

Wattle Early Childhood Centre



Staff Handbook

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Welcome!

The Educators, Director, Families and Parent Management Committee welcome you to Wattle Early Childhood Centre. Wattle Early Childhood Centre is a community based non-profit organisation whose sole purpose is to provide early education and care facilities to the Australian Capital Territory and surrounding communities.

“The first years of life, including the first months, have a decisive impact on the later development of the individual. This is the foundation on which everything else is built. If the foundation is strong, the structure is better able to withstand shocks. Because of this, we try to secure the most favourable circumstances for the child, especially at the beginning, which gives [him/her] an advantage in his development, which will serve [him/her] [his/her] entire life” (Dr Emmi Pikler). So, as research strongly suggests, the first five years of a child’s life are the most important for their ongoing development and wellbeing, early education and care should then be considered an investment in your child’s life.

Wattle Early Childhood Centre (WECC) opened in July 1992,¹ and we are a licensed Centre for 33 children per day.

Hours of Operation

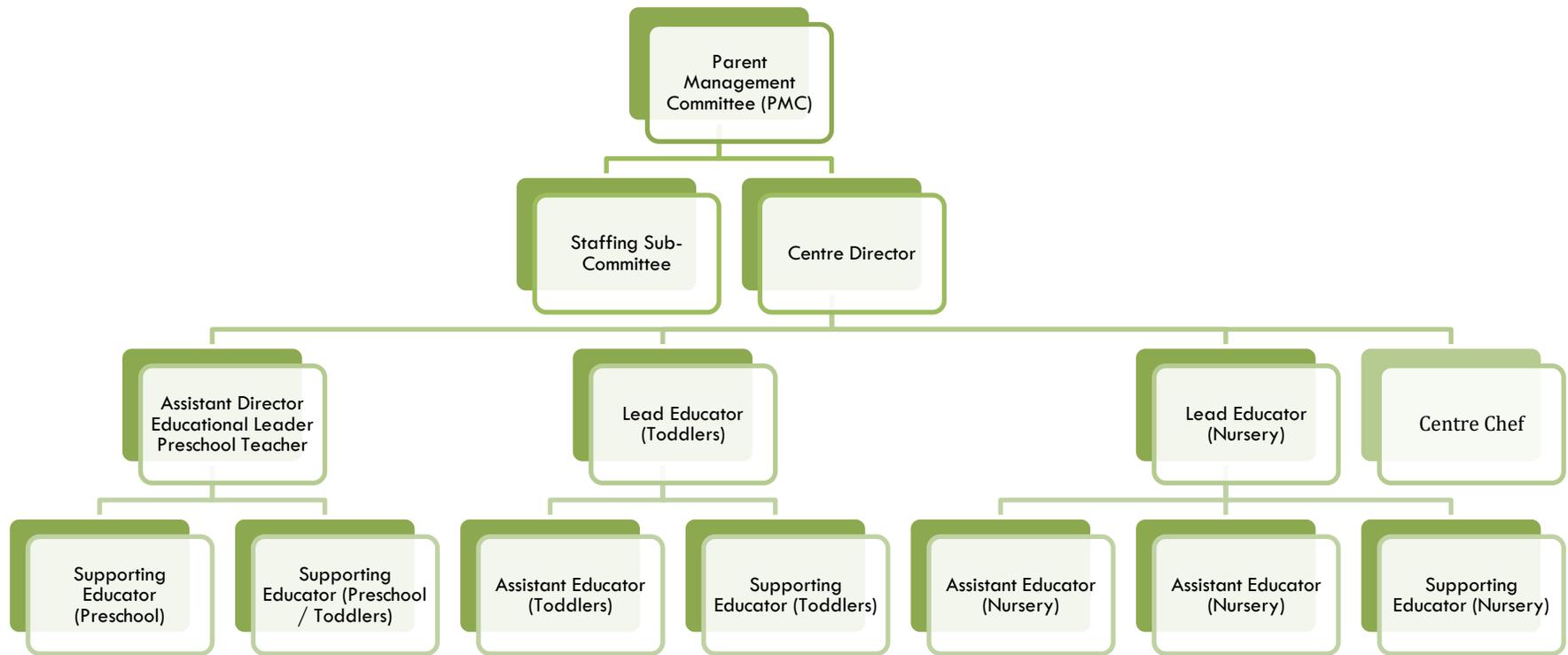
The Centre is open from 8.00am to 5.45pm Monday to Friday.

We are closed on all ACT Public Holidays and are normally closed for a Christmas shutdown period of at least the period between Christmas and New Year. Shutdown dates are advised each year once confirmed by the Parent Management Committee.

Normal fees apply for all public holidays. No fees are charged during the Christmas shutdown period.

¹ Previously known as Wattle Child Care Centre.

Organisational Structure



Centre Philosophy

At Wattle Early Childhood Centre, we believe that all children will be treated as individuals, respecting each child's differing abilities and skills. We will support all children to become confident and capable learners, whilst building children's self esteem through a wide range of learning experiences.

