

EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICE HANDBOOK



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Welcome to West Wimmera Shire Council's Early Childhood Services

Whether you are new to our early childhood services, or a returning family, we are looking forward to sharing an exciting year with you.

West Wimmera Shire Council manages three kindergartens across the shire – in Goroke, Edenhope and Kaniva - and a childcare program in Edenhope.

In all our early years services we offer a play-based, emergent curriculum, where children initiate and lead their own learning. Our focus is on exploration rather than on teaching specific skills. Children are encouraged to develop social and self-help skills, including learning ways to resolve conflict and become socially-aware.

Our educators acknowledge parents and families as their child's first teachers; and are passionate about encouraging a sense of belonging and providing the best outcomes for children and families.

We welcome you to our service and encourage you to come to us with any questions, concerns or ideas.

Early Childhood services contact details

If your child is going to be absent, please call or email and let educators know. All our early childhood services have mobile phones and answering machines so you can leave a quick message outside of centre hours.

This helps us ensure the safety of your child; particularly for those children who are bus travellers.

Our services

Service	Details
Goroke Kindergarten	9 Compston St, Goroke 5386 1113 0448 955 923 GorokeKindergarten@westwimmera.vic.gov.au
Edenhope Early Childhood Service	52 Langford St, Edenhope 5585 1571 0448 796 816 (kinder) 0400 336 631 (under 3 room) EdenhopeKindergarten@westwimmera.vic.gov.au
Kaniva Kindergarten	25 Baker St, Kaniva 0448 785 317 KanivaKindergarten@westwimmera.vic.gov.au

Early Years Coordinator / Manager Community Support and Wellbeing

Phone: 13 99 72

earlyyears@westwimmera.vic.gov.au.

We understand that in small towns everyone tends to know everyone, and families may be friends with educators outside of the kindergarten. We ask you to please be respectful of our educator's work hours and to reserve your communication about your child in the kindergarten context to official communication channels. In turn, our educators will also respect your time and keep to official channels.

Enrolments

All enrolments are submitted via Xap. [Complete the Expression of Interest form](#), making sure to fill out every section.

No childcare or kindergarten place will be confirmed until all appropriate documentation is submitted.

Questions? Contact the Early Years Coordinator on 13 99 72.

Quick contacts

Need help with...	Contact
Submitting an enrolment	Expression of Interest form
How Xap works	www.xap.rocks or 1300 543 792
Enrolment questions	Early Years Coordinator, 13 99 72

Signing in and out

An iPad is provided so you can sign your child in and out of each session via Xap, our software management program.

Authorised collection

The enrolment form includes a space to authorise other people (nominees) to collect your child. Nominees must be:

- 18 years or older
- the only people educators are permitted to release a child to

If you need to add someone to this list, please let educators know. If they aren't familiar with the person collecting your child, they'll ask for identification.

What to do if...

If...	Please...
You'll be late collecting your child	Arrange alternative pick-up if possible. If you can't, phone educators to let them know. Late fees may apply.
Your child will be absent	Let educators know, or mark them absent on Xap. If we don't hear from you, an educator will text or call to check.

Gate and door safety

Please take care when entering and leaving the kindergarten – close all gates and doors securely behind you and only allow your own children out of the gate.

Drop-off and pick-up times

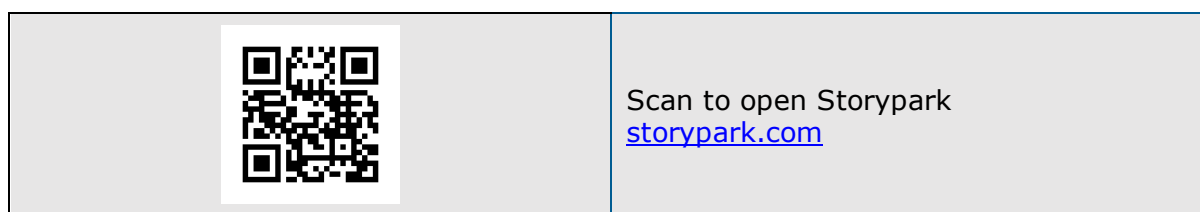
Children cannot be left at the service before the session start time and must be collected promptly at the end. This is a requirement of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations*. See the Hours of Operation chapter for session times and our late pick-up policy.

