

VACATION CARE FAMILY HANDBOOK



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WELCOME

We warmly welcome you and your child to our Vacation Care programs.

We would like to acknowledge that our Vacation Care services reside on the land of the Dharawal people. We acknowledge the first custodians of this land and also acknowledge the present and past Australian Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders and whom reside within this area.

This handbook should be read along with the program and the terms and conditions of enrolment which can be found on the Sutherland Shire Council website. We hope it provides you with a more personalised guide to Vacation Care.

We provide a high standard of quality care for the children enrolled in our programs. We are committed to the National Quality Standards (NQS) for Middle Years Education and Care and are guided by the Middle Years framework My Time Our Place (MTOPI). We are committed to the ongoing continuous improvement of our practices and these are reflected in each of our Vacation Care's Quality Improvement Plans (QIP).

We value our partnerships with families and believe that strong, effective communication between Educators and families are vital to maintaining these partnerships. We value your feedback and use information that you share to continue to improve the service and programs we provide.

We will provide you with opportunities to participate in our service formally and informally and we encourage your participation and contributions to all parts of our service.

Please take the time to read this handbook prior to enrolment and feel free to refer to it on our website for future reference. If you need any assistance or unsure about any matters relating to Vacation Care or this handbook, please ask an Educator, they are there to help.

We hope your child enjoys the many fun and engaging activities on offer during our school holiday programs for many years to come. We trust this handbook provides you with a solid overview of our service and procedures.

Parents and carers are most welcome to ask any questions about our service at any time. For further information, please contact our OOSH Director or the Service Coordinator at each site.

Carlene Turner
OOSH Director
Email: cturner@ssc.nsw.gov.au
Phone: 0414 193 621

OUR LOCATIONS

Miranda Vacation Care

Miranda Children's service
31A Wandella Rd, Miranda

We are located immediately behind Miranda Library (in the front of the same building as Wombat Occasional Care). Entrance and parking is available in the Westfield car park - Library end. There are 10 minute drop off places along with all day parking in the car park. Please utilise these spaces (and avoid the designated spaces for Library staff and Children's Services Educators only as fines may be incurred).

Lucas Heights Vacation Care

Lucas Heights Community School
132 Old Illawarra Rd, Barden Ridge (entry via car park at the junior hall)

Burraneer Bay Vacation Care

Burraneer Bay Public School
161-165 Burraneer Bay Road, Cronulla (Entry via Gannons Road car park entry)

CONTACT NUMBERS

Customer Service Team

For Vacation Care enrolment and fee queries, please contact our team at Children's Services:

Phone: (02) 9710 0466
Fax: (02) 9710 0597
Email: VacationCare@ssc.nsw.gov.au

Vacation Care Service

For queries regarding your child, please phone the respective centre:

Lucas Heights Vacation Care.....0414 193 693
Miranda Vacation Care.....9540 5631
Burraneer Bay Vacation Care0414 193 847

HOURS OF OPERATION

Opening Hours

Our three Vacation Care centres are open 7am-6pm during school holidays. This may include pupil free days at the commencement or end of school terms which will be noted on the program for that holiday period. Children will not be permitted on the premises outside of these days/hours.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The three Vacation Care services are managed and overseen by Sutherland Shire Council's Children's Services Unit.

We cater for children from Kindergarten to age 14 years at both Miranda and Lucas Heights and at Burraneer Bay Kindergarten to 12 years.

Vacation Care has been operating since 2003. It is a not-for-profit service operating on a revenue-neutral basis (a break-even budget with income derived from parents' fees).

The service is committed to meeting the requirements under the National Quality Framework which is made up of "The Education & Care Services National Law and Regulations 2011" and "The National Quality Standards" legislated by both Federal and State Governments.

Throughout our many years' experience, we have developed our philosophy, guidelines and goals reflecting the beliefs and values of our Educators, our customers, Council and the wider Education and Care sector. We also aim to include the children's voices, thoughts and beliefs throughout our documents and programs.

Sutherland Shire Council's Children's Services Educators promote and abide by the Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics (2006) available at www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au.

