

# FORREST EARLY YEARS CENTRE



**PRE-SCHOOL**

**CHILD CARE**

**OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE**

**(03) 5236 6540**

**[WWW.FORRESTPS.VIC.EDU.AU](http://WWW.FORRESTPS.VIC.EDU.AU)**

PARENT INFORMATION **BOOKLET**

**2020**

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# WELCOME

A special welcome to the Forrest Early Years Centre. We trust your experience will be happy and rewarding. Forrest Early Years Centre contains a small rural Pre-School, Out of School Hours Care and Child Care incorporated within Forrest Primary School. The Early Years Centre has 2 rooms dedicated to Pre School & Childcare, and a good-sized playground for outdoor activities. The group size is small and friendly with a great community feel where everyone knows each other and looks out for each other.

We seek to provide a warm and caring environment for students, parents and staff where the welfare of everyone is of the utmost importance.

We encourage and value inclusive behaviours, respecting cultural differences and barriers, striving to ensure that all children enjoy success and that positive behaviours are reinforced at every opportunity.

Committed to continual improvement, our Pre-School program underwent a Quality Assurance process (ACECQA) in October 2014 to help us ensure our service is meeting the needs of our community. This has been a valuable process for all of us and it was gratifying to find that our validation was successful.

Few parents bring their child to an educational setting without a keen interest in their child's welfare. Again, part of the role of the Early Years Centre is to assist parents to participate in their child's education, and to feel comfortable in the school environment during the period of their association with the school.

We aim to link school, early years centre and OSHC programs as closely as possible so as to increase enjoyment, relevance and student engagement in all programs. Newsletters and parent information evenings help to give you

more information about the centre programs and events but the best way is to talk to your child's Educator or the principal.

This Information Booklet will assist you to understand the workings of our Early Years Centre. Please keep this information book for reference.

Darryl Harty



Principal

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# EARLY YEARS CENTRE VISION

Forrest Pre-School and Child Care follow the vision "Belonging, Being and Becoming" of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) for Australia, set up by the Government 2009. The learning outcomes are: Identity, Community, Wellbeing, and Learning & Communication.

Forrest Pre-School runs a play-based program, where every child and its family are respected and valued. We believe that children learn best when they feel safe and happy. We are interested in the children's ideas and questions, and encourage reflective thinking. The children are seen as competent and capable learners, and we wish to provide an environment where every child can develop at their own pace. We believe that children develop and learn in different ways, and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected.

The Out of School Hours Care program has strong links to the school and aims for this;

Forrest Primary School seeks to be a community of learners.

Everything we do is designed to support the development of the whole child.

We expect each child to develop a positive self-image, seek excellence and respect the rights of others.

Over time, each child should come to understand the importance of independence and lifelong learning, and acquire the skills, which will allow them to function co-operatively as responsible global citizens.

The fundamental starting point for our activities is the belief that all students have the ability to learn and to progress and that this learning can be enhanced by the use of appropriate information and learning technologies.

We aspire to support the development of students as autonomous learners whose preferred learning styles are facilitated and extended by teachers who have a wide range of teaching strategies to draw upon.

We will provide a supportive and caring environment, which promotes positive relationships between people and engenders a positive attitude to learning.

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## CENTRE VALUES

At Forrest Primary School and Early Years Centre we practice the following values... respect, healthy choices, excellence and support. These were developed at the start of each year within the classrooms, with support from specialist and classroom staff.

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## EYC BACKGROUND

The Forrest Early Years Centre, part of Forrest Primary School is situated 35 km south east of Colac in the Otway Ranges. The school has proudly served the rural community since 1885 and the Pre-School commenced operation in 2000. Prior to 2014, School Council held a service agreement to run Preschool and Occasional Care services. In 2014, the service agreement has been altered to reflect the changing needs of the Forrest community. Our new centre based license will enable the exciting development of Forrest Early Years Centre, which provides more comprehensive Child Care and educational service options.

