

Family Handbook



St Nicholas OOSH

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE



stnicholasoosh.org.au



Acknowledgement of country and traditional owners

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which our services operate and pay our respects to the Elders, past and present, of this land who, long before us, lived, loved and raised their children on this land. We also acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our community and their deep physical and spiritual connections to their land.

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Welcome

Welcome and thank you for choosing St Nicholas OOSH. We are thrilled to have you and your children as a part of our community.

At St Nicholas OOSH, we provide high-quality out of school hours care in fun, safe, supportive and inclusive environments where children between the ages of 5-12 can play, explore, be creative and use their imagination.

Whether children come to us for Before School Care, After School Care or Vacation Care, our dedicated educators are here to nurture and inspire their interests and passions.

This family handbook has been created to provide you with all the information you need to know about our program, including our policies and procedures, our daily routines and activities, and our expectations regarding behaviour.

We encourage you to read this handbook carefully and to refer to it throughout your time with us as needed. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to speak with our staff.

Thank you for entrusting your child to our care.





Quality assurance

St Nicholas OOSH is committed to providing high-quality services for children in our care and their families. To achieve this, we maintain a quality management system that is compliant with all relevant legislative and regulatory guidelines.



Our three main regulatory bodies are:

- ▶ Department of Education – Early Childhood Education and Care (Education and Care Service Regulations 2011): St Nicholas undergoes monitoring and licensing visits to ensure our compliance with these regulations. For more information, visit www.dec.nsw.gov.au.
- ▶ Australian Children’s Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) (National Quality Framework – National Quality Standards): In 2012, the National Quality Framework was introduced, including the Regulations and the National Quality Standards. For more information, visit www.aceqa.gov.au.
- ▶ Department of Communities and Justice: Oversees early childhood education and care providers such as St Nicholas by setting and enforcing regulations to ensure compliance with standards related to staff qualifications, child-to-staff ratios, health and safety, and curriculum guidelines.



... The family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs.
Gravissimum Educationis n3

Our philosophy

St Nicholas OOSH provides high quality education and care services using best practice guidelines. Our goal is to facilitate each child's optimal social, intellectual and physical development and education, in partnership with parents and carers.

- ▶ We believe children's primary school years are critical for learning and development. Our quality play-based programs are linked to the 'My Time, Our Place' Framework, offering a planned and reflective approach
- ▶ We believe we create an aesthetically pleasing environment, where learning and intentions are visible and every child can make choices regarding their learning, explore, investigate, listen, observe and experience a sense of belonging

- ▶ We believe in creating environments and resources which emphasise accountability, advocacy and promote children's understandings of the natural environment and sustainability
- ▶ We believe we embrace diversity. Our practices are inclusive of all cultures, religions, genders, abilities and family structures
- ▶ We believe in building genuine relationships and partnerships with families to ensure the optimal education and care of each child and encourage family involvement and participation
- ▶ We believe in the importance of working cohesively as a team to provide high quality education and care for each child and their family
- ▶ We believe it is paramount to build genuine long-term relationships with the community.

Our Values



Compassion

We commit to treating all people with kindness, respect, empathy, and dignity.



Hope

We strive to create places that allow the opportunity to thrive.



Integrity

We have the courage to do what is right.



Justice

We are accountable for moral and ethical behaviour.



Participation

We unite as a community incorporating the voices of all.



Operational information

Arrival and departure of children

To ensure your child/ren's safety, we ask parents/carers to please be aware of the following procedures upon arrival and departure at a St Nicholas OOSH service:

- ▶ Only authorised persons aged 16 years and over can drop off and pick up children from St Nicholas OOSH
- ▶ The hours of operation for your local St Nicholas OOSH can be found on your service information sheet. While educators may be on the premises outside of these hours, they are not licensed to be caring for children
- ▶ Children must be signed in and out of each session by an authorised parent/carer
- ▶ The sign in/out process must be completed accurately. This is a legal requirement
- ▶ Parents /carers are asked to communicate any important information to staff at sign-in
- ▶ If a parent/carer is unable to collect their child/ren, staff are able to sign children out into the care of an emergency contact who the parent/carer has authorised to collect
- ▶ If someone other than the parent/carer will be collecting on a regular basis the parent/carer will be required to set this person up as 'hub guest' via the Xplor app. The staff at the service will be able to assist with this process

How to sign to your child in/out

Xplor Hub

1. Click 'Sign in'
2. Enter your mobile number and access code
3. Select child/ren you wish to sign in/out

Xplor Home app

1. Select 'Sign in' tab
2. Click 'Sign in' button with QR icon

If this is the first time signing in through the Xplor Home app, you will need to give permission for the app to access the camera on your phone.