Fees & Charges

Vacation Care fees are set by Council's Children's Services unit and adopted by Council on an annual basis. Current fees are available at <http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/VacationCare>

Booking Conditions

Please refer to our Vacation Care Terms & Conditions, available at:
www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au/VacationCare

Sign In and Out - Arrival and Departure

You are required to electronically sign your child into and out of Vacation Care at the relevant site your child is attending. Please use the digital sign in/out iPad service.

If you have electronically signed in/out at our Vacation Care service previously, the same PIN can be used. If you are a new customer, you will need to enter your mobile number and the password '0000' after which you can set your own PIN. Our Educators can assist you. We also have a step-by-step guide by the electronic device.

Please note: electronic signing in/out will only work for contacts who have your collection permission within the My Family Lounge. You can add additional contacts within the online My Family Lounge at any time.

Late Collection of Children

We are only able to cater for children between the hours of 7am and 6pm during school holidays. Children should not be on the premises outside of these hours.

Within any given 12 month period, parents who pick up their children after closing time (6pm) will:

- On the first, second, third and fourth times receive a fine for the first 5 minutes or part thereof, followed by an additional fee for each 5 minutes thereafter. This is to be paid within 14 days of an account being issued by Council.
- On the fifth time of receiving a fine, the child's position at the service will be terminated.

Authority to Collect

On enrolment you are able to nominate people that are able to collect your child and the end of the day and /or for emergency situations such as when a child becomes unwell. Only those people which you have nominated are then authorised to collect your child. All authorisations **must be in writing** and **not via telephone**.

Due to the numbers of children enrolled at our sites each holidays and many of which use the service irregularly, Educators we will ask people collecting children for photo identification in the cases where an educator does not recognise that person. This may include a parent or otherwise authorised collection person. We also have many casuals that work across our Vacation Care sites so even though you may have attended that centre before a particular educator may not know that person. The photo identification will be checked against the information that has been provided as part of the enrolment process for those persons authorised to collect the child.

We suggest that you tell any authorised person to collect that this process would occur on pick up and that they should bring photo identification with them.

Your child will not be released from the service without photo ID that matches information provided on enrolment.

Lost Property

Please label all equipment and clothing that your child brings with them to Vacation Care. As per the Terms and Conditions of enrolment, Sutherland Shire Council will not be liable for any damage or loss of

items during children's time with our Vacation Care program. Lost property will be at each Vacation Care site for that holiday period.

Child Protection

All Educators are Mandatory reporters under child protection legislation and are legally bound to record and report any concerns of a Child Protection nature to Community Services.

Educator Staffing

We access a regular pool of casual Educators through Council to staff our Vacation Care centres. Wherever possible, we utilise return casual educators to ensure continuity of staff for the children enrolled in our program.

Our Miranda Vacation Care utilises our permanent MOOSH (Before & After School Care service) Educators for their Vacation Care Site.

Our Vacation Care program of activities, staff management and rostering is undertaken by our Vacation Care Director. Our Director holds a Diploma of Early Education and Care and undertakes the role of Educational Leader across the sites. This role is required to develop and guide the program across the Vacation Care services. This position is supported by a Supervisor at each site throughout the day, play leaders and support educators.

Accidents

Where there is a group of children playing and learning together, things can happen. Sometimes children can be hurt, throw things or fall over or off things. While supervision is vital and our primary priority at all times, we, just like you at home, cannot be everywhere at once.

When an accident occurs, we apply first aid as needed, and reassure and comfort the child until they feel better. We complete an accident report which you will be required to review and sign.

In the event of a serious accident, we contact the family and if necessary seek medical attention through an ambulance. Where possible an Educator would accompany your child to the hospital and remain with them until you arrive. For more information, please see our Incident, Injury & Trauma Guideline.

Illness Infectious Diseases

If your child is diagnosed as having an infectious disease, please notify the service as soon as possible so parents of other children at the service can be notified. A medical practitioner's clearance is required before your child can return to the service.

The Department of Health requires exclusion from the service for infectious conditions.