The school has extensive gardens and grounds providing active and passive play areas, and several well maintained play equipment areas. The grounds cover four hectares with an oval, a tennis/basketball court and a safe adventure playground with ample room for further development of play and environmental study areas. The Early Years Centre is complete with safe and stimulating outdoor play areas suitable for children under school age.

At Forrest we believe that children deserve the opportunity to fulfil their potential. We know this can best occur when children are actively engaged in learning tasks in a safe, positive and supportive environment, where individual assistance is readily available. Multi-level class structures are a feature of our school and pre-school, which encourages cross-age learning. To realise these aims we encourage community support with active participation.

Educators work together in a purposeful and professional manner to plan and implement programs. Pre-School and Child Care programs are based upon the Early Years Learning Framework and the Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework. These frameworks are designed to advance all children's learning and development from birth to eight years of age. The frameworks provide early childhood professionals with a common language for describing outcomes for children, and describes practice principles to guide early childhood professionals to work together, with children and with families to achieve the best outcomes for every child.

Effective communication is a feature of our Early Years Centre. Weekly newsletters and the Skoolbag App communicate centre happenings and allow for local groups to advertise coming events. The website is another great source of information and includes a calendar of events. See <http://www.forrestps.vic.edu.au/>

Forrest Early Years Centre is firmly committed to providing excellence in education and is continually assessing school, pre-school and student needs for further plans and improving student outcomes.

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## TIMETABLE

Our Early Years Centre is a vibrant and happy place to learn, with many programs to suit all ages of children, from babies and toddlers through to primary school aged children. The program has been developed after extensive community consultation and is detailed at the back of this booklet.

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## SERVICES AND EDUCATORS

Service approval number SE- 0000 3552 (ACECQA)

Pre-School Teacher: ***Mrs Di Carter***

Di Carter holds a Bachelor of Teaching (Early Childhood), an Advanced Diploma of Children's Services, a Diploma of Children's Services and a Certificate III in Children's Services. She started

working at Forrest Pre-School in 2019. Di has worked as a Centre Leader and has had extensive experience in various other Child Care Centres.

Child Care Educator: ***Ms Caralyn Grgic***

Caralyn Grgic has been working at Forrest Primary School and Early Years Centre since 2012 and has worked in the Pre School, the Out of School Hours Care Program and the Sporting Schools Program. Caralyn holds a Diploma of Early Childhood Education and Care and a Certificate III in Children's Services.

Child Care Educator: ***Mrs Vicki Garner***

Vicki Garner started working at Forrest Primary School and Early Years Centre in 2016. Vicki has extensive experience in various other Child Care Centres and holds a Diploma of Children's Services and a Certificate III in Children's Services.

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# EARLY YEARS CENTRE CURRICULUM

The VEYLF and EYLF are designed to advance all children's learning and development from birth to eight years of age. We use these frameworks to guide both Pre-School and Child Care programs. The frameworks provide early childhood professionals with a common language for describing outcomes for children, and describes practice principles to guide early childhood professionals to work together, with children and with families to achieve the best outcomes for every child. You will see the following learning outcomes features in program documents and child observations throughout the centre.

The EYLF:

Identifies five Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes for all children

Identifies eight Practice Principles for Learning and Development, categorised as Collaborative, Effective and Reflective. The Practice Principles describe the most effective ways for early childhood professionals to work together, with children and with families to facilitate learning and development

Emphasises the importance of supporting children's and families' transitions as they move within and

across services throughout the early childhood period.

The Learning and Development Outcomes include:

- 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

For more information on this and other DET matters, please visit [www.education.vic.gov.au](http://www.education.vic.gov.au)

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## PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAM

The play-based program is planned around various topics or special interests of the children (a copy of the program plan is displayed in a book located on the entrance shelf at the Pre-School). Pre-School sessions typically include indoor play, mat time, morning/lunch, and outdoor play. On Fridays 9:00- 11.00am, in the area below the junior classroom we run "Forrest Kids Go Bush" program with the P-2 class.