Program and communication

Sharing your child's learning journey

West Wimmera Shire Council uses Storypark as our secure online communication and learning platform. Storypark helps us build strong partnerships with families by sharing your child's learning, development and experiences throughout their early childhood journey.

Storypark provides families with a window into their child's day, allowing you to celebrate achievements, understand learning, and continue conversations at home.



Through Storypark you can:

- View photos, videos and learning stories about your child.
- Receive updates about your child's learning and development.
- Read service news, reminders and community announcements.
- Comment on your child's learning stories and share learning from home.
- Communicate directly with educators during service operating hours.
- Invite grandparents and other trusted family members to view your child's learning (you control who has access).

Family access to Storypark is free and remains available throughout your child's learning journey.

What you can expect

Our educators use Storypark to strengthen communication and partnerships with families. You can generally expect:

- At least one individual learning story for your child each month.
- Regular updates about your child's learning and interests.
- Service news, events and reminders.
- Responses to messages during service operating hours.

Please note that Storypark complements our face-to-face conversations and does not replace discussions about important matters relating to your child's health, wellbeing or development.

Communicating with educators

To ensure communication is professional, consistent and protects everyone's privacy, families are asked to contact educators only through approved service communication channels.

Please contact educators via Storypark, service email or service phone.

Educators do not communicate with families using personal mobile phones, personal email addresses, text messages or personal social media accounts.

Using approved communication channels:

- protects the privacy of children, families and educators
- maintains professional boundaries
- ensures important information is available to the whole teaching team where appropriate
- supports consistent communication for all families.

For urgent matters, including illness, attendance changes or emergencies, please telephone the service directly.

Respecting privacy

Storypark is a secure and private platform. Families are asked to:

- only upload photos or information relating to their own child
- respect the privacy of other children and families
- keep comments respectful and appropriate
- not copy, download or share photos, videos or learning stories from Storypark on social media or other public platforms without permission from the service and the families involved.

Parents and guardians control who is invited to view their child's Storypark profile and can manage family access at any time.

Working together

We value your knowledge of your child and encourage you to:

- comment on learning stories
- share your child's interests, achievements and experiences from home
- tell us about family events, cultural celebrations and milestones
- discuss your child's goals with educators.

Working together helps us create meaningful learning experiences and supports the best outcomes for your child.

Hours of operation

West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to delivering the Universal Access Free Kindergarten program for children in the two years before school.

For 2027:

- 3-year-old kindergarten will operate for 15 hours per week, delivered across two 7.5-hour sessions.
- 4-year-old Kindergarten will operate for 20 hours per week, delivered across two 7.5-hour sessions and one 5-hour session.

Childcare sessions at Edenhope Early Childhood Service will continue to operate four days per week for 9 hours per day. Additional before and after kindergarten care is also available, subject to place availability. Note: Childcare in Kaniva is delivered by Uniting Vic Tas. Contact details available at <https://www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au/Community/Family-and-children/Childcare/Kaniva-Childcare>

The session arrangements outlined below are closely monitored on an annual basis and are subject to change based on enrolment numbers, regulations and legislation.

Kindergarten hours by service

Service	Group	Days	Hours
Goroke	3- and 4-year-old kindergarten	Monday and Wednesday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Goroke	4-year-old only	Tuesday	8:30am – 1:30pm
Kaniva	3- and 4-year-old kindergarten	Tuesday and Thursday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Kaniva	4-year-old only	Wednesday	8:30am – 1:30pm
Edenhope	3-year-old kindergarten	Monday and Wednesday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Edenhope	4-year-old kindergarten	Tuesday and Thursday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Edenhope	4-year-old kindergarten	Friday	8:30am – 1:30pm
Edenhope	6mth – 3-year-old childcare	Monday to Thursday	8:00am – 5:00pm
Edenhope	3 – 5-year-old childcare	Monday to Thursday	8:00am – 5:00pm
Edenhope	Before kindergarten care	Monday to Thursday	8:00am – 8:30am
Edenhope	After kindergarten care	Monday to Thursday	4:00pm – 5:00pm

Please note: Edenhope Early Childhood Service does not operate childcare, before kinder care or after kinder care on Fridays. Only the 4-year-old Kindergarten session (8:30am–1:30pm) runs on Fridays.

2027 roll-out of additional 4-year-old hours

Additional hours of 4-year-old kindergarten for LGAs:

- between 16 and 20 hours per week from 2027
- between 16 and 25 hours from 2029
- between 16 and 30 hours from 2031.