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land we live and work on, the Ngunawal people, and aim to respectfully incorporate elements of the Indigenous culture into our curriculum and learning environments. We acknowledge that we live in a culturally diverse nation, and we will strive to provide an environment which demonstrates respect to each child, family and educator's rich culture, traditions and backgrounds, and provide an inclusive environment for all, by offering and providing experiences and a learning environment that holds a strong link to the diverse world we live in to give children an opportunity to contribute and connect to their world.

We believe in the power of our community, starting with a strong management committee who are committed to providing a high quality service for our local community and strive for continuous improvement. In conjunction, we believe that our local community plays a major role in our curriculum across the centre. We support each child to discover the world around them, through the assistance of strong community links and engagement within our local community.

We recognise that high quality education and care requires skilled educators who are qualified, understanding, knowledgeable and caring individuals and we are committed to recruiting and retaining educators who demonstrate these skills.

We as educators, see ourselves as co-researchers and partners in learning alongside the children. We will allow children to ask their own questions, through exploration and discovery, generating many open ended possibilities. We will also encourage and challenge children to influence and guide our own pedagogical practices in our daily routines and experiences.

We acknowledge that children are our worlds' future and will be the custodians of our environment. We are committed to embedding sustainable practices within the centre and the wider community. We will utilise our environment as a third teacher, giving the children a sense of belonging in our world.

We recognise each family as unique and we strongly value our families' contributions to our curriculum, through participation, involvement and feedback. We value feedback as an opportunity for continuous improvement and to assist us in building stronger relationships with our families, children, educators and community.

We believe children have the right to receive an educational curriculum dedicated to early childhood learning principles, outcomes and theories. We acknowledge the Early Years Learning Framework, and embed a practice of play based learning throughout our curriculums and daily practice. We also believe that some of the best opportunities for learning is through exploring risks, allowing children to analyse their environments and challenge their own learning and development. We encourage children to play in all environments and weather – rain, hail or shine; jumping in muddy puddles, climbing trees, building forts and cubbies and cooking mud pies in the mud kitchen.

We strongly believe children have the right to be treated with respect and to have their voices heard. We are dedicated to being strong advocates for children's rights, and allow children opportunities to develop relationships and engage with their peers, educators, families and community, with the aim of building each child's confidence to communicate their thoughts and feelings.

Your Commitment

You will:

- Commit to being a 'team player' within the Centre
- Communicate effectively to your colleagues, families, children and community visitors
- Seek to build collaborative relationships
- Promote ongoing professional development within your team and participate in staff meetings and workshops
- Role model high quality professional practices
- Support and adhere to the policies and procedures of Wattle Early Childhood Centre
- Acknowledge the Centre philosophy as a living document, and use this as the forefront in all that you do
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Create and maintain safe, healthy environments which enhance children's learning and development
- Be committed to providing a socially just and inclusive environment for all

- Commit to embedding sustainable practices across the Centre and role modelling and supporting colleagues, children and families to participate in sustainability practice
- Ensure compliance with all relevant Workplace Health and Safety Legislation
- Contribute to the development and review of the Quality Improvement Plan on a regular basis as directed
- Adhere to all legislative requirements and support your colleagues, students and visitors to be compliant
- Be committed to a play based learning curriculum, using the guide of the Early Years Learning Framework and the Centres Curriculum Planning Cycle tools to support your planning and implementation of the program
- Acknowledge and ensure compliance of the National Quality Standards, aiming to achieve high quality practice and standards across the Centre.

Policies and Procedures

Our policies and procedures cover all areas of the National Quality Standards and ACT licensing requirements. Policies are reviewed on a regular basis and we encourage feedback from families, children, staff and the Parent Management Committee. Our policies and procedures can be found in the front foyer and the staff room for easy access, on our website at <http://wattleecc.org.au/about/policies>, or please speak to the Centre Director to request a copy.

Staffing and Management Structure

The Centre is managed by our elected Parent Management Committee (PMC) under Wattle Community Association Incorporated. The AGM is held in December each year to elect the Committee members for the following year. Families and employees of the Centre are encouraged to join the Wattle Community Association, and the Constitution of the Association allows for an elected staff representative and 3 persons to be elected as General Committee Members, 2 of which must be parents of the Centre, who will have the authority to vote on items at the PMC Meetings which are held bi-monthly.

The Centre is then directly managed by the Centre Director, who is supported by the PMC on all levels.

We recognise that high quality education and care requires skilled educators who are qualified, understanding, knowledgeable and caring individuals. The Centre provides multiple professional development opportunities from in-house training, external training and even interstate conferences relevant to the growth and development of the Centre

and the individual educators. The Centre also supports the upskilling of educators into achieving higher qualifications through on-the-job training.

The Centre is an equal opportunity employer.