If your child becomes ill at the service, you may be required to collect your child or make arrangements for your child to be collected as soon as possible.

Please refer to the National Health Medical Research Council Recommended Minimum Exclusion Periods which are available in a PDF format at:

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/publications/staying-healthy-preventing-infectious-diseases-early-childhood-education-and-care-services>

Immunisation

It is recommended that children adhere to the immunisation schedule to keep up to date with their immunisations. Please provide the Customer Service team with your updated Immunisation History Statement as your child receives updated immunisation. [NSW Immunisation Schedule](#)

Medical Conditions

If your child has any medical conditions (allergies, anaphylaxis, asthma, diabetes etc) a Medical Management Plan and a Risk Minimisation and Communication Plan must be completed on an annual basis or as changes occur.

Please note these documents are a legislative requirement and parent participation is required to complete these to continue enrolment with the service.

Inclusion and Family Support

Our service philosophy is founded on the concept of inclusion of all children. We work closely with outside agencies to provide a holistic approach to child development.

We are committed to supporting families through a collaborative approach to children's wellbeing. The more information that you can supply regarding your child's needs, the more assistance we can provide.

At any time, we are available to support you as a family as you undertake this step of your life journey. We work closely with many agencies and professionals to help support family and parenting issues. For more information on our inclusive practice, please see our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Guideline.

Family Support

We have access to various community support agencies and programs which provide support to families.

This may include emotional support or parenting help for behavioural issues. Please speak with our Educators if you are interested in accessing this type of support. All conversations and requests are confidential.

Excursion information

Excursions are a much-loved part of our Vacation Care program. Please check with the service supervisor or the communication noticeboard advertising daily events, items required and excursion times.

Children may be required to bring additional materials to participate in some activities, e.g. craft materials.

Excursion costs are calculated to include the extra staff required to meet staff excursion ratios, venue and travel costs.

Meals

Families are to provide **all** meals for all days including excursions. Children should not bring money to purchase lunch whilst attending Vacation Care unless specified by the service's Supervisor prior to the day.

The service has current information regarding healthy eating practices available for families at all times. Attached is a healthy Lunch Box checklist to assist you in packing a healthy lunch.

Food Preferences and Allergies

Our Vacation Care services are **nut aware sites**. There may be children in our care who have a life threatening anaphylactic reaction to certain foods. It is vital that children do not bring any food to Vacation Care which contains nuts.

For cooking experiences which may form a part of our curriculum, we are committed to ensuring food preferences or allergies are catered for where reasonably known or notified. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure our service staff are aware of any such requirements or preferences.

Where practical, food or other products which are known to cause or contribute to allergies, will be removed. We retain absolute discretion in this regard and to the extent permitted by law the service does not otherwise take or accept any responsibility for products not so removed.

Clothing

Please dress your children in something old, comfortable and labelled. Children need to bring a hat and wear safe and appropriate footwear - excursions do require some walking therefore sensible shoes will be needed.

Please supply spare clothes for your child.

Sunscreen and Hats

Sunscreen is provided at the service. We adhere to a strict sun smart policy. Our services provide Cancer Council Sunscreen or you may choose to provide your own.

Parents must provide permission within their online enrolment to have sunscreen applied at the service. Children must also wear a hat whilst outdoors. We abide by our "No Hat ... day in the shade" policy.

We suggest all children have a shirt that will cover their arms whilst out in the sun. It is the parent's responsibility to apply sunscreen on arrival and staff will encourage the children to re-apply throughout the day.

Positive Guidance

Behavioural expectations and child rearing practices may vary greatly among different cultures and social groupings. Within our quality services, Educators and staff endeavour to consider the backgrounds and cultures of families using the service in relation to guiding children's behaviour.

Positive behaviour guidance is a practical approach to children's behaviour which contributes to a healthy self-esteem and allows children to feel capable and competent, encouraging their ability to interact with others. It praises and acknowledges caring, co-operative and desirable behaviour.

Through an effective positive behaviour guidance program, our services will provide environments which are safe, secure and consistent for young children.