3. Once the code is successfully scanned, the welcome screen for your service will appear

If there is only one child, click the 'sign in' button to sign them into their session

If there are multiple children, select those you wish to sign in, and click 'confirm'

4. Once the sign in is successful, a success screen will display. Click 'close' to get back to the dashboard.



Children are eligible to commence care at St Nicholas OOSH when they are of school age (5+ years)

Enrolment and orientation

Eligibility

Children are eligible to commence care at St Nicholas OOSH when they are of school age (5+ years). In situations where the number of care applications exceeds the number of available places, names will be placed on a waiting list.

Enrolment requirements

The following documents are required for your child to commence care at a St Nicholas OOSH service:

- ▶ Completed online enrolment form and direct debit authorisation via Xplor
- ▶ Child's immunisation history statement
- ▶ Copy of child's birth certificate + original sighted by service
- ▶ Copy of any court orders or restraining orders concerning custody of the child, if applicable
- ▶ Current contact information for parents and emergency contacts
- ▶ Information on child's additional needs, including medical conditions, health and developmental needs

Medical conditions

If your child has a medical condition, it is the parent/carer's responsibility to St Nicholas with the appropriate documentation, along with a completed medical form. These include Medical Action Plan (asthma, anaphylaxis, allergies and any diagnosis requiring medication). This must be updated every 12 months. Children cannot attend the service if the plan has expired.

Risk minimisation plan (for all medical conditions)

If applicable, medication, in its original packaging with a pharmacy label stating the child's name, prescribing doctors name, and dosage instructions.

It is a requirement these documents have been completed before your child commences their enrolment. This is to ensure the safety of your child while in care.

Orientation

Once a place is offered at St Nicholas OOSH, the parent/carer may elect to arrange a visit to their service of choice for orientation. This provides an opportunity for families to see the service, learn about our programs and ask questions.

Fees & payments

St Nicholas OOSH fees may vary. For full details of your service's fees and inclusions, please speak to your Nominated Supervisor.

Our dedicated Billing Team is also available at any time to discuss your fees and account details – (02) 4979 1182 or finance@stnicholasmn.org.au

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

St Nicholas OOSH offers fee relief for parents/carers through the Australian Government's Child Care Subsidy (CCS). The CCS indicates the percentage of fee relief you are entitled to, dependent on your gross income and other details.

If you wish to receive CCS, you will need to contact Centrelink/ Family Assistance Office and pass the income test. Your child will need to be fully immunised or have the appropriate documentation stating why they are not immunised. One parent and the child you are enrolling will require a Customer Reference Number (CRN) to access CCS. Once provided with you and your child's CRN and enrolment details, we will electronically link your child to the Centrelink system.

Upon confirmation of your child's Subsidy rate from Centrelink, St Nicholas staff will ensure the relevant amount is deducted from your child's standard fee.

Please note, it is necessary for St Nicholas to charge standard fees to all families until confirmation of CCS is received from Centrelink. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify Centrelink of any changes to circumstances as soon as possible.

The Child Care Subsidy dollar value is reassessed by the Federal Government every year in July.

For more information, please contact Centrelink on 13 61 50 or visit www.humanservices.gov.au.



Payment of fees

St Nicholas OOSH uses a direct debit payment system to ensure a centralised, easy-to-use payment process for all families. Direct debit information is captured during the Xplor enrolment process.

Fees will be debited from your nominated account on either a weekly or fortnightly basis depending on what you have nominated during the enrolment process. Debits will default to weekly on a Thursday if no preference is given.

Fee Statements will be sent via email on a weekly basis. Families can access their statements at any time via Xplor.

Please note, failure to pay fees within the agreed timeframes is a breach of the conditions of your child's enrolment agreement. Failure to adhere to the agreement may result in termination of care.



Additional information

- ▶ St Nicholas requires all fees to be paid via Direct Debit. Further details are available in our Fee Policy, the Direct Debit Request Form, and Direct Debit Request Service Agreement.
- ▶ Full fees will be charged from the commencement day at St Nicholas, regardless of attendance.
- ▶ Fees are payable when a child is absent from St Nicholas for any reason. If your child is unable to attend a scheduled day at a St Nicholas OOSH service, please call the centre as soon as possible to inform staff of your child's absence.
- ▶ All public holidays are charged for if they fall on your child's standard day of care.
- ▶ Any requests for changes to care days, or notice that your child is leaving St Nicholas requires at least two weeks' notice in writing to the Nominated Supervisor.
- ▶ In accordance with Family Assistance Law, CCS is not paid for absences after a child ceases care at the service. Full fees will be charged for all absent days after a child ceases care until the required two-week notice period is complete.
- ▶ In accordance with Family Assistance Law guidelines, a full statement is provided to families every two weeks.
- ▶ Fee debts will not be carried over into a new calendar year. A child/ren's enrolment for a new calendar year is dependent on their fees being up to date.