We support students through school based apprenticeships and work experience placement from local high schools and colleges to interstate universities.

We also recruit a number of casual educators who support the Centre with staff absences for holidays and personal leave, to provide a high level of consistency and continuity for the children and families within the Centre.

Regulations and Children’s Education and Care Authority (CECA)

As a licensed service, we are governed by the “Education and Care services National Regulations” under the “Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011”.

We are also governed by the Children’s Education and Care Authority (CECA) within the ACT Government Education and Training Directorate.

The Children’s Education & Care Assurance administers the legislation covering approved education and care services.

Approved education and care services, including long day care, family day care, outside school hours care, public and non-Government preschools and playschools, are required to comply with the *Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011* or the *Children and Young People Act 2008* (depending on service type). Children’s Services Advisers monitor services compliance with the legislation and provide support in understanding and meeting these requirements.

The function of the Children’s Education & Care Assurance also includes:

- Quality assessment and rating of approved education and care services;
- Investigation of complaints about approved education and care services;
- Professional advice on the planning, design and establishment of new services; and
- An advisory service for families, children’s services and the ACT community in relation to education and care.

The CECA is staffed by professionals with early childhood qualifications. For further information relating to the role of the CECA visit http://www.det.act.gov.au/childrens_policy_and_regulation/for-families or phone (02) 6207 1114.

Award

All employees, with the exemption of degree trained teachers, are employed under the Children's Services Award 2010. Degree trained teachers are employed under the Education Services (Teachers) Award 2010.

Age Groups

The Centre is divided into three groups. The groups are:

- Infants: 6 weeks - 24 months (12 children);
- Toddlers: 25 months - 3 years (10 children); and
- Pre-schoolers: 3 years - school age (11 children)

Movement of a child from one group to the next higher one occurs when:

- there is a vacancy in the appropriate group;
- the child is the appropriate age;
- the child is the oldest in the younger group; and
- staff and parents agree that the child is ready.

Centre Fees

Fees are set by the Parent Management Committee and are reviewed twice per year (July and January). Four weeks' notice is given for any increase to the current fee schedule. Fees are applied one week in arrears and for the current week, and are expected to be paid in full by Thursday of the week invoices are issued (Public Service pay week). Direct Debit is our only method of payment.

Full payment of fees is required for all absences including, public holidays, illness, personal holidays, etc.

The Centre closes at 5.45pm, and if a child has not been collected at this time families will be charged a late collection fee of \$20.00 for the first 15 minutes and then \$10.00 for every 5 minutes after 6pm. Educators must complete a 'late slip' which is signed by the parent on collection and passed onto to the Director for administration of late fees.

If families cannot be contacted regarding late collection, educators will contact the child's authorised person(s) for collection. Educators will remain with the child until collected, but if no contact has been reached by 6.15pm (30 minutes after closing), the educators will contact ACT Care and Protection Services and police. If late collection occurs more than 3 times without any notification in a three month period, the child's care may be terminated.

Child Care Benefit (CCB)/Child Care Rebate (CCR)

Wattle Early Childhood Centre is an approved childcare provider, enabling eligible families to receive the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate (CCR).

It is the families' responsibility to register for CCB and CCR and to provide the Centre with the correct details to formalise their account so they can receive their CCB and CCR. Full fees will be charged to family accounts until the correct details have been entered into our system. Adjustments can be backdated 28 days once we can formalise their account.

We recommend families choose the option "pay to service" for the CCR entitlements, as this can significantly reduce their out of pocket expenses.

Enrolment of Employee Children

Employees of Wattle Early Childhood Centre are more than welcome to enrol their children into the centre, subject to availability. Employee children will be prioritised for a placement, should one become available at the time of need.

Employees will not work in the same room their child is enrolled in, to ensure all children are subject to a fair and equitable environment.

Employee children are also not authorised to enter the staff room, unless in the event of needing to breastfeed. The staff room is designed as a space for rest for employees, and this must be respected as such. Employees are welcome to visit their children in their enrolled rooms during employee breaks as part of the Centre's Open Door Policy.

Smoke Free Zone

Wattle Early Childhood Centre programs, buildings and outdoor environment, are smoke free zones. Smoking is not allowed on the premises or surrounds.

Food and Nutrition

Wattle Early Childhood Centre is a registered food business and morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and a late snack are prepared and provided at the Centre. The menu is on display in our front foyer for families, staff, and children to view.

Our menu offers a variety of healthy and nutritious meals that meet at least 50% of the recommended daily intake for children. The menu rotates through a 4 week cycle and is reviewed every six months to change with the Summer-Winter seasons. Families, children and staff are encouraged to participate in the menu review.

Babies' meals are adjusted according to their age and development. If a baby requires formula/breast milk, families must supply as many feeds as they will require for the day with each bottle clearly labelled.

