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Vision

We have big hearts to grow little minds

Values

Nurture	Culture	Respect
Identity	Love	Trust
Inclusion	Empathy	Whaanaugnatanga
Community	Tuakana Teina	

Philosophy

At Little Minds Early Learning Centre we believe in nurturing and inspiring little minds to reach their full potential, just as the koru unfurls into a silver fern.

We build a respectful community where all cultures and identities are embraced.

Through empowering our tamariki they will gain the ability to become confident and competent future citizens of Aotearoa.

The Parent Handbook

Welcome to Little Minds Early Learning Centre Parent Handbook. This handbook is a guide to commonly asked questions. If you have a question that is not covered in this handbook please feel free to contact us.

LICENSED HOURS AND AGE GROUPS

At Little Minds we are licensed Monday to Friday from 7.30am to 5.30pm for children aged from 3 months until they go to school (aged 5 or 6). We are licensed for 50 children at any one time, including 12 under twos.

ABSENCES

If your child is going to be absent for any reason please contact us via text, email or phone.

Unfortunately, if your child is going to be absent due to illness or other family reasons, fees will still be charged for the enrolled hours.

If a child is absent for longer than 21 consecutive days their WINZ and government funding will cease and the parent or caregiver may be liable to cover these costs.

ATTENDANCE REGISTER

Little Minds Early Learning Centre is required by the Ministry of Education to ensure all children are signed in and out of the centre. An attendance register is kept in the centre's foyer for parents to sign as they arrive and leave. The attendance register is a legal document audited by the Ministry of education; therefore, accurate times are essential. This is also what we would use for a roll call if there was an emergency and we had to evacuate the building so it is very important to us. Thank you for your co-operation with this.

BELONGINGS

Please ensure all belongings that come to the centre are named including bags, spare clothing, hats, lunch bottles, drink bottles, etc. We always have a supply of vivid markers if you wish to use these when you come in. When belongings are named, it is easier to return them to their rightful owners. If any belongings are found with no name they are kept in lost property. Please remember to check this when you arrive or leave.

CELEBRATIONS (BIRTHDAY/LEAVING DAY)

At Little Minds Early Learning Centre there are special celebrations which are held to acknowledge birthdays and when leaving Little Minds.

A final celebration occurs on a child's leaving day when they are presented with a leaving certificate and any of their creations.

All families are welcome to share in these celebrations, and you are more than welcome to bring a cake if you wish. We provide treats for children with food allergies.

CHANGE OF HOURS

If you wish to change the days your child attends, please email our Centre Manager. Two weeks' notice is preferred and each request is treated on a case-by-case basis as spaces may not be available.

COLLECTION OF CHILDREN

Our policy on the collection of children has been made for the safety and protection of the children. Only those people listed on your child's enrolment form may pick them up from Little Minds Early Learning Centre. Names of whanau/friends with permission to pick-up children can be added (or removed) from an enrolment form at any time. To help our staff, if there are Court orders (copies must be supplied) and a photo would be helpful to keep with your child's enrolment form.

COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS

Little Minds Early Learning Centre values quality communication with parent's caregivers and the wider community. Methods of communication include our website, our Facebook page, Storypark, by email or text. Please note that we have an open-door policy so you are always welcome to talk to our lovely Teachers or Centre Manager at any time.

COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Please see complaints procedure which is always displayed in our foyer.

FEES

WINZ

WINZ allowances are available for some families. Please see our manager to discuss.

WEEKLY FEES

For specific fees please refer to our fee schedule and contact our manager for further details. We require 1 weeks fees paid in advance and there is also a one off charge for a wet bag which is \$22.50.

LATE PICK UP

Should a late pick up outside of enrolled hours occur late fees will be charged.

HOLIDAY FEES

Little Minds ELC offer a 50% discount on fees over the 2-week Christmas break. We also offer you a 1-week holiday at 50% to use at your discretion throughout the year, on condition that your account is kept up to date.

SIBLING DISCOUNT

We also offer our families 10% discount when siblings attend Little Minds. Please see our Administrator or Manager to set this up and let you know how it works.

FOOD

Little Minds early learning centre has a healthy eating policy and so we encourage parents to provide healthy food for morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea in a named lunch box. Most lunch boxes consist of a sandwich, fruit, yogurt, crackers, cheese and one treat item. Water is available at all times, but it is recommended that children bring their own named drink bottle of water each day.

AS per Ministry of Health guidelines “Reducing food-related choking for babies and young children at early learning services” (2020)

We exclude the following:

- Juice and Flavoured milk- water is preferred
- Whole or pieces of nuts
- Large seeds, like pumpkin or sunflower seeds
- Hard or chewy sweets or lollies
- Crisps or chippies
- Hard rice crackers
- Dried fruit
- Sausages, saveloys and cheerio's
- Popcorn
- Marshmallows
- Please avoid meals that need to be heated. Alternatives could be sandwiches, wraps, cold pasta salad, pita breads or creamy rice.

Please read the guidelines included in your enrolment pack with information on how to alter high risk foods also.

HOLIDAYS

Little Minds early learning centre is open throughout the year, we are closed on statutory holidays and weekends only. Please note that there is a charge for statutory holidays. If you have a planned holiday for longer than three weeks, please see our manager as soon as possible.