Additional hours of 4-year-old kindergarten for 2028 priority groups:

- between 16 and 25 hours from 2028
- between 16 and 30 hours from 2030.

More information

- [Best Start, Best Life reforms](#)
- [More hours of 4-year-old kinder](#)
- [Pre-Prep roll-out schedule](#)
- [Benefits of kinder](#)
- [Kinder supports all Victorian children](#)
- [Tips for starting kindergarten](#)
- [Priority access criteria](#)

Orientation

During the initial days we invite you to speak with your child's teachers/ educators to make individual arrangements to suit your family, if necessary, i.e., shorter sessions, parents to stay for a visit, etc. In this way we can tailor the beginning of kindergarten to suit each family rather than have designated orientation sessions.

Drop-off and pick up

Session	Drop off	Pick up
3 and 4-year-old kindergarten	8.30am	4.00pm
Additional 4-year-old hours	8.30am	1.30pm
Childcare	8.00am	5.00pm

If you've been unavoidably held up, please arrange alternative pick-up for your child where possible. If you can't, phone educators to let them know you'll be late. Late fees of \$1 per child per minute may be charged to your account.

We welcome families bringing siblings along at drop-off and pick-up. To help ensure the safety and supervision of all children, please keep siblings with you at all times.

Please do not leave children in parked cars – it is illegal to leave a child unattended in a vehicle, regardless of weather conditions. If you have a sleeping baby in the car or are finding it difficult to come inside, please contact educators so we can help.

Fees

Sessions	Fee	Per
6mth – 3-year-old childcare	\$135	Per day
3 – 5-year-old childcare	\$125	Per day
Kindergarten	Free	2 years (3- and 4-year-old kindergarten)
Before kindergarten care	\$8	Per session
After kindergarten care	\$16	Per session
Late fee	\$1	Per child per minute

West Wimmera Shire Council participates in the Victorian Government's Free Kindergarten Program, providing funded kindergarten at no cost to families. This allows eligible children to attend 15 hours of funded 3-year-old kindergarten and 20 hours of funded 4-year-old Kindergarten per week. For further information, visit www.vic.gov.au/free-kinder.

Please note: there may be small incidental costs throughout the year, e.g. photos, excursions and late pick-up fees.

Paying your fees

Childcare invoices are sent out in advance, fortnightly, through Xap. All families are encouraged to sign up to PayChoice to ensure fees are paid. Families can also opt to pay via BPay.

Childcare places will be cancelled after 2 weeks if fees are not paid.

If you're experiencing difficulty paying your fees, please contact the Early Years Coordinator on 13 99 72 as soon as possible to discuss options.

Childcare places may be cancelled without charge with two weeks (14 days) notice, for example for school holidays or planned family trips – a casual place can then be offered to another family. Cancellations within two weeks are charged normal childcare fees.

Child Care Subsidy

You may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy. All information is at www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/child-care-subsidy.

Eligibility and access

Eligibility for Kindergarten

We provide equal access and participation for all eligible children.

A child is eligible to be enrolled in 3-Year-Old Kindergarten if they turn 3 before 30 April. Children must have turned 3 before they can commence kindergarten – for example, a child who turns 3 in March is eligible to attend that year, but cannot begin sessions until the date they turn 3. Enrolments are accepted from the beginning of the year.

A child is eligible to be enrolled in 4-Year-Old Kindergarten if they turn 4 before 30 April in the year they will attend.

A child who will turn 6 before the end of the year will need to apply for an exemption from school – please ask the kindergarten teacher for assistance if this is the case.

A child must be 6 months of age to be eligible for childcare.

Priority of access

West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to providing equitable access to high-quality early childhood education and care. We welcome all children and families and strive to ensure every child has the opportunity to participate in a safe, inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Where demand for places exceeds availability, services will allocate places in accordance with the Victorian Department of Education Priority of Access Guidelines and relevant Commonwealth Government requirements. Available places will generally be offered in the following order:

Priority	Children who...
Priority 1	- are at risk of abuse or neglect - are in Out-of-Home Care - are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander - are asylum seekers or refugees
Priority 2	- have parents or guardians who are working, studying or undertaking training - have a disability, developmental delay or additional needs - have a parent or family member with a disability - are experiencing family vulnerability or disadvantage - are receiving support through Child and Family Services
Priority 3	All other children

When places are allocated, the service may also consider:

- maintaining continuity of education and care for currently enrolled children
- keeping siblings together where possible

- the age and developmental mix of children, to support quality learning and educator-to-child ratios
- the pattern of attendance requested and service operational requirements.
- children of West Wimmera Shire Council education and care staff

Priority of Access is applied fairly, consistently and without discrimination. Individual family circumstances are treated respectfully and confidentially.