The Centre caters to all allergies and dietary requirements. Families must complete the required documentation relating to food provisions upon enrolment or as identified to the Centre Director and your child's educators. We are also a nut free centre, and will not provide nuts in any meals.

Wattle Early Childhood Centre supports breastfeeding, and families are welcome to breastfeed anywhere in the Centre they feel comfortable in doing so, but we do have a breastfeeding space in our Nursery should families wish to feed in there.

Educators are encouraged to have a small portion of the meals with the children to role model appropriate behaviours and etiquette at meal times.

Asthma and Anaphylaxis

If a child needs long term or emergency medication, the Centre will require additional information from families.

Families will be required to complete a medication authorisation form and will need to provide a medical action plan from a medical practitioner. In some cases, a photo of the child, with permission to display in the Centre may be requested. A risk minimisation plan will also be developed in consultation with the child's family upon enrolment, which will be kept in the child's file and in the rooms' health and wellbeing folder.

Medication

If a child requires medication whilst in care, families must complete an authorisation form, clearly stating the name of the medication, the dosage, the time it was last given and the expiry date. If this form is not filled in correctly, the medication will not be administered. It must also be signed and dated.

All medication must be physically handed to an educator, and must not be left in the child's bags.

Medication must be in its original packaging. Prescription medication must have the pharmacy label clearly visible, stating the child's name and the prescribed dosage. Medication will not be administered if it is not in its original packaging. It will also not be administered if it has passed its expiry date.

All medication is stored away from children in lockable containers in the Centre's fridge.

Medication that is not prescribed will not be administered unless it is accompanied by a medical authorisation from a medical practitioner, however, the Centre does have Panadol on site that can be administered with the parents' permission in case of a serious fever before parents arrive.

Families are reminded that children are unable to attend the Centre for the first 24 hours after the commencement of any course of antibiotics or administration of pain relief (e.g. Panadol, Nurofen).

If you are carrying any medication with you (prescription or over the counter medication), you must ensure that they are inaccessible to children. You must **never** give your own medication to children, e.g. Panadol, cough lollies, etc. Please

ensure that you have notified the Centre Director of any medical conditions that you have been diagnosed with, in particular any medical conditions that may require medical treatment whilst you are completing your contracted hours, e.g. Asthma, Anaphylaxis, etc.

Excursions

At Wattle Early Childhood Centre, excursions play an important role in the curriculums across the Centre. Excursions are carefully planned to identify the learning opportunities available within the experience, but also to determine the children's safety whilst participating.

Families will be given written notice of the planned excursions, including any additional costs that will be incurred, and families will be required to sign the permission form to enable their child to participate. Children will not be able to participate without the signed permission form.

Special performances and events will be planned and arranged for on a regular basis within the Centre.

Birthdays

We love to celebrate birthdays at Wattle! If families would like us to celebrate their child's birthday, they are more than welcome to bring in cupcakes for the children to share and celebrate together (please ensure these are nut free). Birthday cupcakes can also be made at the Centre for a small \$5 fee. Families must inform their child's educators if they wish for the cakes to be made at the Centre with at least one week's notice. The fee will be charged to your fee account.

National Quality Framework (NQF)

The Australian Government and state and territory governments recognise the importance of increasing their focus on the early years to ensure the wellbeing of children throughout their lives and to lift the productivity of our nation as a whole. The drive for change is based on clear evidence that the early years of children's lives are very important for their present and future health, development and wellbeing.

The National Quality Framework (NQF) aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement in education and care services through encompassing:

- Strong and nationally consistent standards for early childhood education and care;
- A quality ratings system that will provide parents with important information about the services their children receive;
- Streamlined regulatory arrangements that improve national consistency and reduce the administration burden on service providers; and
- The Early Years Learning Framework, which will guide practice and support quality teaching and learning.

For more information on the NQF please refer to: <http://www.acecqa.gov.au/>

Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) guides educators in developing quality programs for children. It describes the early childhood pedagogy (principles and practice) and the outcomes required to support and enhance young children's learning from birth to five years of age, including their transition to school.

The EYLF has a strong emphasis on play-based learning, as play, as described by Lev Vygotsky, "In play, the most important thing is not the satisfaction the child receives through playing, but the objective use and objective meaning of the play, of which the child himself is unaware. This meaning, as is well known, involves the development and exercise of all the child's powers and latent strengths" (Bodrova, 2008, p. 359). Abbott (1994, p. 52) also states that "We believe that it is vital for all adults with responsibilities for young children to recognise that, for them, play is a good deal more than recreation. It has a fundamental role in early childhood education, supplying the foundation upon which learning is built."

The EYLF also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development. "Play that is well planned and pleasurable helps children to think, to increase their understanding and to improve their language competence" (Abbott, 1994, p. 41).