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## CHILD CARE PROGRAM

We are proud of our CHILD CARE program as it meets the needs of the whole child as reflected in our Pre-School program. All of our Child Care programs address the EYLF and VEYDF through a play-based curriculum. Activities are well planned and flexible, incorporating themes of special interest to the children and the group. A copy of the program plan is displayed on the EYC notice board. Child Care activities are very similar to those within the Pre-School, which include free indoor play, drama, dance, quiet time, reading time, art activities and outdoor play. Special events held throughout the year will often incorporate the Pre-School program.

Child Care operates according to the same policies and processes as Forrest Pre-School.

NOTE: You can learn more about our programs, learning outcomes and student observations by looking at the noticeboard at the front of our centre.

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## OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE PROGRAM

Our OSHC co-ordinator runs a fun, flexible and engaging program based upon student interests and needs. The vision for the program is for children to learn through play & leisure using the My Time, Our Place Framework for School Aged Care. Activities are designed to cater for individual differences and to respect cultural, social and religious backgrounds of all people. Activities are specially organised to cater for variety of interests and include things such as, cooking, clay modelling, making slime, science activities, art activities , tie dying, theme activities (cultural events, celebrations, and festivals etc.) painting, board games, needlework, drawing, music, craft work , sport, indoor and outdoor and games, woodwork, computer, movie nights and much more.

Activities occur on a rotational basic, and are often designed to address individual students' interests (when children request a certain activity), enabling us to best meet their needs and keep them engaged in the program. Please note: sometimes the program will differ from that advertised in the weekly school newsletter; this is due to changing student interests and needs.

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## GENERAL INFORMATION A-Z

### BIRTHDAYS

We love to celebrate birthdays! Parents are most welcome, but do not have to send a cake or something to share with the group on your child's birthday. Please check with the teacher first, in case of allergies.

## BUSHFIRE AND EMERGENCY

### MANAGEMENT

The Forrest Early Years Centre (Pre-School, OSHC and Child Care) has been identified as being in the highest fire risk area and will be closed on days that have been declared CODE RED and EXTREME by fire authorities. Where possible, parents will be provided with up to three days' notice of closure. Once confirmed, the decision to close will not change, regardless of improvements in the weather forecast. You can access more information about children's services closure on the Department of Education and Training website - see [www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/bushfires).

For up-to-date information on this year's fire season, visit the CFA website at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or call the 24-hour Victorian Bushfires Information Line on 1800 240 667.

### CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The committee appreciates and understands the importance of children with additional needs being given the opportunity to attend regular Pre-School and Child Care sessions. Special requirements for your child may include the need for an additional assistant to help integrate your child as much as possible. Your child's needs should be discussed with the Pre-School/Child Care Educator and additional support services involved if necessary.

### CLOTHING

The children should wear strong and practical clothing (no singlet tops), so that they can play without feeling any discomfort. To help the children be independent, please avoid belts and difficult buttons. Their shoes should sit firmly on their feet for climbing and running (no thongs or Crocs). Good clothes should not be used at Pre-School as we often have painting and "messy activities". Always pack some spare clothes in your child's bag in case of an accident or spilling.

### CONCERNS

Always talk to the educator if you have any concerns about your child or the running of the Pre-School or Child Care Centre. It is important to develop positive relationships based on mutual trust and open communication.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

All information on enrolment forms will be treated as confidential.

## ENROLMENTS

All enrolment forms (as listed in the package below) must be completed and returned before a child can be enrolled for a Pre-School and/or Child Care sessions. This is a legal requirement and all aspects of the enrolment package must be completed/supplied. Enrolment forms are available at the Early Years Centre and the school office.

Children are eligible for one year of funded Pre-School. Parents are required to supply;

- Enrolment Form
- Copy of Birth Certificate
- An Immunisation History Statement
- A concession card such as a current Health Care Card, if you have one, must be sighted by an office staff member.
- Fee Payment Agreements ( as per Attachment 3 or 4 where applicable)

## FEES

Fees are determined by the management committee and are reviewed annually.

Please refer to Attachment 1: Fee Information for families and Attachment 2: Fee Schedule. All fees must be paid promptly by the due date on the invoice.