Centre Closure

On occasion, we've been unable to secure a suitably qualified relief educator at short notice, and childcare/kindergarten has been unavoidably closed for a day. Should this occur, you'll receive a phone call between 7:00am and 7:45am to notify you. We have a pool of relief staff we can call on in the event of staff illness, though availability can be an issue.

The Edenhope Early Childhood Service (childcare) is closed for 4 weeks over January.

All WWSC kindergartens and early childhood services are closed on gazetted Victorian public holidays, our annual staff conference days, and designated Department of Education professional development days, to allow staff to participate in required professional learning. Dates to be advised in the new year.

Fees are calculated on a fortnightly basis including public holidays. Families will be charged for public holidays at the same rate as a regular day of care.

Dates

Term dates, public holidays, starting dates and staff professional development closure dates for the year will be advised in the confirmation of enrolment letter, which will be emailed to you. Hard copies can be posted on request.

Code Red Days

It's important that all our families understand the circumstances that apply to Edenhope Early Childhood Service and Goroke Preschool on days declared as Code Red.

Edenhope Early Childhood Service and Goroke Kindergarten are on the Category 4 – grass fire register and are required to close on declared Code Red days.

What happens on a Code Red Day?

Schools, kindergartens and licensed early childhood services identified as high fire risk, on the Department's Bushfire At-Risk Register and grass fire register, will close on declared Code Red days. Services not on the Register will remain open, unless directly threatened by fire or another emergency.

Where possible, up to three days' notice of a planned closure will be provided – however, in some instances fewer than three days' notice may be given. Advice will be provided directly by your kindergarten and/or WWSC.

When a children's service is closed for bushfire, no staff remain on site. The final decision to close is confirmed no later than midday the day before the planned closure, and will not change even if the weather forecast improves. This helps limit confusion and helps your family plan for how your children will be cared for.

No child should be left at home alone or in the care of siblings on high fire danger days.

Child Safety and Wellbeing

The safety, wellbeing and rights of children are our highest priority.

West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to providing child safe environments where every child feels safe, respected, valued and included. We have zero tolerance for child abuse and are committed to acting in the best interests of every child.

Child Safe Standards

Our services comply with the Victorian Child Safe Standards, which require organisations to embed child safety into everyday practice. The 11 child safe standards are:

1. Establish culturally safe environments where Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.
2. Embed child safety and wellbeing in leadership, governance and organisational culture.
3. Empower children and young people to understand their rights, participate in decisions and be heard.
4. Inform and involve families and communities in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
5. Uphold equity and respect diverse needs in policy and practice.
6. Ensure people working with children are suitable, supported and supervised.
7. Maintain child-focused processes for responding to complaints and concerns.
8. Equip staff and volunteers with the knowledge and skills to keep children safe through ongoing education and training.
9. Promote safe physical and online environments.
10. Regularly review and improve child safe practices.
11. Document policies and procedures that demonstrate how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

Every employee, volunteer and contractor shares responsibility for protecting children and creating environments where children can learn, grow and thrive.

If you have any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child attending one of our services, please contact the Manager Community Support and Wellbeing (Child Safety Officer) on 13 99 72.

Reportable Conduct Scheme

West Wimmera Shire Council participates in Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme, administered by the Social Services Regulator (SSR).

The scheme strengthens child safety by requiring Council to appropriately respond to allegations of reportable conduct involving workers and volunteers.

Council is required to:

- respond promptly to allegations
- notify the SSR of reportable allegations
- conduct fair and timely investigations
- take appropriate action to protect children and prevent future harm.

The scheme applies to allegations involving children and young people under 18 years of age.

The scheme does not replace mandatory reporting obligations or requirements to report criminal conduct or immediate risks to Victoria Police or Child Protection.

West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to ensuring children are safe, concerns are taken seriously, and all reports are managed respectfully and in accordance with legislative requirements.

Our commitment to inclusion

We welcome children of all abilities, cultures, religions, languages, family structures, genders and backgrounds. We work in partnership with families and other professionals to ensure every child can participate fully in our program. Reasonable adjustments and inclusion supports are provided wherever possible so that every child experiences a genuine sense of belonging, inclusion and success.