The learning outcomes of the EYLF are:

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

Here at Wattle Early Childhood Centre we also believe that some of the best opportunities for learning through play is through exploring risks, allowing children to analyse their environments and challenge their own learning and development. We encourage children to play in all environments and weather – rain, hail or shine; jumping in muddy puddles, climbing trees, building forts and cubbies and cooking mud pies in the mud kitchen. We encourage children to wear old clothes that will stand up to the challenges of each day (and bring in some gumboots on those wet and muddy days!).

Family Participation and Contribution

The Centre relies on the active participation of families in the running of the Centre. Children benefit from the high standard of facilities and services which have been largely achieved through the efforts of parents. The Centre recognises that working parents have high demands on their time, but encourages them to contribute to maintaining the quality service provided by the Centre.

As part of the conditions to their enrolment, all families are required to contribute to:

- 2 hours once a year on our yard duty roster (roster distributed at the beginning of each year)
- 2 hours once a year to contribute to the working bee (held twice yearly)

A fee of \$100.00 will be charged to accounts of families who do not contribute to the yard duty roster and, again, if they do not attend one working bee in a calendar year. Sign in sheets are recorded at working bees to confirm attendance and duties completed.

Other opportunities to become involved include:

- Becoming a member of the Wattle Community Association Incorporated. This allows families the right to vote at Committee and general meetings enabling them to participate in the running of the Centre. A small annual subscription of \$2.00 is payable for membership;

- Becoming a Parent Management Committee member. Wattle is run by the PMC which determines policy, draws up budgets, sets fees, selects and employs staff, approves staff salaries, approves spending and generally works to better the conditions at the Centre;
- Attending Committee meetings. All meetings are open to any parent and employee to attend at any time;
- Assist with fundraising activities;
- Assist with day to day repair of equipment and materials;
- Make equipment (e.g. sewing dress ups, bed linen);
- Share special skills with the children (e.g. storytelling, playing musical instruments, cooking, talking about interesting holidays or showing slides or artefacts). Families from different cultures are also encouraged to devise activities which reflect their own cultures. Experiences could also include cooking, music, dancing, costume or celebration of national holidays;
- Contribute a special skill to the running of the Centre. Skills which are always needed include carpentry, plumbing, painting, garden design, employment conditions, industrial relations, legal, accounting, information technology; and
- Help with particular projects such as writing submissions to obtain funding or help lobby for changes to early education and care policy.

Sun Protection

Wattle Early Childhood Centre is a sun smart centre and has a comprehensive UV protection policy. Therefore, we endorse safe sun play practises and actively encourage the wearing of appropriate clothing for outdoor play all year round and sun hats are provided for all the children, throughout the year. The Centre also provides sunscreen and ensures that it is applied for all outdoor play.

Employees are provided sun smart hats for outdoor play, and sunscreen is available for staff use. Clothing can also be ordered which meets sun protection requirements.

Presentation and Dress Code

As your image represents the values of Wattle Early Childhood Centre, employees are expected to act in a professional manner at all times.

Whilst the Centre respects the rights of individuals, certain requirements in keeping with our professional image are stipulated. It is a requirement that clean clothing is worn each day. Basic hygiene and cleanliness is expected. Hair is to be kept neat and tidy, and when working around food, hair must be tied back. Earrings and other jewellery is a fashion accessory and provided it is discreet, and not a safety hazard, is acceptable, and worn at your own risk. Educators are also encouraged to follow the centre's UV Protection Policy in relation to clothing. The following clothing must be adhered to:

- Knee length shorts/skirts (nothing shorter)
- No tracksuit pants or tights
- Enclosed shoes when serving and preparing food (and at other times when the environment deems necessary, e.g. excursions out of the Centre). Enclosed shoes with a non-slip surface are encouraged.
- No low cut tops or midriffs
- No clothing with large slogans or pictures that could be deemed offensive/inappropriate to families, colleagues, and children

Personal Information

Please ensure that Wattle Early Childhood Centre always has the most current personal details (i.e. phone number, address, emergency contact details, bank account details etc). Please notify us immediately if any of this information changes.

Use of Company Property

Wattle Early Childhood Centre will provide you with the necessary equipment to do your job. This equipment should not be used for personal use, nor removed from the premises of the Centre unless it is approved and/or your job specifically requires the use of such equipment outside of the Centre or office.

Computers/Tablet: Computer equipment may not be used for personal use. This includes internet access. If you wish to install programs onto the centre computer/tablet, please request permission from the Director before doing so. Forbidden programs and documents include, but are not limited to, unlicensed software, pirated music and pornography.

Phones: The fixed telephone line must remain open for business calls only. Staff are requested to discourage any personal calls – incoming and outgoing – with the exception of emergency calls. Personal mobile phones are not to be used whilst working at the Centre and are to be kept out of sight and away from the children. Photographs of children are not to be taken on personal mobile phones.

Cameras: The digital cameras must be kept on the premises of the Centre to ensure their availability for the next operating day at the service. Cameras must be locked away when not in use to ensure their safety.