Invoices for payment of Pre-School fees will be issued at the start of every term. Invoices for Child Care and OSHC will be issued fortnightly.

Invoices are payable at the School Office and through different payment methods. These will be detailed on your invoice, and electronic fund transfer, Cash and Cheque are accepted.

Please note that Child Care/ OSHC are billed separately to the Pre-School program as they are funded differently by the government.

**IMPORTANT-** Please alert the School Office if you hold a current Health Care Card, as this will reduce your Pre-School liability.

Early Start Kindergarten fee subsidy - please refer to Attachment 1: Fee Information for families

## FOOD AND DRINK

The Pre-School encourages healthy eating habits and follows a healthy eating program assisted by Otway Health. The children bring a healthy lunch to every session and we sit down and eat together. The children also bring their own water bottle so they can have a drink whenever they are thirsty. We only drink water, no sweet drinks.

## "FORREST KIDS GO BUSH" PROGRAM

During Pre-School sessions, the "Forrest Kids Go Bush" program the children get to explore and play in a more natural environment (within the schoolyard) together with the P-3 class. Children are encouraged to learn from the natural environment, and use their imagination in play and creation. They are allowed to play responsibly with sticks and ropes, and encouraged to problem solve together. This program is intended to support young children through play, to develop responsibility for themselves and others. It encourages early risk management strategies that will ensure that young children start to consider the impact of their actions on themselves and on others. In so doing, children learn to take on challenges and accept responsibility.

Forrest Kids Go Bush program is intended to operate across a broad spectrum of weather conditions, allowing children to experience nature and its elements across the seasons. Whatever the weather, children are encouraged to take the lead in playing, exploring and learning in a bush or natural environment.

It is important for all parents to understand that children will be provided with the opportunity to climb trees, play in mud, build shelters etc. Safe risk taking will be encouraged which strongly supports children in building resilience. Parents need to have a clear understanding of appropriate protective clothing which will be needed for the children, as well as having a good grasp of what your children will be doing.

All of the children are provided with a pair of overalls and need to wear boots, long pants and have a rain-jacket; the program operates even if it's raining.

## GOVERNMENT

The Victorian State Government (Department of Education and Training) regulates the operation of the centre. The Pre-School holds a standard licence (number 2850). The centre is inspected regularly by a Children's Services Adviser from DET. This adviser ensures that the Centre is operating legally and in accordance with the National Regulations for Education and Care Services 2012 and the National Law Act 2010, (copies of these can be found in the Pre-school office). The inspections also include the assessment of buildings and grounds. Most Children's Services follow the new National Quality Framework (NQF) which introduces improved child to educator ratios, new qualification requirements for educators and a focus on learning outcomes. The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA) oversees these changes nationally for the benefit of families. All Children's Services are assessed against seven quality areas in the new National Quality Standard (NQS). Different rating levels can be awarded for each quality area, as well as an overall rating. More information about the ratings can be found on the ACECQA website. <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

## HEAD LICE

Head lice are common at every school. Please treat your child/family with head lice treatment if they appear; also let the Pre-School and Child Care service know so all the children can be checked.

## INDOOR PLAY

The children choose what they want to spend most of the time playing with. The classroom is set up with a range of activities, including: puzzles, books, Lego, games, blocks, toy cars, painting, play-dough, creative art and home corner. While the children play, the teacher and assistant move around and interact with them. Special activities also include baking or cooking, finger painting or making gifts.

## INTERVIEWS

Term 1- The Pre-School Teacher will arrange an interview with parents prior to the commencement of the Pre-School year in order to understand the needs of your child and to orientate parents with the Pre-School. Please bring your child's Birth Certificate and Immunisation details to the interview if you have not already done so.

Term 3 – Child Care interviews are held with parents to discuss your child’s progress and readiness for further care and or/ the Pre School program.

Term 4 - As a requirement by DET, a transition report is written by the teacher and the parents during term 4. The transition to School Report is then forwarded onto your child's Prep Teacher.