Our aims for guiding children's behaviour are;

- To encourage co-operation, self-discipline, positive self-esteem and an ability to interact with others
- To encourage children to gain understanding and appreciation of other people's needs rights and feelings.
- To foster respect for others as well as respect for property.
- To acknowledge and value the child's background and culture in relation to behaviour guidance
- To ensure that educators hold appropriate expectations of children and that appropriate positive behaviour guidance strategies are used

- To ensure that educators are aware of a child's individual needs and be informed about the development of self-regulation over the Early Childhood years
- Strategies employed should involve positive techniques of guidance, redirection and reinforcement
- To work together with families in the behaviour guidance process to keep parents informed of their child's behaviour
- For children to learn about the ways their choices impact themselves, others and the environment.

The strategies we use empower the children to make their own choices and gain a better understanding of how to positively express their emotions. This is a step towards emotional self-regulation and independence.

We are strong believers in working together with families to guide children's behaviour and we are always available (and may suggest) meetings to ensure we are actively working towards the same goals.

It is important to communicate with Educators any changes at home, stresses, problems that may be having an effect on the child's behaviour. We will discuss and develop strategies that can be used at the service and home to address any inappropriate behaviour. Your support to work through these behaviours is imperative as behaviour management plans are only successful when both families and Educators implement them consistently.

Educators attend regular training on managing children's behaviour and catering for children's individual needs. Please refer to the Positive Behaviour Guidance Guideline.

National Quality Framework (NQF)

Throughout your time within our Vacation Care program, you may notice we will refer to the National Quality Framework or NQF. The National Quality Framework is part of the National Partnership Agreement to improve early and middle education and care nationwide in Australia.

It consists of the following:

- The [Education and Care Services National Law](#) & the [Education and Care Services National Regulations](#),
- [National Quality Standards](#) (NQS) for Early Childhood Education and Care and School Age Care,
- A [national quality rating and assessment](#) process,
- A national body jointly governed by the Australian Government and state and territory governments—the [Australian Children's Education and Care Quality](#) Authority (ACECQA)—to oversee the system.
- An approved learning framework for Primary School aged children, called the [My Time, Our Place](#) (MTOF)
- Incorporation of the [Early Years Learning Framework](#) (EYLF) for children in Kindergarten.

National Quality Standard (NQS)

The [NQS](#) provides children throughout Australia with high quality care and education that best promotes their learning and development in the vital years.

