



# Parent Handbook

## 2020

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## **Family Handbook**

Muckabout provides quality Before & After School Care and Vacation Care for children aged 5-12 years. Muckabout is fully accredited and is owned and run by Nathan and Kris Butson in conjunction with a full time Coordinator. Our Centre aims to meet the needs of parents in our local community who are working, studying or require care for school aged children.

## **Our Philosophy**

We believe that Muck-A-Bout should be a fun and safe place, where children have a voice and are involved in the decision making process around programming and planning. We recognise and value the importance of play and offer a program that enhances our children's learning and development.

We value family partnerships and recognise the important link between home, school and community. We value the input of families and encourage involvement through engagement and networking. All educators at Muck-A-Bout are expected to be positive role models and interact with and facilitate children's play. We have qualified and experienced educators and pride ourselves on providing professional development experiences within our service.

Personal autonomy and lifestyle skills are scaffolded in our environment by providing opportunities for children to make choices and develop their independence. We are committed to contributing towards a more sustainable future by embedding practices that promote protection and preservation of our environment.

We endeavour to provide a high quality service by following the Children's Services Laws and Regulations as well as implementing the 'My Time, Our Place' and National Quality Frameworks in all aspects of the service's daily operations.

## **Service Management Structure**

Muckabout is owned and run by Nathan and Kris Butson. It is administered by a full time coordinator. The management is committed to managing the service in line with relevant legislative requirements under the National Quality Framework for school age children and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. The management employs the Coordinator and other staff to oversee the day to day running and operations of the service

New staff will be introduced in our newsletters and notice board. Our experienced staff are dedicated and motivated to meet the care and education needs of the children. The staff will listen, respond to and respect each child whilst promoting good self-esteem and modelling positive behaviour. Staff will not discriminate against anyone on the basis of their race, cultural background, religion, gender, disability, marital status, income or any other reason.

There will be a minimum of two staff on duty at all times. The National Quality Standards ratio of staff to children is 1:15 (one staff member to fifteen children). Please feel free to talk to the Coordinator with any questions, concerns, or feedback that you might have and an appropriate time will be arranged to discuss these issues if they cannot be discussed at that particular time.

All information given to the staff by parents will be kept confidential. We have a wide range of policies available on request at the centre. If parents/carers have a problem with the centre or its staff, please arrange for an appointment with the Coordinator. These issues will not be discussed in front of staff or the children. If the complaint is not handled to the parent's/carer's satisfaction, parents or caregivers are encouraged to contact the owners of Muckabout. A meeting will then be arranged to resolve the problem. Correspondence can be forwarded to [Nathan@Muckabout.com.au](mailto:Nathan@Muckabout.com.au).

## **Activities**

As play is one of the most important and valuable learning tools a child can have in the early learning years we offer a wide range of age appropriate games and activities for both outside and inside the Centre. We encourage the children to join in with the whole group, play in smaller groups and individually. We have a policy that everyone is to be included and welcome to join in at any time.

Essential skills are learnt through the various activities planned for children, such as; art & craft, dramatic play, construction, technology, cooking, literacy activities, sport and both small and large group games. A weekly program is developed by staff in conjunction with children's ideas and suggestions. The program is based on the principles of the My Time Our Place Framework and can be viewed on the front notice board. Children are encouraged to be supportive and respectful of other's ideas or interests in the Centre.

Additional to the planned program, children are offered a range of 'self-selection' resources and equipment during the morning and afternoon sessions where they can make their own choices as to what activities they would like to do. This encourages independence and promotes good self-esteem.

Children who attend the Vacation Care program, will be able to experience a wide range of activities during the holidays. Some of these experiences may be Zoo visits, Movies, Laser Tag,

Bowling, Parks, Swimming and many other exciting activities. A separate vacation care program is developed and is made available to families by Week 5 of each school term.