Photocopier/printer: The photocopier must not be used for personal use, or other uses not connected with official activities of the Centre. If you require the use of the photocopier/printer for personal use, please request permission from the Director before doing so. You may incur a small charge for the personal use of the printer/photocopier.

Mobile Phones and Social Media

All employees will ensure their phones or other technology devices (e.g. iPad, tablets etc.) are kept in the staff room at all times whilst working on the floor.

Employees that have social media accounts must ensure they maintain confidentiality of the workplace at all times and ensure that children's photos are not posted or shared on personal social media accounts and that personal comments made on public forums do not jeopardise the reputation of the Centre at any time.

Attendance and Punctuality

Wattle Early Childhood Centre views attendance as a very important facet of your job performance. All employees are expected to arrive at work, in order to be ready to be productively engaged in their work duties at their scheduled start time. Overtime is only performed when necessary, and must be approved in advance by the Director.

Wages and Timesheet Reporting

Employees are paid fortnightly in arrears. The pay period is from Wednesday to Tuesday. All employees are requested to have completed their timesheet on Tuesday morning. Wages are processed on the Wednesday by the Centre Director. You will be provided with a pay slip for each pay and staff are responsible for checking the details of their pay and notifying the Director of any discrepancies as soon as practically possible. Staff are required to complete their individual timesheet on a daily basis. The timesheet folder is available in the staff room.

Leave

Wattle Early Childhood Centre adheres to the National Employment Standards for all of our employees. All employees must advise the Centre Director of any absence as soon as possible.

Unplanned personal leave must be notified to the Centre Director at least two hours prior to the commencement of your shift via a phone call – text messaging/social media contact is not acceptable. Applications for Personal Leave (which includes Carer's Leave) shall be in writing and shall be accompanied by a medical certificate or other evidence satisfactory to the Director in the following circumstances:

- Where the absence is two or more consecutive days; or
- Where the absence falls on a working day before or after a public holiday or rostered day off; or
- At the Director's discretion

Casual staff rostered on to work, need to give the two hours minimum notice, but medical certificates/evidence is not applicable.

Permanent employees (part time & full time) wishing to apply for annual leave are to submit a Leave Form to the Director giving a minimum of two weeks' notice. Only two permanent educators will be permitted to be on annual leave at the same time. We request that you do not book holidays etc. until your leave has been confirmed and approved by the Centre Director.

Jury duty also requires a leave form to be submitted with your jury summons.

Annual Leave

Accrued annual leave will be paid on cessation of your employment with Wattle Early Childhood Centre. Permanent full time employees accrue four weeks (20 days) annual leave per year. Part time staff accrue annual leave on a pro-rata basis. Permanent employees may be entitled to 'Christmas Leave' for what would otherwise be ordinary working days but where the Centre is closed over the Christmas period. This additional 'Christmas Leave' is offered to staff who have worked with the Centre for a continuous period of 12 months or more. The Christmas shutdown period will vary from year to year and will be determined by the PMC, in consultation with the Centre Director. Employees who have *not* been employed by Wattle Early Childhood Centre for a period of 12 months or more will be required to access their own leave accruals for what would otherwise be ordinary working days but where the Centre is closed over the Christmas period.

Personal/Carers Leave

Full time employees accrue ten days paid personal/carers leave, plus two days unpaid carers leave as required, per year. Part time employees accrue personal/carers leave on a pro rata basis. An employee may take paid personal/carers leave if the leave is taken:

- a) Because the employee is unfit for work because of a personal illness or injury affecting the employee;
- b) To provide care or support to a member of the employee's immediately family or a member of the employee's household who requires care or support because of a personal illness or injury affecting the member or an unexpected emergency affecting the member.

If you are unable to work due to sickness or injury you must contact the Director as soon as possible so that you can be replaced for your shift. If you are away from work due to sickness for more than two days you must provide a medical certificate to the Director for the leave to be payable. Please note that we reserve the right to request a medical certificate for single sick days. Unused sick leave is not paid out on cessation of employment.

It is imperative that if you are sick, you must give at least a minimum two hours notice to the Director. It is preferred that staff ring in sick, rather than come to work and leave after a short period as this spreads infection and doesn't allow the staff member to recover or recuperate. In the case of a staff member taking excessive sick leave, the Director may

request that the staff member seek a medical certificate, stating that the staff member is not in a fit and proper state to work at the centre, as per Division 7 in the NES.

Compassionate Leave

Up to two days compassionate leave is available for part time and full time employees. An employee is entitled to two days of compassionate leave for each occasion when a member of the employee's immediately family or a member of the employee's household:

- a) Contracts or develops a personal illness that poses a serious threat to his or her life; or
- b) Sustains a personal injury that poses a serious threat to his or her life; or
- c) Dies.

Community Service Leave

Unpaid leave for voluntary emergency activities and leave for jury service, with an entitlement to be paid for up to ten days of jury service. Adequate proof of service must be provided in order to receive your regular wage during your absence for jury duty. Should extraordinary circumstances exist which would make your absence severely detrimental to the operation of our service, we reserve the right to contact the court to request that your service be postponed.