For more information, please refer to St Nicholas' cancellation policy and enrolment terms and conditions.

If you are having difficulty paying your fees, please see your Nominated Supervisor or contact St Nicholas' Billing Team – (02) 4979 1182 or finance@stnicholasmn.org.au.

Educators at St Nicholas are continually developing skills and knowledge by attending regular professional development sessions.

Our staff

All St Nicholas OOSH services are staffed by dedicated and qualified OOSH educators. All staff have current first aid, asthma and anaphylaxis management certificates, have completed child protection training and hold a current Working with Children Check (WWCC). Please see the staff at your local St Nicholas OOSH service for more information about their specific qualifications.

Educators at St Nicholas are continually developing skills and knowledge by attending regular professional development sessions through our vocational education arm, St Nicholas Pathways. St Nicholas educators work collaboratively with each other and with our Newcastle office team to provide quality care and education for the children who attend our services.





Curriculum & program

At St Nicholas OOSH, we understand that parents want their children to be in a safe and nurturing environment where they can learn and grow. That's why we have developed a comprehensive curriculum and program that is designed to provide children with a range of engaging and stimulating experiences.

Our program is based on the My Time, Our Place framework, which is a national curriculum framework for school-aged children. This framework guides our program by focusing on five key outcomes:

1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators

Through our program, we aim to support each child's development across all of these outcomes, helping them to become well-rounded and confident individuals.

Our program includes a range of activities and experiences that are designed to be both fun and educational. We offer a mix of indoor and outdoor activities, including art and craft, games, sports, cooking and more. Our activities are age-appropriate and tailored to suit the interests and abilities of each child.

We also place a strong emphasis on building positive relationships between children and our educators. Our educators are experienced, caring and dedicated professionals who are passionate about helping children to learn and grow.

We believe that our curriculum and program at St Nicholas OOSH provides children with a safe, supportive, and engaging environment that encourages learning, exploration and creativity.

Vacation Care

St Nicholas OOSH's Vacation Care programs offer a variety of engaging experiences during school holidays. Each day, children encounter a new adventure and new experiences.

Incursions allow children to participate in meaningful and enjoyable experiences in a safe and familiar setting, while excursions allow children to explore different environments and activities across their local communities.

Vacation Care is a great opportunity for children to get physically active, discover new interests, meet new friends and make memories that will last a lifetime.

Activities can include:

- ▶ Science experiments
- ▶ Cinema sessions
- ▶ Gymnastics centres
- ▶ Cultural experiences
- ▶ Zoo adventures
- ▶ And more.

Children and young people have a right to grow up in **healthy communities** which offer **protection from harm, security of accommodation** and **stability of care**.

Health & safety

St Nicholas OOSH provides an environment that promotes effective health and safety practices that minimise risk and ensure best practices in our centres.

All St Nicholas policies and procedures regarding safety are available on our website, or onsite at your local St Nicholas OOSH service.

Effective Health and Safety practices will include:

Child protection

Children and young people have a right to grow up in healthy communities which offer protection from harm, security of accommodation and stability of care. St Nicholas OOSH centres are mandatory reporters and have a responsibility to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and young person in our care. We work in a co-ordinated and cooperative manner with relevant regulatory bodies and the Office of Safeguarding to ensure protection and timely intervention where children and young people are at risk of harm.

The Office of Safeguarding is an integral part of St Nicholas, and is placed outside St Nicholas' services and programs, overseeing their safeguarding standards in operation.

The Office of Safeguarding works with NSW Police, the Office of the Children's Guardian, the Department of Community and Justice and other statutory authorities and specialist authorities within the Catholic Church in Australia to fulfil its responsibilities and maximise the safeguarding of children and vulnerable persons.

Immunisation records

Parents/carers are required to provide St Nicholas OOSH with documented evidence of their child/ren's immunisation status prior to commencement at our services. This will initially be provided at the time of enrolment and updated as necessary. It is a parent's/ carer's right not to immunise their child; however they will be excluded during an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease.

Administration of prescription medication

In recognition of the duty of care there will be occasions when the administration of prescribed medication may be necessary to support children during the course of normal attendance at St Nicholas.