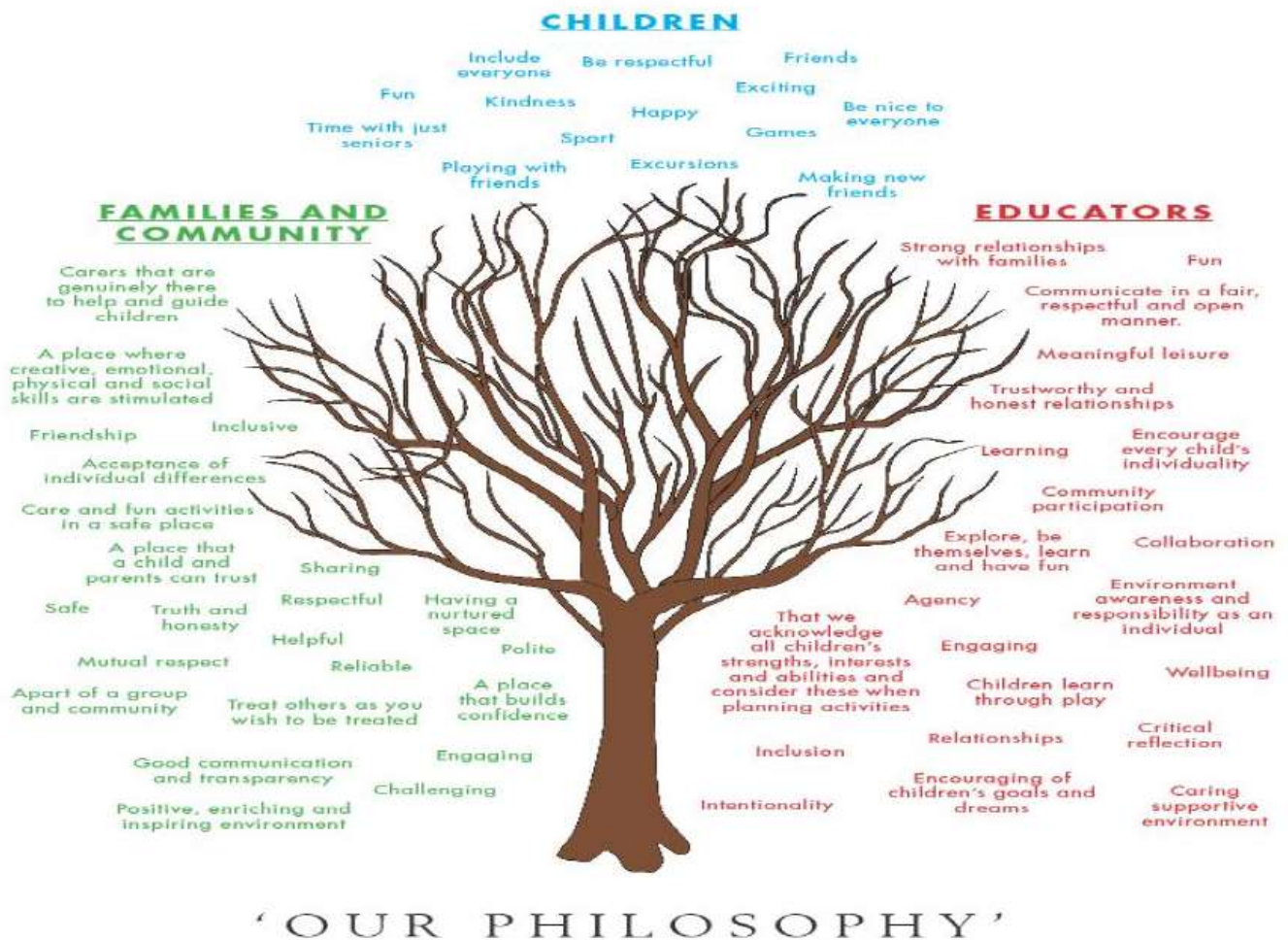
The standard is based on seven quality areas:

1. Educational program and practice
2. Children's health and safety
3. Physical environment
4. Staffing arrangements
5. Relationships with children
6. Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
7. Leadership and service management.

The assessment process is ongoing – it is about the commitment of Educators, management, and parents working together for the benefit of all children, each other and the broader community. This process does not stop once the service has achieved an assessment rating.

The assessment process requires our service to continually update its programs, policies and procedures and to undertake an annual review of our philosophy, goals and evaluation of the program. This entire process ensures we continue to maintain and improve upon our current standards.

Vacation Care Philosophy



Our Curriculum: Programming and Planning

Our Vacation Care services uses My Time, Our Place (MTO), see more below, to guide the programming for enrolled children.

Our Educators plan for a balance of autonomy and relaxation throughout the day.

Activities & Events

Our Vacation Care programs change each school holiday period.

Each program clearly outlines the planned daily experiences including;

- excursions,
- incursions (visits from others to the service to perform or provide and experience) or
- a focus for the day (such as service-based art and craft).

These activities are planned by our Vacation Care Director to provide a combination of learning, physical activities and social interactions whilst balancing children undertaking duties or experiences within the wider community and most of all having fun!

For example, going to the movies allows children to experience a social event, often bargaining with other children regarding seating and observing the norms of society in purchasing tickets and food items and obeying the rules of the cinema.

Planned Experiences

In addition to the experiences and activities detailed within our Vacation Care program, our Educators ensure that activities and equipment provided at the centres allows for further learning and development that caters to the children’s interests.