Public Holidays

Permanent staff receive a paid day off on a public holiday, if it would otherwise be an employee's normal day of work.

Time in Lieu

Employment terms and contracts do not include time in lieu days, however if it is necessary or appropriate, this may be arranged with the Director.

Long Service Leave

Long Service Leave is paid to the ACT Long Service Leave Authority on a pro-rata basis of your worked hours.

Please note:

- **Employees employed on a casual basis do not receive paid leave. Casual employees receive a loading on their hourly rate to compensate for this.**
- **Excessive absences, including sick leave, may result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination.**

The Director will be able to assist you with any questions you may have regarding your leave entitlements.

Termination/Resignation of Employment

We request that you provide written notice to the Director of your intent to resign from your position as set out in the National Employment Standards of notice periods. Wattle Early Childhood Centre, as the Employer, will also provide you with the appropriate notice period if your position is ever terminated or made redundant, unless it is deemed that your performance and/or actions require instant dismissal. This decision will not be made lightly, if it is ever deemed necessary.

Reimbursement of Expenditure

All purchases and expenditure needs to be approved by the Centre Director prior to any expenses being incurred. If expenditure is approved, you will need to complete an expenditure reimbursement form with attached receipts and forward onto the Director who will arrange reimbursement. If you need any assistance with claiming your reimbursement, please speak to the Director, who will be able to assist you.

Staff Meetings and Professional Development

Staff meetings and professional development attended outside of your normal working hours will be paid for as

additional hours. These times must be recorded on your fortnightly timesheet, and will be processed in that pay cycle. It is the responsibility of each individual to record these times, not the Centre Director.

Supervision and Interactions with Children

Education and Care Services National Law requirements are adhered to for staff to child ratios. Centre ratios are 1:11 for children aged 3-5 years, 1:5 for children aged 2-3 years, 1:4 for children aged 0-2 years.

Always remember to position yourself where you can interact with children, while at the same time being able to supervise the rest of the group. Where possible, have your back to the wall or the boundary so that you are able to watch all the children in the area. At times you may need to move to have a clear line of vision.

National Law Section 165: Offence to inadequately supervise children

(2) The nominated supervisor of an education and care service must ensure that all children being educated and cared for by the service are adequately supervised at all times that the children are in the care of that service.

Penalty: \$10,000.

“Educator-to-child ratios alone do not determine what is considered adequate supervision.

Supervision is critical to the safety of children. At its most basic level, supervision helps to protect children from hazards or harm that may arise in their play and daily routines. Adequate supervision means that an educator can respond immediately, including when a child is distressed or in a hazardous situation.

Effective supervision also requires educators to be actively involved with children. It is not the intention of this requirement that educators merely ‘stand back and watch’.

Every child should always be monitored actively and diligently. This means knowing where children are at all times. Children of different ages and abilities will need different levels of supervision. In general, the younger children are, the more they may need an adult to be physically present and close by to support and help them.

Children should never be left in a play area unattended, even for short periods of time. If you are the only staff member with a small group and you need assistance, send a child to get another staff member rather than leaving the group.

National Regulation 155: Interactions with Children

An approved provider must take reasonable steps to ensure that the education and care service provides education and care to children in a way that:

- a) Encourages the children to express themselves and their opinions; and
- b) Allows the children to undertake experiences that develop self-reliance and self-esteem; and
- c) Maintains at all times the dignity and rights of each child; and
- d) Gives each child positive guidance and encouragement toward acceptable behaviour; and
- e) Has regard to the family and cultural values, age, and physical and intellectual development and abilities of each child being educated and cared for by the service.

Employment of Under 18 Year Olds

Consideration of the operational requirements of Wattle Early Childhood Centre will be undertaken in respect of employing people under the age of 18, as they are not authorised to work unsupervised under the Education and Care Services National Regulations. If an employee who is under the age of 18 years of age is recruited, they will be rostered to be supervised by an employee 18 years or older at all times.

Behaviour Guidance

In order for the children to feel safe, secure and know the boundaries with behaviour, the educators must ensure the children experience a consistent approach to behaviour guidance. This involves developing the child's awareness of what is appropriate to do, what is not appropriate, what is safe, what angers or hurts others while developing the child's capacity for self discipline.

National Law Section 166: Offence to use Inappropriate Discipline

(3) A staff member of, or a volunteer at, an education and care service must not subject any child being \ educated and cared for by the service to:

- a) Any form of corporal punishment; or
- b) Any discipline that is unreasonable in the circumstances.

Penalty: \$10,000.

No child will be subject to punishment that humiliates, frightens or threatens them. Where possible, behaviour guidance should be based on positive redirection and prevention of incidents occurring, rather than management after a problem has occurred.

A child may be excluded from the program for consistent, unacceptable behaviour which puts the health and safety of children and staff at risk.