## Daily Program

### AM:

- 6.25 am: Staff arrive- For child protection laws and licensing laws, we cannot take any child before 6.30am
- 6.30 am: Children start to arrive, have breakfast, quiet games, read, finish homework or art & craft
- 7.45 am: Kitchen closes, tidy up and first bus leaves at 8am
- 8.15 am: Complete pack away time and second bus leaves at 8.30am
- 9.00 am: Staff finish

### PM:

- 2.00 pm: Staff arrive and set up, buses start to leave at 2.15pm
- 2.45 pm: Bus 1 arrives, afternoon tea begins, quiet activities
- 3.20 pm: Bus 2 arrives, afternoon tea begins, quiet activities
- 3.45 pm: Bus 3 arrives, afternoon tea begins, quiet activities
- 4.00-5.00 pm: Free play, organised games/ Art & Craft/ Music/ Indoor activities/ Homework
- 5.00 pm: Staff begin centre clean, pack up time, Indoor games, DVD, reading, quiet activities
- 6.30 pm: Centre closes

## Homework

Homework is an optional extra, if you wish for your child to do some extra work, please organise with your child and centre staff. Staff will not be held accountable for any incomplete homework. It is the responsibility of the parent to check if their child has completed his/her homework.

## Parent Participation

Parents are encouraged to have a say and input into our centre. The Director is available to discuss any suggestions and concerns. Please contact the Director to arrange an appropriate time to meet. At times we seek feedback from families in the form of digital surveys, however verbal or written feedback is welcome any time.

## Food

Children attending Before School Care will be offered a light breakfast between 6:30am and 7:45am. During After School Care the children will receive a variety of nutritious snacks. All food is prepared and stored in a hygienic manner. Parents are encouraged to share family and multicultural food ideas for the children to enjoy. Children have access to fresh drinking water at all times in the centre. Parents must advise the staff of any special dietary requirements. Please see website or noticeboard for the current menu.

## **Anaphylaxis**

Anaphylaxis is the most acute and serious form of allergy. Approximately 1 in 200 individuals will experience such a reaction. Nuts are responsible for many such reactions. For this reason, we do not serve any nut products and we strongly discourage children from bringing any nut based food or products into the centre.

## **Hours of Operation**

Monday – Friday:	6:30am – 9:00am	Before school care
	2.30pm – 6:30pm	After school care
	6:30am – 6:30pm	Vacation care

During **Pupil Free Days** (first day of 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> term) the Centre opens all day from **6:30am – 6:30pm**.

**\*The Centre is closed during public holidays.**

## **Registration Fees**

\$25 per family (per year)

This annual fee is payable on enrolment and will be included in your first invoice at any time of the year and is non-refundable.

## **Fee Policy**

**All fees are to be paid as stated on the invoice. Invoices will be issued weekly and will be emailed to your nominated address. Balances of fees are given upon request at any time. Outstanding fees will jeopardise a place for your child at the Centre. If Public Holidays fall in Term time, fees will still be charged if your child would normally attend.**

We aim to provide a quality service that is affordable. Fee levels will be set by management each year or end of financial year on completion of an annual budget and according to the Centre's required income. Parents will be given at least 4 weeks notice of any changes in fees or policies.

All fees must be paid my direct debit. A form is included on enrolment.

Fees for 2020:

Before school care	Permanent fee \$20 per child Casual fee \$22 per child
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After school care	Permanent fee \$30 per child Casual fee \$32 per child
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Vacation care	\$75 per child per day
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## Child Care Subsidy

Child Care Subsidy is paid directly to the Centre. If you claim and are eligible for Child Care Subsidy for approved child care and you and your partner meet the Child Care Subsidy 'work, training, study test' (or are exempt from it), you may be eligible for Child Care Subsidy. Please call Centrelink on 13 6150 for details.

## Late Pick up Fee

If your child/children is collected after 6:30pm (by the Centre's clock), this will be considered a late pick up, hence a late fee will apply:

\$25 per 15 minutes or part thereof

This applies to any child who is signed out of Kiosk after 6:30pm. After three (3) late fees in one term we reserve the right to cancel your child's enrolment.