St Nicholas educators will:

- ▶ Provide parents/carers with medication forms that are essential for medication to be administered at St Nicholas
- ▶ Administer prescribed medication and be witnessed by a second staff member as per our medication policy.

Responsibilities of parents/carers:

- ▶ Any medication must be given directly to a permanent St Nicholas staff member on arrival at service and a medication authorisation form must be completed for each medication provided. This must be completed accurately and signed and dated by parent/carer. If anyone other than the parent/carer is bringing the child to St Nicholas, a written permission note from the parent/carer, including the above information, must accompany the medication. The guardian will be requested to complete the medication form at the centre.

Managing high temperatures

On enrolment, parents are requested to consent to the administration of liquid paracetamol to their child should it be needed. This will only be administered once in the case of a child's temperature reaching 38 degrees or higher. In this case the child's parent or emergency contact will be called to pick up the child and verbal consent will be sought over the phone. Parents will then be required to sign a Medication Authorisation and Administration Form upon picking up their child. If a child's parent or emergency contact cannot be reached, verbal authorisation will be acquired from a doctor or emergency service.

Infection control

St Nicholas OOSH promotes and adheres to best practices that will reduce the transmission of infectious disease through policy and procedure on general hand washing, toileting, use of gloves, and cleaning and maintenance.

Families are asked not to send a sick child to the service as they can become quite distressed and run the risk of infecting other children and staff. The Nominated Supervisor and Responsible Person are authorised to refuse a child's admission to the service if they feel it is in the best interests of the child and the service.

A child starting a course of antibiotics is recommended to stay home for at least 24 hours from the first day of the course. Please see the medication policy for further information.

Exclusion

St Nicholas OOSH manages an outbreak of an infectious disease in the service by appropriate exclusion of sick children and staff. St Nicholas' Exclusion Policy Guidelines have been formulated with reference to the NSW Health Department's Exclusion Policy Guidelines.

Parent notification

St Nicholas will inform parents/carers when an infectious disease occurs in the service.

Exclusion guidelines and relevant procedures are sought from the Public Health Unit to advise and protect children and staff at St Nicholas.

Exclusion periods

St Nicholas Early Education is staffed by a professional team with a wide range of qualifications and experience.

While every precaution is taken to prevent transmission of illnesses within our centres, at times children become unwell and exclusionary periods are applied to prevent the spread of infectious diseases.

St Nicholas follows the exclusionary periods as outlined in the 'Staying Healthy: Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services' guideline - scan here.



Please also refer to St Nicholas' Policies and Procedures - scan here



Medical conditions

St Nicholas will facilitate effective care and health management of children with medical conditions including asthma, anaphylaxis, diabetes and epilepsy.

The Nominated Supervisor is responsible for ensuring effective care and health management of children with a medical condition and ensuring the following steps are undertaken.

For children attending with a specific medical condition we will:

- ▶ On enrolment, provide each family with a copy of the medical conditions procedures as they relate to the child's specific medical condition and the risk minimisation plan (Regulation 90)
- ▶ Obtain a medical action plan from the child's medical practitioner
- ▶ Meet to discuss and document a Risk Minimisation Plan
- ▶ Update the risk minimisation plan when notified of any changes to a child's health needs. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to notify St Nicholas of any changes
- ▶ Ensure that no child with a diagnosed medical condition attends St Nicholas without his/her treatment/medication
- ▶ Inform all educators of the child's medical condition and the location of both the medical condition action plan and risk minimisation plan
- ▶ Ensure all educators have undertaken Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management training, and engage in regular practice sessions with training apparatus.

Good nutritional values

At St Nicholas OOSH, we recognise the importance of supporting families in providing healthy food and drink. We implement the key messages outlined in Crunch & Sip, supporting the National Healthy Eating Guidelines for Out of School Hours Care Settings. We also promote healthy foods, safety, safe food handling, positive eating environments, education and communication.



Water safety around water hazards

St Nicholas OOSH prevents child accidents and illnesses relating to water hazards by:

- ▶ Having staff closely supervising children engaged in water activities at all times
- ▶ Tipping out water at the completion of an activity
- ▶ Water activities being limited to appropriate weather conditions (during hotter months)
- ▶ Having Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) charts located in a visible and accessible location at the service.

Protection from ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun

St Nicholas OOSH has adopted the Cancer Council NSW Sun Protection Policy as best practice in all services. The policy applies to children and staff attending St Nicholas, as well as parents/carers, students and volunteers.