## LATE COLLECTION

The Child Care Program ceases at 3.30pm and our Out of School Hours Care Program closes precisely at 6.00 p.m. Please call if you are going to be late to collect your child so arrangements for supervision can be made.

## MAIL POCKETS

Every family has a pocket for mail. Please check it every time you come to the Centre. A Newsletter is distributed every Tuesday via email, unless a printed version has been requested.

## MAT TIME

The teacher leads group activities, such as singing, movement, nursery rhymes, maths activities, games and stories. The children take turns doing Show and Tell, and looking after the class animal (soft toy).

## MORNING TEA/LUNCH

All sit down to enjoy a healthy morning tea and lunch. Sometimes we eat outside.

## OUTDOOR PLAY

The children choose from a range of outdoor activities, such as playing in the sandpit, using the swings and climbing equipment, playing with the dolls, prams, trucks, wheelies, trampoline and balls, or running around having fun with one another.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

The importance of parents to the Pre-School cannot be underestimated. Therefore, should parents wish to be involved and share in the many activities or contribute ideas, time of their expertise to the programs, it would be greatly appreciated.

If you would like to help or present something, you are most welcome. Please talk to the teacher beforehand. Being such a small group, we don't have a parent on Pre-School duty as bigger Pre- Schools

have. We do send home laundry to be washed with every family during the term.

Maintenance of the Pre-School grounds is through voluntary help.

We are sure that parents who are able to participate in the Pre-School activities will agree that this is a rewarding experience.

## POLICIES

The Early Years Centre Policies incorporate Pre-School, Child Care and OSHC and may be found in the Pre-School office. Please feel free to ask a staff member if you have questions or simply refer to them any time. These are regularly reviewed as part of our Quality Assurance processes.

## PRE-SCHOOL SUB COMMITTEE OF SCHOOL COUNCIL

A Pre-School representative attends the Forrest Primary School Council meetings. Forrest Primary School Council holds the service agreement to operate all services operating within the Forrest Early Years Centre, so all decisions regarding the operation of the Pre-School are ratified by the School Council.

## SAFETY

Parents must always sign their children in and out when picking up and dropping off the children. This is done digitally, utilizing an ipad for this purpose. The ipad is situated on the shelf inside the EYC entrance.

If a person other than the Parent/Guardian is to pick up children, a letter of authorisation from the child/ren's parent/guardian is necessary. NO child/ren will be allowed to leave the program with an unknown adult without the initial presentation of such letter to the program Co-ordinator. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. car breakdown, the parent must ring the Co-ordinator to arrange other means by which their children can be taken home.

The Program Co-ordinator will communicate with the office daily regarding bookings and cancellations of children, and will refer to the digital Attendance Log and check that they are all present. If a child is found in attendance at the program and he/she has not been booked in, the Co-ordinator will ring one of the emergency numbers as listed on that child's enrolment form and he/she will be subsequently removed from care.

Every child will adhere to the rule of "no hat, no play" during the first and fourth terms of the school year. If a child does not have a hat, he/she will have to stay in the shaded areas. Hats must be wide brim and caps are not acceptable. Also, every child must use sunscreen during these two terms.

## SCHOOL COUNCIL

We have a very dedicated group of parents and teachers on our School Council which manages our Early Years Centre. Please enquire at the School Office as to the current membership on School Council.

The Annual General Meeting is held in March each year when new members and office bearers will be elected at this time.

## SCHOOL OFFICE HOURS

We operate the school office from 8.45am- 4.00pm most days. The following staff are available. Teaching staff may also be able to assist. Parent accounts and financial matters are best dealt with on Monday, Tuesday and Thursdays.

- Principal- Mr Darryl Harty
- Office Manager - Sarah Lane (Monday - Thursday 8.30am-4.00pm)  
(Wednesday 8.30am – 11.30am)

## SICK CHILDREN

If a child becomes ill whilst in care, his/her parents will be notified and arrangements will be made in order to have that child picked up. The child will be monitored and cared for until he/she is picked up.

To avoid spreading germs and diseases, please keep your child at home if he/she is unwell or has been unwell during the night. Please let the Centre know if your child has an infectious disease so other parents can be warned and look for symptoms.