INDEPENDENCE OF THE CHILD

At the core of our philosophy lies the independence of the child. Please be aware of allowing your child to be independent and perform tasks for him/herself. Examples of this would be carrying their own school bag, putting his/her lunchbox and water bottle on the food trolley.

SICKNESS

To minimise the risk of infection, if your child is sick, please ensure that they stay home. Please see our illness and infectious disease policy, and our exclusion due to illness policy for more information.

E-PORTFOLIO

To document each child's learning journey with Little Minds early learning centre a Storypark portfolio is developed over time, this is full of information and photographs. Your child's e-portfolio is an important tool in creating a link between Little Minds and the home environment.

Parents are encouraged to add their own memories to the portfolio, for example; aspirations for their child, pictures of their family, stories from holidays and special family celebrations, or anything else you would like to share.

CLOTHING

Here at Little Minds, we engage in messy play, painting, water play, clay and all those lovely messy things that you don't want to do at home 😊 please ensure your child is dressed appropriately in clothes that you don't mind getting dirty. Please pack plenty of spare clothing and underwear each day. Accidents do happen and children often get wet and dirty from water play during summer time and mud in the winter time.

During the winter months please supply your child with a jacket and warm clothes, gum boots are great too.

HATS

Due to the severity of our New Zealand sun, hats are compulsory in the summer months, we have 'No hat – No outside' policy. Named hats can be kept in the hat basket at Little Minds or in your child's bag.

MEDICATION

All medicine to be administered during licensed hours must be signed into the Medical Register by a parent or caregiver. Unfortunately, we cannot administer medicines without this being done. Please let a teacher know that your child needs medicine, and they can put it in a safe place out of reach of children, please don't leave it in your child's bags.

All medicine must be prescribed by a health provider and display a current label with your child's name, dosage and expiry date.

Pamol or pain relievers may be administered if they are prescribed by a doctor for acute on-going conditions such as ear infections.

If your child has an on-going medical condition and needs to keep medication at school for example; an asthma inhaler or Epi-pen, please ensure you fill out an individual health plan form available from one of the teachers.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

If your child has any special requirements for example; long term medication or an allergy, please ensure this is clearly stated on the enrolment form and discussed at the parent introduction visit. This information will allow the teaching team to plan for your child's needs before they start, ensuring a smooth transition.

PRE-ENROLMENT VISITS

Before your child starts at Little Minds, we encourage you to attend 2-3 pre-enrolment visits with them, please feel free to discuss this with the Centre Manager. You know your child best and we are here to make sure it is a smooth transition for you and your child.

WAYS IN WHICH YOU CAN BE INVOLVED

We would love you to be involved with your child's learning. We have an open-door policy where by you are welcome to come and spend time with your child at the centre. We review policies and procedures regularly and will add these to storypark, send them to you by email and also leave copies of these in the foyer, for you to be involved in the communication and consultation process, we encourage your feedback.

HOW TO APPROACH TELLING YOUR CHILD ABOUT ATTENDING LITTLE MINDS

It's usually best to introduce your child to the idea of starting at an early childhood centre a few days before they start. Too much advanced warning can cause anxiety and too little warning can be a shock. Talk to your child and reassure them about what will happen during their day at Little Minds.

SETTLING YOUR CHILD

We know that it is not easy leaving your child, particularly if they have never been left before. Please talk to our Centre Manager or the Teachers about this, we are experienced in settling children but we will work with you to make it as easy as possible for you and your child.

When you are ready to leave, please always tell your child you are leaving and will be back. If you sneak off, they learn not to trust and often take longer to settle. A Teacher will always help you if needed.

PERSONAL TOYS AT LITTLE MINDS

Please encourage your child to leave toys at home rather than in their bags, the lure of toys in the bag can be too tempting for some children even if it is not their own! Unfortunately, Little Minds can't take responsibility for any toys that come and subsequently go missing or get broken. However, Comfort toys/teddies/special blankets or cuddlies are more than welcome.

TOILETING

Many newly enrolled children are often in the early stages of toilet training, in which case the teachers remind them initially every hour and actively encourage them to go to the toilet. During the early days children may well have accidents as they get too involved in their activities. These accidents create a perfect learning opportunity for the child to complete their understanding of toileting and caring for themselves. Please include plenty of spare underpants and clothes.

NAPPIES

Disposable nappies, pull-ups and wet wipes are provided by Little Minds. Teachers check nappies every 2 hours and all changes are recorded and signed for.

SUNSCREEN

Please apply sunblock to your child before coming in. You are welcome to use the centre one in reception and stamp their hand.

PLASTIC BAG FREE

We are currently working on being plastic bag free, so charge an enrolment fee of \$15.50 which provides each child with their own personalised wet bag for wet clothes.

WITHDRAWING A CHILD FROM LITTLE MINDS

Little Minds requires two weeks written notice of your intention to withdraw your child from school. You will continue to be liable for all fees up to the date of the termination of enrolment.

Two weeks' notice needs to be given in writing if you wish to withdraw your child from our centre. You will continue to be liable for fees on your enrolled days up to the date when your enrolment contract finishes.