[Disability Standards for Education now include early childhood education and care services - Department of Education, Australian Government](#)

Philosophy, programs and policies

Philosophy and programs

Each room has its own Philosophy Statement, developed in conjunction with families and relevant to the individual community. A copy of the Philosophy Statement is on display at each service.

Our Kindergarten program follows the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF), in line with Victorian Government requirements for funded kindergarten programs. Our Child Care program is guided by both the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) and the VEYLDF. These frameworks don't prescribe a curriculum – rather, they provide the foundation for our educational practice, supporting children's learning, development and wellbeing through play-based experiences and responsive teaching.

The Framework conveys the highest expectations for all children's learning from birth to five years, and through the transition to school, communicated through five Learning Outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators

The Framework provides broad direction for early childhood educators to facilitate children's learning. Fundamental to the Framework is a view of children's lives as characterised by “Belonging, Being and Becoming”.

More broadly, the Framework supports Goal 2 of the Melbourne Declaration on Education Goals for Young Australians – that all young Australians become:

- Successful learners
- Confident and creative individuals
- Active and informed citizens.

Each group has an individual program. Educators plan experiences based on children's interests and offer a flexible, play-based program, with a focus on social skills, self-help skills, encouraging exploration and wonder, and setting children up to have a love of learning.

Parents and families are encouraged to play a part in the program – sharing your ideas, talking about what your family has been doing at home, helping out during a session, attending special events, being involved with the Parent Advisory Group, and giving feedback on the program.

The program is displayed at the service. Please speak to your child's teacher/educators to learn more.

National quality framework

West Wimmera Shire Council's kindergartens are licensed with the Department of Education (DE). Services receiving government funding are required to undertake continuous quality improvement.

Each service works under the National Quality Standard, developing a Quality Improvement Plan that families are encouraged to have input into. Services are assessed by DE and receive a rating, which is displayed at the service.

Policies and procedures

A copy of the WWSC Early Childhood Service and Kindergarten Cluster's Policies and Procedures folder is available at each service and on our website. These policies guide the day-to-day running of our Early Years Services, and educators use them to make fair and informed decisions.

Our policies are reviewed regularly, with parents encouraged to be involved in this process. Please feel free to speak to educators if you'd like to view any of the policies.

<https://www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au/Community/Family-and-children/Early-years-documents>

Interactions with Children

In managing interactions with children, our educators use positive behaviour guidance and redirection techniques appropriate to the age and developmental level of individual children. No form of physical punishment or emotional blackmail (i.e., bribes or threats) will be used to guide children when behaviour is unacceptable. This is in accordance with our Interactions with Children Policy.

We encourage you to discuss the interactions with your child with educators if you have any concerns or if your child talks to you about something that has happened, and you would like more information.

What to bring and wear

What to bring

- A hat – we recommend a wide-brimmed or legionnaires hat rather than a cap to ensure better protection from the sun. No singlets please (not SunSmart).
- A change of clothes – this is not just for toileting accidents. We love to play with water and mud, so a change of clothes helps keep your child comfortable after such great exploration
- Morning tea (fruit), lunch and afternoon tea
- A drink bottle filled with water
- Nappies, wipes, sunscreen if required

Comforters such as teddies or blankets are welcome. However, we ask that families avoid sending toys from home, as personal toys can be lost or damaged, causing unnecessary distress. Our services provide a wide variety of age-appropriate resources and materials, so we kindly ask that personal toys remain at home.

We encourage, learn about and support healthy eating at kindergarten. We recommend fruit, yoghurt, cheese and biscuits, sultanas, sandwiches/rolls/wraps and similar – please support us by leaving chips, chocolates and lollies for “sometimes foods”.

We do our best to get all your child's belongings back to you. Please help us out by ensuring anything and everything that comes to childcare or kindergarten is clearly labelled with your child's name.

If your child wears nappies, or is currently toilet training, please inform the kindergarten early childhood teacher or room leader so we can ensure we're prepared to provide the appropriate support.

Children's clothing

At our Early Years' Services, children are busy, active and often messy as they learn and play! We encourage you to dress your child in comfortable “play clothes” that you don't mind getting dirty – activities such as painting, cooking, water play, gardening and digging in the mud patch can be very messy. Clothing that's easy for your child to manage when toileting, such as elastic-waisted pants, is also helpful.