If you realise that you are unable to pick up your child on time, please phone one of your authorised persons to pick up your child before 6:30pm and inform the Centre immediately.

**Late fees will still apply if pick up occurs after 6:30pm.** This will also enable staff to inform your child of your call to avoid any anxiety.

## Late Payment of Fees

**It is essential that fees be paid by the required dates**, as they pay for your child's care, snacks, equipment and day-to-day costs. Overdue fees attract a penalty of \$25.00. If fees are over three (3) weeks in arrears, care for your child may be refused. Any costs incurred in recovering debts will be borne by the parent/carer as agreed in the enrolment form.

## Casual Bookings

Pre-bookings are required for Before and After School Care. The Centre accepts bookings at short notice subject to a place being available. If you require After School Care on a day that your child is not booked in, please contact the centre to book a place. Emergency bookings will be accepted provided there is a space.

**\*All casual bookings will be charged for regardless of whether you attend or cancel a booking.**

## Cancellation of Permanent Bookings

If you no longer require a permanent booking at Muckabout for your child you must advise the centre in writing giving two (2) weeks' notice. This can be done by letter or email ([info@Muckabout.com.au](mailto:info@Muckabout.com.au)). **Cancellations cannot be made verbally over the phone or in person.** Please be aware that CCS is only paid up to the last date of attendance (Centrelink may take up to 8 weeks to reconcile accounts).

## Children's Absence

The Centre must be informed if your child is to be absent. **Verbal Messages from the children will not be accepted.** If your child is absent from pick-up at school, you shall be contacted immediately to check your child's whereabouts. If you can't be contacted, we will ring the contacts on the enrolment form given. A search fee will apply.

The Federal Government allow families to claim a maximum of 42 days of Child Care Subsidy on days they are booked into care but are unable to attend. For children in Out of School Hours Care this will include days where they are booked for Before, After School Care & Vacation Care. Additional days may be granted in the event of medical absences, with the provision of a medical certificate.

## Search Fee

If your child is absent and the centre was not informed, a search fee of \$10.00 will be charged to your account.

## Collection Procedures

All children attending After School Care will meet staff in the designated areas of the school for roll call before boarding buses to Muckabout.

## Signing In/Out

Responsibility will not be accepted for a child at Before School Care until they have been signed into the Centre by a parent or guardian. Parents must sign into the kiosk each day when dropping their children off or collecting them. The kiosk is a legal document and serves as a safety feature informing staff when children are at the Centre. An attendance roll is marked every afternoon by staff when the children arrive at the pick-up location at their school. If your child is enrolled, but does not turn up, staff will notify parents immediately.

**The authorised person who is collecting the child from After School Care must ensure that a staff member is aware that they are taking a child from the school and the roll book must be signed.** Children will not be released from the School or Centre without this being completed. People under 16 years of age will not be allowed to collect your child/children from the School or Centre. **We can no longer accept verbal requests for collection of a child, this must be done in a letter, email ([info@Muckabout.com.au](mailto:info@Muckabout.com.au)) or text message to the Muckabout phone: 0434 024 572.**

If this is not done staff cannot release your child until your permission has been given. Any person unfamiliar to staff will be asked for identification. This is for your child's safety as well as that of the caregivers.

After 6:30pm if the staff have not heard from the parent they will ring the emergency phone numbers. After 7:00pm, NSW Police or the Department of Communities and Justice will be called. Two staff members will wait with children who have not been collected by 7:00pm. No child will be permitted to travel home alone.

Under no circumstances is the staff of Muckabout allowed to escort or transport your child home as set out in The Child Protection Act and Muckabout's Policy.

### **Priority of Access**

The Owner/Coordinator at the Centre maintains a waiting list. The main priority will be given to working parents, parents seeking work or studying for work purposes. Priority of access will be determined as follows:

- **First Priority:** a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect;
- **Second Priority:** a child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the '*A New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999*';
- **Third Priority:** any other child.

