for a range of purposes
- Children engage with a range of texts and get meaning from these texts
- Children express ideas and make meaning using a range of media
- Children begin to understand how symbols and pattern systems work
- Children use information and communication technologies to access information, investigate ideas and represent their thinking

Throughout the year we will be referring to this document to verify the learning that children are participating in.

Our programs do contain formalized times when children come together for group activities. Formal group times may be with small or large groups of children and educators, they will involve; music, movement, drama, games, and stories.

What to expect in the first few weeks

The first term at kindergarten is an important time for every child.

For some, it may be their first experience away from home and their immediate family — a time to:

- Venture into a new environment
- Meet new people and learn to trust
- Mix socially and share with other children
- Participate and cooperate in group situations

At Yarragon ELC, we aim to make kindergarten a welcoming, safe, and happy place where every child feels valued and secure. Building your child's self-confidence is a key part of their early development, and we work closely with families to support this important stage of growth.

You can help your child settle and thrive by:

- Talking together about the positive experiences they have at kindergarten
- Ensuring your child attends regularly and arrives on time
- Showing interest in what your child does and learns at kinder
- Praising their efforts and positive behaviour
- Sharing with us any information that helps us better understand your child

Separation Anxiety in children

Separation from family, particularly parents, is a normal part of early childhood. It often reflects a child's need to hold onto what feels safe in a world that can sometimes seem overwhelming. As children mature and gain confidence, they learn to trust the caregivers with whom they are left, and their anxiety gradually eases.

While this can be a challenging time for both parents and children, it's important to remember that these feelings are common and temporary. Most children adjust as they become familiar with their new environment and build trusting relationships with educators.

To help your child manage separation anxiety, it's important to stay positive, calm, and encouraging. Please let staff know if your child may need some extra support.

Helpful tips for navigating this stage:

- Create quick goodbye rituals – Lingering can make parting more difficult and prolong anxiety. A short, predictable goodbye helps your child feel secure.
- Be consistent – Try to do drop-offs in the same way each day. Familiar routines help your child build confidence, independence, and trust in both you and the environment.
- Give focused attention – When saying goodbye, be present, calm, and affectionate. Offer reassurance, say your goodbye confidently, and then leave promptly, even if your child protests.

Attending Kindergarten

For each day your child attends kindergarten, they must be signed in and out of the Centre. In 2027 we are trialling a digital sign in on an ipad at the desk in the foyer. All families will receive their Arrival sign in pin closer to the start of the year.

Families are required to provide contact details for every person who may drop off or collect their child. If someone other than a parent or guardian is collecting your child, please ensure their name is listed as an authorised person on your child's enrolment form.

In the case of an emergency, verbal authorisation may be given over the phone, but the person's details must then be added to your authorised contacts as soon as possible.

Under Department of Education and Training (DE) regulations, we are not permitted to release a child to anyone who is not listed as an authorised person. This includes staff from the onsite Outside Hours School Care (OHSC) program run by TheirCare**. If your family uses this service, please ensure TheirCare is added to your authorised persons list.**

For everyone's safety, please make sure all gates and doors are securely closed when arriving and departing the Centre.

When not to attend Kindergarten

To ensure the health and safety of all children at Yarragon ELC, we kindly ask that any unwell children remain at home until they have fully recovered. This helps to prevent the spread of illness among children, families, and educators.
Families are expected to follow public health guidelines regarding the recommended exclusion periods for specific illnesses.
For a complete summary of these requirements, please refer to Appendix A.

Dressing for Kindergarten





Yarragon ELC has an optional kindergarten T-shirt available for purchase from the School Office for **$20 each**. Sizes 4, 6, and 8 are available.
Children are welcome to wear casual clothing, provided it meets the following guidelines:

- **Comfort and practicality** – Clothing should be seasonally appropriate, well-fitting, and comfortable, allowing children to run, climb, and play freely. We encourage clothing that can get dirty, muddy, or wet, as outdoor play is a key part of our program. Please include a spare change of seasonally appropriate clothes each day in case of spills or messy play.
- **Sun protection (September–April)** – In line with our SunSmart Policy, every child must wear a wide-brimmed hat that shades their face, ears, and neck during the warmer months (until the end of April and again from September).
    - Yarragon Primary School sells broad-brimmed hats for $15 each.
    - The Centre provides sunscreen; however, we encourage families to apply sunscreen at home before arrival.
- **Cold weather** – During cooler months, please ensure your child brings a warm coat, as outdoor play continues throughout the year.
- **Labelling** – All items of clothing, including hats and coats, should be clearly labelled with your child's name.
- **Footwear** – We strongly recommend closed-toed shoes suitable for running and climbing. Sandals and thongs do not provide adequate protection and may prevent children from participating fully in activities.