Please consider footwear that's safe for running, climbing and playing outdoors, while still comfortable for your child. Children may take their shoes off for activities such as sandpit play, so shoes that are easy to put on and take off are best.

Kindergarten polo shirts, windcheaters and hats will be available to order in Term One. While uniforms aren't compulsory, they're comfortable and wash well – please see the kindergarten teacher if you'd like to place an order.

Nappies and wipes aren't supplied by the service, so please pack enough for your child each day if required.

In line with our SunSmart Policy, SPF 30+ sunscreen is applied before outdoor play from September through April, or whenever UV levels reach 3 or above. Sunscreen is provided, but you're welcome to supply your own. Please ensure your child wears clothing that covers their shoulders (e.g. t-shirts rather than singlets) for extra sun protection.

During winter, we encourage raincoats and gumboots – cold or rainy weather doesn't stop us from exploring outdoors! If you'd like, a raincoat and gumboots can be left at the service for your child to use.

Health and medical information

Immunisations and “No Jab, No Play” legislation

Please provide a copy of your child's immunisation record upon enrolment, and whenever your child receives new immunisations.

In 2016 the Victorian Government passed the “No Jab, No Play” legislation, aimed at reducing the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases. Early childhood education and care services must have on record evidence that a child is up to date with their vaccinations or has an approved exemption.

Copies of your child's immunisation history statement can be accessed by logging in to your MyGov or Medicare online account at www.medicareaustralia.vic.gov.au/online, or by phone on 1800 653 809.

Documentation needs to show that your child:

- is fully vaccinated for their age, or
- is on a recognised catch-up schedule if they've fallen behind with vaccinations, or
- has a medical reason not to be vaccinated.

If your child has a medical reason they can't be vaccinated, an Immunisation Exemption Medical Contradiction form will need to be obtained from Medicare and signed by a GP. If your child isn't currently up to date, please see your Maternal and Child Health Nurse or Doctor.

In accordance with our policy, children who aren't fully vaccinated will be excluded during an infectious illness outbreak, until the exclusion period for all cases at the kindergarten has passed.

Medication

On occasion, medication may need to be given to a child while they're at kindergarten. Educators can only give medication prescribed to a child by a doctor, such as antibiotics. Cough mixture, pain or fever relief medications cannot be given unless prescribed by a doctor, with a label clearly stating the child's name, the dose, and when it's to be given.

A medication form authorising educators to administer the medication must be filled out by a parent/guardian at drop-off, completed further by educators when administering it, and signed again by a parent/guardian at pick-up.

Allergies and medical conditions

Each year, educators will discuss individual children's needs with families and develop an appropriate risk minimisation procedure if necessary. Children with allergies will have their photo and allergy displayed in the kindergarten, to assist adults in keeping children safe and well.

At this point, none of our kindergartens have a "nut-free policy". The needs of children with allergies will be assessed, and educators will advise you if it becomes appropriate for the kindergarten to initiate such a policy.

If your child has an allergy or is anaphylactic, please discuss this with educators and ensure an appropriate plan, signed by a medical practitioner, is in place. If your child is asthmatic or has a medical condition, please inform educators of their needs and management plan.

Children diagnosed with asthma or anaphylaxis cannot remain at the service without their prescribed medication. If medication is forgotten, families will be required to take their child with them to collect it before returning to care

Illnesses

If your child is unwell, please keep them at home – this ensures your child's comfort and helps prevent the spread of illness to others. Children who require Panadol or Nurofen before attending are not well enough to be at the service.

To participate in childcare and kindergarten, children must be well enough to join in all aspects of the program, including outdoor play. As outdoor play is important throughout all seasons, children too unwell to go outside should remain at home until fully recovered.

If your child becomes ill, please inform educators. For certain contagious diseases we're obliged to alert families so they can look for signs and symptoms in their own children (names will be kept confidential).

Exclusion periods apply for certain illnesses and diseases, as set out by the Department of Human Services.

If your child has been suffering from vomiting or diarrhoea, they are required to be excluded from kindergarten for 24 hours after their last vomit or loose bowel motion.

To support prevention of illness, we encourage appropriate hand-washing procedures and the use of hand sanitiser, which is available at the kindergarten.

Health Care Record

Regulations require the service to read your child's health care record to improve outcomes for children. Please bring them in on your first day to show the kindergarten teacher or let them know if you don't have one.