Children will be excluded from care if they have an infectious disease and parents must provide the Co-ordinator with a letter from their Doctor stating that their child is no longer infectious when they wish their child to return to care. Please refer to the table attached to this booklet for information on the minimum period of exclusion from Children's Services Centres for infectious diseases.

If a child is to be given medication whilst in attendance at the Program, parents must provide the Co-ordinator with a letter of authorisation and they

must also place the medication in a named lunch box for safe storage.

Those administering medication must record this administration in an exercise book which contains such details as the child's name, the type of medication, the date and the time of administration. This must be signed by the person giving the medication and it must also be counter-signed.

## SIGNING-IN/SIGNING-OUT

When you arrive, and leave the Centre you need to sign in/out your child using the ipad, log in details will be assigned to you for this purpose. This is a requirement from the Department of Education and Training. Please tell the staff if someone else is picking up your child so we can make sure that their name is on the enrolment form.

## SUN SMART POLICY

During Terms 1 and 4, the children need to wear a hat for outdoors that protects the ears and the neck. Please apply sunscreen to your child's skin at home before you come to the Centre. No child is to wear sleeveless tops that expose their shoulders to the sun. These are recommendations from the SUN SMART POLICY.

## TOYS

Please don't let your child bring any of their own toys to the Learning Centre, except for Show and Tell. Children's own toys can sometimes be misused inadvertently to steer friendships. The same goes for lip-gloss and jewelry.

## WELFARE AND DISCIPLINE-OSHC

Forrest Primary School and Forrest OSHC have a high commitment to student welfare. We seek to be a Health Promoting School by adopting policies and programs, which promote the health and well-being of students, parents, staff and the general community.

As often as possible our school and OSHC programs will run according to the same policies. An OSHC policy document may be found in the school office. Staff and Student Codes of Practice apply during OSHC as they do during school hours. Please see A-Z Parent Information Guide and school office for more details.

In line with this, the following rules have been developed to ensure student safety whilst being in the

OSHC program. The OSHC Program Staff will educate the children in care as to the rules and consequences of both good and bad behaviour.

The children will -

- Pack up the equipment/games etc. that they use
- Use appropriate language at all times.
- Respect others' property, including clothing, school bags, books, toys, etc.
- Treat other children with respect and refrain from using physical contact, name-calling or bullying tactics.
- Use good manners towards each other and Program Staff.
- Obtain staff permission before leaving the care area to go to the toilet
- Wait until parents come into the care area to collect them. No child is to leave the care area unsupervised.
- Not waste food - a child will not be given any other piece of food during a session in which he/she decides to waste his/her food.
- Play one at a time on computer.
- Always walk around the care area.

The consequences for poor behaviour that is, not complying with the rules are:

The child will be involved in a quiet discussion with the Program Co-ordinator using restorative questions.

The parents will be informed if the behaviour re occurs.

If the problem continues to occur, a meeting will be convened in which the Program Co-ordinator, Assistant, a Committee member and the Parents will attempt to resolve the issue.

If the meeting does not resolve the issue, a letter will be given to the Parents from the Program Committee giving them the option to either comply with the Program rules or to look for an alternative service for their child.

At Forrest Primary School and Early Years Centre we pride ourselves in our genuine care and concern for the welfare of our students. If at any time you are worried, confused or would like to ask a question please do so. Our dedicated staff are here to assist and work with you to make your child's journey a wonderful learning experience. We encourage all parents to feel comfortable about talking to our team of dedicated and professional staff about matters relating to your child's health and well-being.

Once again welcome to our Early Years Centre, we look forward to sharing this important part of your child's educational journey with you!

## PRE-SCHOOL

WED 9AM – 2PM

THURS 9AM – 2PM

FRI 9AM – 2PM

## CHILD CARE & OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE

MON – FRI \* DEPENDANT ON ENROLLED NUMBERS

MORNING & EARLY AFTERNOON CARE 9AM – 3.30PM

AFTERNOON CARE 2PM – 6PM