Lunch and Snacks

4 year old group - Please provide a healthy and substantial lunch and snack for your child each day, along with a full water bottle.

3 year old group - Please provide healthy snack, enough for two breaks, along with a full water bottle.

At Yarragon ELC, we encourage children to develop independence during meal times.
Please ensure your child can open their lunch box, snack containers, and drink bottle on their own. It's also important to check that these items are practical and appropriate for your child's needs.
We ask families to provide nutritious foods that support children's growth and development. Please avoid foods high in sugar and low in nutritional value, such as lollies, chocolate, and cordial in drink bottles.

Each child will need:

- A clearly labelled drink bottle
- Snack and lunch containers that are easy for them to manage independently

The Nutrition Department of the Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne, offers the following suggestions for healthy lunch and snack options:

BEST CHOICES

- Fruit – fresh, tinned or dried
- Try vegetable sticks with dips or a small container with mixed vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, peas, cucumber.
- Fruit yoghurts, cheese stick or slice (don't forget to include a cold pack to keep cool)
- Sandwiches. Try a variety of breads and fillings. Some different breads include: rolls, pita bread, flat bread, fruit loaf or buns, foccacias, scones, pikelets, muffins, crumpets, crisp breads, rice cakes, corn thins to name a few
- Dry biscuits

BEST LEFT OUT

- Dried fruit bars and 'straps' or 'wraps' and lollies are very high in sugar, low in fibre and stick to children's teeth causing tooth decay
- Chips and packets of crisps
- 'Dairy desserts' are high in sugar
- Sweet dips such as chocolate spreads
- Donuts and creamy cakes
- lollies and chocolate bars
- Cordial/juice/soft drink/flavoured milk

We have also enclosed a "Pick and Mix" flyer from Nutrition Australia that has some valuable healthy lunch box ideas.

Celebrations

We enjoy celebrating special occasions and strive to include a variety of cultural festivals and events that are important to our families. If you would like to participate or share information about your celebrations, please reach out to one of our educators..

We enjoy celebrating Easter, Mothers Day, Fathers Day and Christmas.

Birthdays

Children enjoy celebrating their birthdays at kinder. Parents are welcome to bring along some individually packed items to share with the group. Please check for any allergies first and provide a list of ingredients of the cakes or celebration food.

Artwork

Please remember to collect your child's artwork each week. Artwork and notices are placed in each child's locker or take home file which is placed out for collection each afternoon. Don't despair if your child doesn't bring home much (or in some cases, any!) artwork. Some children are much more into being creative with block buildings or sand creations.

Fees

From 2023, the Victorian Government has provided funding which allows for all kindergarten programs to be free for three and four-year-old children saving you and your family up to $2,500 per year for their program. Free Kinder is a critical component of the Victorian Government's **Best Start, Best Life reform.**

Yarragon Early Learning Centre will participate in the free kinder initiative so you will not be required to make any fee payments for three and four-year-old kinder programs in 2026.

Best Start Best Life

KINDERGARTEN Victorian Government Approved

Services will receive funding directly from the Victorian Government so that families are not out of pocket. The funding will go directly to your service, not your child or your family.

(Families with a current Pension or Health Care Card are still required to provide a copy of their card for funding requirements. A copy of your current concession card must be taken by a staff member to be eligible for the subsidy.

Facebook

We have a Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Yarragon-Primary-School-Early-Learning-Centre-153596291382208/. Please go on and "Like" if you have not already.

Interacting with the School

Yarragon ELC is part of Yarragon Primary School. At the discretion of the educators, children will be taken to the school to enjoy its wonderful facilities and build relationships with other students. Our goal in fostering this connection with Yarragon Primary School is to make the transition to school a richer experience for the children entering Foundation next year.

Information regarding transition to school will be sent out to all families directly from the school.

Rosters

The ELC relies on parents help and involvement to run smoothly. Parents are most welcome to help out with 'parent duty' during the kinder sessions. You don't have to stay for the whole morning or afternoon if you don't have that much time, a couple of hours will also be greatly appreciated.

You may be asked to help with cleaning up, wiping tables, sweeping the floor after lunch, cleaning up paint brushes or supervising an activity. You may also be asked to help with other duties at different times throughout the year so please keep an eye out for notices from the ELC staff.

Washing – we ask that families assist with some washing during the year. A roster will be in place from Term 1 and shared between all groups. Each family will be asked to help with some washing once throughout the year.