If there are any court orders affecting custody of your child, please provide a copy for our records. Staff cannot restrict access if this is not produced.

### **Updating information**

It is your responsibility to inform us of any changes of address, phone numbers or authorised persons to collect your child/children. This can be done in person or via email.

### **Illness**

The Centre will not accept a child who is contagious (eg. mumps, measles, chicken pox, influenza, head lice, heavy colds or stomach infections etc.). If a child arrives at the centre unwell or becomes ill, parents will be notified. The Owner/Coordinator has the right to exclude a contagious or sick child from the Centre and you will be contacted to pick up your child immediately or to arrange for someone else to pick the child up. If you cannot be contacted the Centre will phone a person from your contact list.

Parents will be responsible for any medical expenses incurred on behalf of their child and fees are still required.



## **Medicines**

If a child is undergoing medical treatment and requires medication, the medicine must be given to the Coordinator or Supervisor in its original packaging with the child's name on the label, along with the management plan filled out by child's doctor. Staff cannot administer over the counter medication without written permission. The Coordinator/Supervisor is to be made aware of any medical conditions that affect your child.

## **Accidents**

At least one staff member on duty will be trained in First Aid and will keep up to date on First Aid procedures. Qualified staff will administer first aid when necessary and with any serious injuries, an ambulance will be called and the parent will be contacted immediately. If we are unable to contact a parent, the emergency contact will be called.

In the event of a minor injury, the parent will be advised when collecting the child. Serious injuries will be noted in the accident and injury book and an incident report will be forward to the Department of Communities and Justice.

## **Emergency Procedures**

Emergency procedures such as fire drills and lockdowns will be practised at least once a term. Copies of Emergency Procedure policies are on hand if you require them, please see the Coordinator/Supervisor for a copy.

## **Discipline Policy**

We encourage our staff to aim for consistency when dealing with inappropriate behaviour. We also emphasise positive reinforcement for appropriate behaviour to maintain positive self-esteem in all children. Negative behaviour is dealt with in a calm and appropriate manner to achieve a positive outcome. Children will be offered choices if behaviour is inappropriate. Staff will supervise children at all times and will ensure that all of the children know the rules and will also offer clear and simple directions for all activities. Children are encouraged to ask staff for support.

Parents will be provided with feedback on both positive and negative behaviour of the child. Children will then be asked how they could have handled the situation for a better outcome, the child will be allowed to return to an activity after the situation is resolved.

In moderate cases of negative behaviour, staff will complete an Incident Report in order to document the situation. In cases of ongoing negative behaviour, we will work with parents/carers to develop a behaviour management plan. Serious incidents are discussed with the parent/s upon next signing in/out of their child or at the next possible time.

Unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. The staff of Muckabout, after consultation with the Owners, reserves the right to suspend or refuse a child's attendance to the Centre. During short periods of suspension, permanent bookings will still incur fees.

## **Lost Property**

Please check our lost property basket regularly. We recommend you label all belongings with your child's name.

## **Confidentiality**

The centre has a strict confidentiality/privacy policy developed in consideration of the Privacy Act of 1998. Family information and individual children's records will remain private and confidential at all times, and only made accessible to relevant staff and management members on a needs basis. All records and information are kept under lock and key at all times. Records will be shredded after the correct time frame has elapsed, as per legislative guidelines.

No information about children or families will be given to persons outside of the service. This includes family addresses or telephone numbers as well as financial information. The exception to this is if we have to share information with an authorised prescribed body under Child Protection legislation or for the purposes of recovering outstanding debts.

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**We hope that this booklet has answered many of your questions and provided you with the information you require. We hope that your children's journey over the primary school years can be enhanced through the relationships, friendships and experiences that they will encounter whilst with us here at Muckabout Before/ After School Care & Vacation Care.**

**Please don't hesitate to contact the service and any of its representatives to clarify any additional information that you may require.**