Every day you will notice our Educators reflect in the floor book and curriculum planner on experiences at the site, the extension on learning and follow up of interests that occur. Children will be referred to and also have their input in the daily reflection of learning within the floor book and curriculum planner. The Floor book is a child-led approach to observation, documentation and planning, by listening to children and identifying their interests we create a unique learning opportunity which excites and interests children. You may not see your child’s name everyday - this does not mean that your child did not participate in activities. To ensure authentic reflection on a moment in time throughout the day, not all children are able to be documented on each day.

My Time Our Place

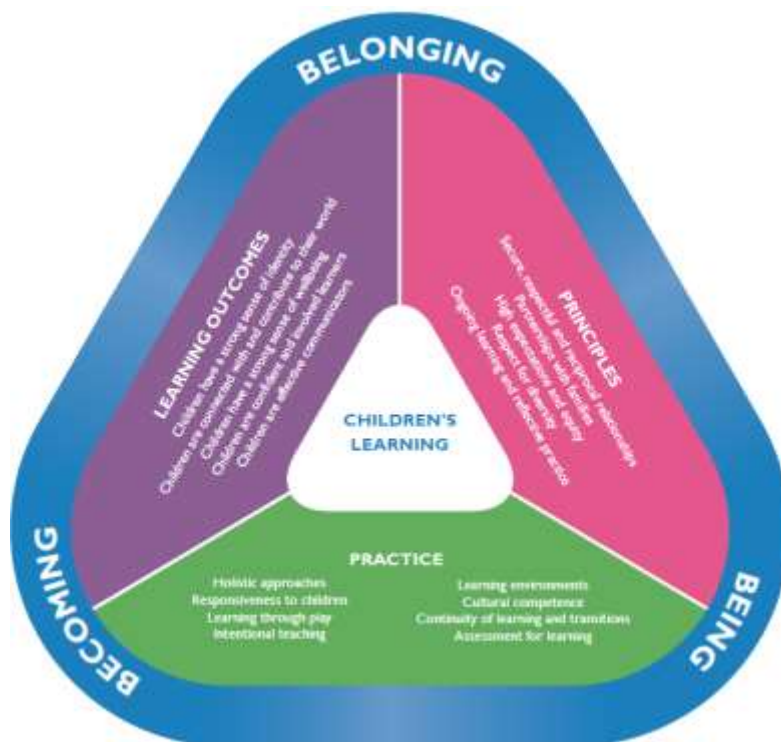
The Council of Australian Governments has developed *My Time, Our Place – Framework for School Age Care in Australia* (The Framework) to assist educators to provide children with opportunities to maximise their potential and develop a foundation for future success in life. In this way, the Framework will contribute to realising the Council of Australian Governments vision that:

“All children have the best start in life to create a better future for themselves and for the nation.” 1

The Framework has been designed for use by school age care educators working in partnership with children, their families and the community, including schools. It represents Australia’s first national framework for school age care to be used by school age care educators, and aims to extend and enrich children’s wellbeing and development in school age care settings.

All School Aged Education and Care Services are required under the National Quality Framework to utilise the My Time Our Place - Framework for School Age Care in Australia in their programming for children.

Educators within our Vacation Care services utilise the principles and practices within My Time, Our Place to achieve the learning outcomes for children.



Play is Learning

Play is very important for children. Through play children explore and learn to understand the world around them as they communicate, discover, imagine and create.

When children play they are showing what they have learned and what they are trying to understand. This is why play is one of the foundations of My Time Our Place (MTOPE).

By using MTOPE, Educators will guide your child's play by carefully designing learning activities and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments. We encourage the children to engage in all types of play.

Relationships are Key

It is well known that children learn best when they have secure relationships with caring adults. When children develop trusting relationships they feel more confident and able to explore and learn.

In school aged education and care settings, when children feel emotionally secure they learn through play to develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others and gradually learn to take responsibility.

Relationships & Interactions with Children

We believe that strong attachments build trusting relationships and provide children with a secure base for exploration and learning. Through this children will develop confidence and feel respected, valued and part of a network of secure relationships. Educators who are attuned to the thoughts and feelings of the children they care for support the development of children's wellbeing.