Remember, dads, grandparents, aunts, uncles or special friends can do duty too!

Photography

To keep in line with the updated Child Safe Standards of 2025, there is to be **no photography or videography at all within the grounds or buildings of the Early Learning Centre.**
If you have any queries, please speak to your child's Teacher.

Recycling

We try to encourage an awareness of the environment and the need to recycle where possible. For this and other reasons we ask for donations of any wrapping paper, greeting/Christmas cards, polystyrene meat trays, corks, bottle tops, material, boxes, wood off cuts, yoghurt containers and any other items you think may be useful to us. Special requests may be made at different times of the year. Also please think of us before discarding any kitchenware, old clothes or things that we might be able to use for dramatic play.

We are always after spare clothes (sizes 3-6), dolls clothes, old towels or face washers, gumboots (sizes 3-6), plants (child-safe) and fresh flowers to brighten up the room.

Your child's progress

We encourage parents to communicate regularly with our educators. Keeping track of your child's progress is important. If there are any specific issues you'd like us to address with your child, please feel free to come and chat or schedule a private meeting with your child's teacher.

Illness and Emergency Care

A child's parent/guardian will be notified immediately any medical emergency occurs concerning their child and arrangements made for the child to be taken from the centre as soon as possible.
Parents must give authorisation on enrolment for an ambulance and or medical/hospital service to be sought in the case of a medical emergency.
Parents must provide emergency contact numbers which will be used in case a parent/guardian is unable to be contacted.
Please try to make contacts who are authorised to collect children, geographically close to the kindergarten. Contacts that are located away from the immediate area should not be used if possible.
Staff have the authority to take a child from the centre without the consent of the parent/guardian in a medical emergency. If an ambulance is called, a staff member will accompany the child if possible.
Please note an ambulance will be called if medically required whether you have ambulance cover or not. The kindergarten will not be held financially responsible for any costs incurred in such an emergency.

Staff Training/ELC Closure Days

Staff will undertake approximately 3-4 days of training throughout the year where the centre will be closed. Information regarding this will be provided at the time.

Immunisation

All enrolments are required to be immunised as per the "No Jab, No Play" Policy. **An up to date immunisation certificate for your child must be provided before they can start at the Yarragon ELC.**

Medication

Must not be left in your child's bag. Give any medication required by your child during the session to an educator. You will need to fill in a medication permission form, noting the name of the medication, dosage to be given and the time required to be administered. The medication needs to be in its original container, and prescription medication needs to have the pharmacy label attached; clearly citing the child's name, name of the medication, dosage, and not be past its expiry date.

If your child experiences asthma/anaphylaxis:

- You will need to provide a current management plan, and provide asthma medications and epipen/anapen to the staff each session, or alternatively medications can be kept at kinder for the year. A doctor must have signed this form. Staff will work with families to create a risk minimisation plan and communication plan after the student has commenced for the year.
- **If you attend the service without your required medication your child will not be able to attend kinder on that day until medication is accompanying them.**
- Please ensure you inform staff of any changes to asthma/anaphylaxis plans immediately.

Communication with Families

The educators at Yarragon Early Learning Centre (ELC) place a strong emphasis on partnering with families in their child's education, and we believe that effective communication is a vital aspect of this partnership.

Program plans will be displayed regularly, and our educators welcome feedback from families regarding their experiences with the program, as well as any suggestions for future improvements. Information about the program, upcoming events, and meetings can be found in the foyer area, so we encourage you to check this information frequently. Newsletters and other relevant notices will be available in your child's locker.

We utilize Compass as our electronic communication platform with families, and we may also send occasional emails from the Yarragon Primary School email address. For those children who will transition to Yarragon Primary School, using Compass will be particularly beneficial, as it is the same platform they will use.

A Parent Guide will be available online, and passwords will be distributed early in the new year. Compass is also used to record kindergarten absences due to illness, medical appointments, or other reasons. Please ensure you log your child's absence by 8:30 AM.

If you have not logged an absence before you return to your next session, you will be prompted to do so during the Arrival sign in process.

Positive Interactions

At Yarragon ELC, we believe in encouraging all children by praising appropriate behaviours. Our goal is to build strong, trusting relationships between educators and children, and we aim to achieve this through positive interactions. Educators will never withhold anything from or exclude children as a form of discipline. Instead, our approach focuses on redirecting children to more acceptable behaviours and reinforcing these through positive responses.

Emergency Evacuation Procedures

Please refer to Emergency Evacuation Procedures located in the ELC. During the course of the year the children will undertake evacuation training at the ELC.
This program will be gently introduced with much discussion and drill practice.