Bus Travel

All West Wimmera Shire Council kindergartens are fortunate to have access to school buses for rural four-year-old children travelling to and from kindergarten.

Aspect	Detail
Who can use the bus?	In line with Public Transport Victoria guidelines, only children aged four years and over may travel on school buses. Bus travel is not available to childcare or three-year-old kindergarten children at Edenhope. At Goroke and Kaniva, children who turn four during their three-year-old kindergarten year may discuss bus travel with their teacher, with approval at the teacher's discretion.
How the service is managed	Local schools administer the school bus service. Families can collect the required forms and route information directly from the school, and collect kindergarten bus forms from the kindergarten.
Cost and availability	Bus travel is currently free of charge. It's only available to kindergarten children if there is enough space on the bus.
Forms and policies	Families wishing to use the bus must complete and sign the required forms and follow all bus traveller policies. Please speak with your child's kindergarten teacher, who will help you complete the mandatory authorisation form and risk management plan.
Communicating absences	It's essential that parents inform both educators and bus drivers if their child won't be attending kindergarten or travelling on the bus – preferably by text message to the kindergarten mobile, or a message on the answering machine if texting isn't possible.

Failure to notify us of an absence may trigger the "missing bus child procedure", which involves contacting families, the school and the bus company, and may lead to a search being conducted. Timely communication is vital to ensure children's safety.

Communication and community

Newsletters

Newsletters and notices come out regularly to alert you to special events, changes or news from the kindergarten. These generally come via Storypark and Xap alerts, but may also be placed in your child's note-pocket or tub – please check this each time you come to kindergarten so you don't miss important information.

Other updates can be seen on the West Wimmera Shire Council Facebook page. Please note West Wimmera Shire does not operate individual kindergarten Facebook pages.

Birthday celebrations

Birthdays are an exciting time, and many families choose to celebrate with a cake. If you'd like to, you're welcome to bring a cake to kindergarten for your child to share with their friends. Please discuss with your child's teacher or room leader prior to bringing in a cake.

For the safety of children with allergies, please bring in the ingredients label from shop-bought cakes, or the ingredients list for home-made cakes.

We respectfully ask that you don't bring lolly bags or party games to kindergarten. If you don't wish for your child to participate in birthday celebrations, please let the teachers/educators know.

Parent Advisory Group

Speak to your child's teacher or room leader to find out more about getting involved with the Parent Advisory Group.

Privacy, feedback and complaints

Respecting your privacy

To provide families with the highest standard of service, and to meet legal requirements, we are required to collect personal information from you about your child and parents/guardians before and during your child's enrolment in our kindergartens. We are committed to protecting your privacy and abide by the Australian Privacy Principles contained within the Privacy Act.

Feedback and complaints

If you have a concern, compliment or feedback about any aspect of the kindergarten or your child's experience, we encourage you to talk to teacher/room leader about this as soon as possible.

If you have a complaint about the kindergarten, please speak to the Early Years Coordinator or Manager Community Support and Wellbeing. If you feel a complaint needs to be taken further, you can contact VECRA, the Department of Education's regulatory authority.

Contact method	Details
Phone	1300 307 415 (Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm)
Email	vecra@education.vic.gov.au
Website	www.vecra.vic.gov.au/contact-us
Submit a complaint online	Submit a complaint about an early childhood service

A full copy of our complaints policy can be obtained from any of the service or on our website.

We understand you're likely to have lots of questions regarding your child commencing kindergarten, and we're more than happy to answer them. If you have any concerns, questions, ideas or feedback, please talk to teacher or room leader at drop-off or pick-up, or call or email the service to arrange a time to talk.

We look forward to working together with all of our families to ensure your child's experience at our services is a positive one.

Child Safe Organisation

West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to the safety of all children and has a zero tolerance of child abuse.

Acknowledgment of Country

The municipal area of West Wimmera lies within the traditional lands of the Wotjobaluk, Jaadwa, Jadawadjali, Wergaia and Jupagulk Nations. Council respects and acknowledges the unique Aboriginal cultural heritage, and acknowledges and pays respect to their ancestors.

West Wimmera Shire Council is committed to providing child safe environments where children's wellbeing, learning and growth is holistically nurtured in a safe, inclusive and supportive community.



CONTACT US

-  council@westwimmera.vic.gov.au
-  www.westwimmera.vic.gov.au/
-  13 WWSC (13 99 72)

CONNECT WITH US

-  facebook.com/westwimmerashire
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