The Sun Protection Policy relates to:

- ▶ **Shade** – St Nicholas OOSH provides and maintains adequate shade for outdoor play.
- ▶ **Hats** – Staff and children are required to wear sun-safe hats that protect their face, neck and ears whilst exposed to sunlight outdoors.
- ▶ **Clothing** – When outdoors, staff and children wear sun-safe clothing that covers as much of the skin as possible (especially the shoulders, back and stomach).
- ▶ **Sunscreen** – All staff and children apply SPF50+ broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen (provided by St Nicholas unless your child has an allergy, in which case parents/carers are asked to send specific sunscreen with their child to the service) 20 minutes before going outdoors and every 2 hours thereafter.

Educators as role models

Sun protection is incorporated regularly into programs and sun protection information is provided to staff, families and visitors.

- ▶ All sun protection measures (including recommended outdoor times, shade, hat, clothing and sunscreen) will be considered when planning excursions and incursions.

St Nicholas OOSH has adopted the **Cancer Council NSW Sun Protection Policy** as best practice in all services.

Children's clothing

Clothing needs to be neat and tidy and appropriate for the weather conditions on the day.

During Before and After School Care, children will wear their school uniform.

During Vacation Care, shorts and t-shirts in Summer and tracksuits in Winter are the most practical as they allow children to move freely whilst at St Nicholas. As most activities are hands-on and include play, we recommend clothing be casual and suitable for messy activities.

When dressing children for St Nicholas, parents/carers should aim for:

- ▶ Sturdy shoes suitable for climbing and active play. No thongs, slippery soles or heels
- ▶ Hats – children will not be allowed to play outside without a hat
- ▶ No dangly earrings or sleepers, for safety reasons.



Policies & procedures

St Nicholas has developed a wide range of policies that cover a variety of areas. The policy manual is located in the designated staff area of each St Nicholas OOSH service and is available at any time.

There is an indexed list of all our current operational policies and procedures on the following page of this handbook, for your reference.

Staff and management regularly review all policies and procedures, and families are notified of any changes. Parents/carers are encouraged to provide feedback and/or comments to St Nicholas on policies at any time.

By signing enrolment forms at St Nicholas, parents/carers are agreeing to comply with the policies of the service. The information in this book details some of our operational policies. For more information, you can find all of St Nicholas' policies and procedures on our website.

Everything our families need to know, right here.



**ST NICHOLAS
POLICIES AND
PROCEDURES**



**NSW
IMMUNISATION
SCHEDULE**



**STAYING
HEALTHY IN
CHILDCARE**



**GUIDE TO
NATIONAL
QUALITY
FRAMEWORK**



**EDUCATION &
CARE SERVICE
NATIONAL
REGULATIONS**



**EDUCATION &
CARE SERVICES
NATIONAL LAW**



**NATIONAL
APPROVED
LEARNING
FRAMEWORKS**



**CHILD
CARE
SUBSIDY**



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St Nicholas

DIOCESE OF MAITLAND-NEWCASTLE

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Family concerns

Families are requested to raise any concerns with their Nominated Supervisor in the first instance. Nominated Supervisors are available to discuss children's care and education with parents/carers at any time. All family concerns will be dealt with in a confidential and professional manner, however if a parent/carer is not comfortable discussing with the Nominated Supervisor, the Area Service Manager can be contacted via the Newcastle Office phone number – (02) 4979 1110. If unresolved by St Nicholas, parents/carers are also able to lodge a formal complaint with the Department of Early Childhood Education and Care or NSW Ombudsman.

Finally...

Please do not hesitate to approach St Nicholas staff if you would like more information about anything related to your child's care at St Nicholas OOSH.

Thank you again for entrusting St Nicholas OOSH with the care of your child. We will endeavour to make your child's time with us a positive and rewarding experience.

Useful contacts

St Nicholas Corporate Office

246 Parry St, Newcastle West NSW 2302

Phone (02) 4979 1110

Email contactus@stnicholasmn.org.au

Department of Early Childhood Education and Care

Phone 1800 619 113

Email ececd@def.nsw.edu.au

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority

Phone 1300 422 327

Email acecqa.gov.au

Centrelink

Phone 136 150

Immunisation Register

Phone 1800 653 809

Office of Safeguarding (Diocesan Child Protection Unit)

Phone (02) 4979 1390

Email childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au

NSW Ombudsman

Phone 1800 451 524

St Nicholas Billing Team

Phone (02) 4979 1182



02 4979 1110
contactus@stnicholasmn.org.au
stnicks.org.au

Head Office

841 Hunter St, Newcastle West NSW 2302
PO BOX 756 Newcastle NSW 2300