Code Red Fire Alert Days

At the direction of the Department of Education and Training (DET), School and Children's Services in high risk areas will be closed on days declared as Code Red Fire Danger Rating Day. This may affect our ELC.
Where possible up to 3 days' notice will be given however, in some instances, less notice may be provided. You will be notified by the kinder if we are closing, but you can also check the DEECD website for details **www.education.gov.au**

Concerns or Queries

Should you have any concerns or queries we encourage you to contact the ELC Educational Leader and Nominated Supervisor, Lee Sheehan or Principal, Melissa Rock on 56342375.

Appendix A

Minimum Period of Exclusion from Primary Schools and Children's Services Centres for Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts (Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2019)

In this Schedule, medical certificate means a certificate of a registered medical practitioner.

Column 1 Number	Column 2 Conditions	Column 3 Exclusion of cases	Column 4 Exclusion of Contacts
1	Chickenpox	Exclude until all blisters have dried. This is usually at least 5 days after the rash appears in unimmunised children, but may be less in previously immunised children	Any child with an immune deficiency (for example, leukaemia) or receiving chemotherapy should be excluded for their own protection. Otherwise not excluded
2	Conjunctivitis	Exclude until discharge from eyes has ceased	Not excluded
3	Cytomegalovirus (CMV) infection	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
4	Diarrhoeal illness*	Exclude until there has not been vomiting or a loose bowel motion for 24 hours	Not excluded
5	Diphtheria	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is received following at least two negative throat swabs, the first not less than 24 hours after finishing a course of antibiotics and the other 48 hours later	Exclude family/household contacts until cleared to return by the Chief Health Officer
6	Glandular fever (Epstein-Barr Virus infection)	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
7	Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude until all blisters have dried	Not excluded
8	Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	Exclude until 48 hours after initiation of effective therapy	Not excluded
9	Hepatitis A	Exclude until a medical certificate of recovery is received, but not before 7 days after the onset of jaundice or illness	Not excluded
10	Hepatitis B	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
11	Hepatitis C	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
12	Herpes (cold sores)	Young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices should	Not excluded

Column 1 Number	Column 2 Conditions	Column 3 Exclusion of cases	Column 4 Exclusion of Contacts
		be excluded while the lesion is weeping. Lesions to be covered by dressing, where possible	
13	Human immuno-deficiency virus infection (HIV)	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
14	Impetigo	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced. Sores on exposed surfaces must be covered with a watertight dressing	Not excluded
15	Influenza and influenza like illnesses	Exclude until well	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer
16	Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	Not excluded
17	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 hours of exposure with any infectious case, or received Normal Human Immunoglobulin (NHIG) within 144 hours of exposure of any infectious case, they may return to the facility
18	Meningitis (bacterial —other than meningococcal meningitis)	Exclude until well	Not excluded
19	Meningococcal infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has been completed	Not excluded if receiving carrier eradication therapy
20	Mumps	Exclude for 5 days or until swelling goes down (whichever is sooner)	Not excluded
21	Molluscum contagiosum	Exclusion is not necessary	Not excluded
22	Pertussis (Whooping cough)	Exclude the child for 21 days after the onset of cough or until they have completed 5 days of a course of antibiotic treatment	Contacts aged less than 7 years in the same room as the case who have not received three effective doses of pertussis vaccine should be excluded

Column 1 Number	Column 2 Conditions	Column 3 Exclusion of cases	Column 4 Exclusion of Contacts
			for 14 days after the last exposure to the infectious case, or until they have taken 5 days of a course of effective antibiotic treatment
23	Poliovirus infection	Exclude for at least 14 days from onset. Re-admit after receiving medical certificate of recovery	Not excluded
24	Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (head lice)	Exclude until the day after appropriate treatment has commenced	Not excluded
25	Rubella (German measles)	Exclude until fully recovered or for at least four days after the onset of rash	Not excluded
26	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)	Exclude until medical certificate of recovery is produced	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer
27	Shiga toxin or Verotoxin producing Escherichia coli (STEC or VTEC)	Exclude if required by the Chief Health Officer and only for the period specified by the Chief Health Officer	Not excluded
28	Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the child has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours and the child feels well	Not excluded
29	Tuberculosis (excluding latent tuberculosis)	Exclude until receipt of a medical certificate from the treating physician stating that the child is not considered to be infectious	Not excluded
30	Typhoid fever (including paratyphoid fever)	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer	Not excluded unless considered necessary by the Chief Health Officer