At our Vacation Care services, our Educators give priority to nurturing relationships to help children develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others and their learning.

Routines

Our Vacation Care services follow a daily routine. It is a flexible routine incorporating the needs & interests of the children, the weather and programmed events.

We have progressive meal times where the children are encouraged to engage in a positive and social meal time.

We practice indoor/outdoor times where the children move through the indoor and outdoor environments engaging in various experiences.

Sustainability Plan

Our Vacation Care service has a Sustainability Action Plan which comprises both short term and long term goals.

We consider it our responsibility to empower children to be sustainable thinkers for the future. We have various sustainable practices at the services and are happy for any suggestions or volunteers to help our plans come to fruition.

Customer Feedback Policy

The aim of our customer feedback policy is to provide and maintain open lines of communication between families and the centre where suggestions can be incorporated into the program, positive feedback can be given and grievances can be handled effectively.

Our customer feedback policy and form is readily available at the centre. Record comments, praise and complaints on the form and return it to the centre. The Vacation Care Director will contact you to discuss the issue within the week. If necessary a meeting will be called with the Coordinator to discuss the issue and/or make a plan of action to work on resolving the issue.

Grievance Procedure

Our services welcome open communication at all times. Educators at each service are available to discuss your child's day with you at any time. The Vacation Care Director is available for you to contact. We maintain confidentiality throughout the grievance procedure and remain solution-focused in our approach to addressing concerns.

Attachment 1 Lunchbox Checklist For Vacation Care

ALL COUNCIL SERVICES ARE NUT AWARE ZONES

Use this checklist to help provide nutritious food for your child each day: Is your child provided with:
PLEASE TICK

<input type="checkbox"/>	Dairy or high calcium foods? High calcium foods are dairy products including plain or flavoured milks, hard and soft cheeses, yogurts and custard. Calcium- added soya milk and tofu are also good sources of calcium. Other high calcium foods are milk based desserts such as fruche, creamed rice, milk puddings and ice-cream.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Protein and high iron foods? Protein foods include beef, lamb, veal, beef sausage, pork, ham, fish, egg, chicken(breast leg or loaf), legumes
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cereal – based foods? Cereal – based foods include bread(all varieties including fruit bread), rice, pasta, noodles, cracker biscuits(plain, unsalted crackers, rice cakes, rice crackers), fruit buns, scones, pikelets, muffins and crumpets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Fruit? Fruit includes fresh, canned or dried but NOT JUICE.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegetables? Vegetables include raw or cooked (fresh, canned or frozen)
<input type="checkbox"/>	A drink? The best drinks for children are milk or water. Fruit juice is not essential if your child eats fruit. If you choose to pack juice, dilute it half and half with water.

Limit the following foods

- Sticky snacks like heath food bars, lollies and fruit straps as these may lead to tooth decay.
- Foods high in fat and sugar like creamed filled and chocolate coated biscuits, chocolate and chocolate or yoghurt coated heath food bars.
- Foods high in fat and salt like chips and savoury snack biscuits

Healthy Lunch Ideas

- Lettuce and ham sandwich, sultanas, milk
- Crackers, cheese/celery sticks, banana, water
- Egg and lettuce roll, apple, flavoured milk
- Left over dinner e.g. spaghetti Bolognese, cheese cubes, orange quarters, water
- Banana roll, yogurt, carrot sticks, water

Keeping food in the Lunchbox cool

- Food poisoning occurs when bacteria in food have the right conditions to grow. Bacteria grow best when the temperature is between 5-60°C. To keep food in the lunchbox safe it is important that food is kept cool.
- Use insulated bags as lunchboxes
- Place ice bricks in lunch boxes
- Place frozen drinks (water) in lunch box
- Freeze suitable foods eg. Sandwiches, yoghurt
- Store lunch in a cool area out of the sun

Reference: Nutrition Ready to go at OOSH

Attachment 2 Customer Feedback Flow Chart

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK FLOW CHART

The following is a flow chart that details the process which customers should follow when they have a grievance, comments, suggestions etc.