Please make yourself familiar with the Behavioural Guidance Policy and ask your Director if you have any questions about this. Remember it is not a sign of weakness to ask another educator to assist if you feel you cannot handle a situation.

Bullying and Harrassment

Wattle Early Childhood Centre does not tolerate any form of discrimination or harassment and believes that all employees and volunteers have the right to work in an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

An employee is bullied at work if:

- A person or group of people repeatedly act unreasonably towards them or a group of workers;
- The behavior creates a risk to health and safety.

Unreasonable behaviour includes victimising, humiliating, intimidating or threatening. Whether a behaviour is unreasonable can depend on whether a reasonable person might see the behaviour as unreasonable in the circumstances.

Examples of bullying include:

- Behaving aggressively;
- Teasing or practical jokes;
- Pressuring someone to behave inappropriately;
- Excluding someone from work-related events; or
- Unreasonable work demands.

What isn't bullying? A manager can make decisions about poor performance, take disciplinary action, and direct and control the way the work is carried out. Reasonable management action that is carried out in a reasonable way is not bullying.

Management action that is not carried out in a reasonable way may be considered bullying.

If you think you are being bullied in the workplace, please speak the Centre Director or the staffing sub-committee. Alternatively, you can also contact Worksafe ACT or the Human Rights Commission for advice.

Signing In and Out

All employees must sign in and out of the service on arrival and departure, including when leaving the premises on your paid lunch break. The sign in sheet is located in the front foyer.

Educators nominated as the certified supervisor at particular times of the day must also sign the certified supervisor log which can be found in the staff room.

Breaks

If you work for 5 hours or more then you are entitled to a 30-60 minute unpaid break. No employee will be required to work more than 5 hours without a break. Your supervisor is responsible for the rotation of staff to ensure that all staff have access to a break period.

If you work for 4 hours or more, you are entitled to a 10 minute paid rest period. Wattle currently offers a 15 minute paid rest pause in this instance.

If you work for 7 hours or more, you are entitled to two 10 minute paid rest periods. Wattle currently offers two 15 minute paid rest pauses in this instance.

Emergency Procedures

To ensure the safety of all children and staff, emergency procedures such as evacuation and lockdown drills will be conducted every three months at a minimum. If families are present at the Centre at the time of the emergency procedure, they are legally required to participate in the procedure.

The procedures are displayed in the Centre for all families, children, staff and visitors to view. In the event of an emergency, the priority is to remain calm and ensure the safety of all the people within the Centre. All people on the premises will assemble at the designated area and staff will mark rolls to ensure all persons are present.

Workplace Health and Safety

For your own health and safety, laptops and other centre resources should not be taken home to ensure you have time for rest and relaxation to benefit your health and wellbeing (as well as risking the privacy and confidentiality of children and families once they leave the centre premises).

If you accrue more than six weeks annual leave, you may be directed to take annual leave at a mutually agreeable time between you and the Centre, to also benefit your own health and wellbeing.

If you injure yourself in the workplace, it is your responsibility to notify the Centre Director of the injury and complete an injury notification form within 24 hours of the injury. It is not the responsibility of your colleagues to provide this information to the centre Director, only yours.

It is important to ensure you are up to date with all relevant Workplace Health and Safety legislation and information, such as manual handling techniques, and to support your colleagues and inform them of correct techniques as needed. Professional development can be arranged to support your knowledge around this area if identified.

Wattle Early Childhood Centre is also a non-smoking premise, and employees must ensure that if smoking before or after work or during your unpaid break, is done so away from, and not in sight of the premises.

Child Protection and Working With Vulnerable People Checks

All employees of the Centre, must hold a valid Working with Vulnerable People Card. *Working with Vulnerable People (Background Checking) Act 2011* (the WWVP Act) sets out a number of rights and obligations for both employers and employees. These include an employee holding a registration to engage with a child or a vulnerable person and for employers to ensure that staff and volunteers are registered before they can engage in a regulated activity with a child or a vulnerable person.

As noted in section 56 of the WWVP Act, it is an offence if a registered person does not tell the commissioner (Access Canberra) in writing within 10 working days after the day that a change of name or address occurs. Registered people can notify Access Canberra of a change of address via an online form that can be located at: <https://form.act.gov.au/smartforms/address/change-of-address-notification/>.

For registered people who need to notify Access Canberra of a change in name, a WWVP change of personal details form will be required to be completed. This form can be downloaded from Access Canberra's website at: [https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/~/working-with-vulnerable-people-\(wwvp\)-registration](https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/1804/~/working-with-vulnerable-people-(wwvp)-registration) (under Forms & Fees).

As part of the recruitment process, successful candidates will be required to complete a National Police Check to confirm their suitability in their role.

All employees will also be required to complete Mandatory Reporting training within their first six months and then annually after that.

Early Education and Care Unions

The union which covers employees under the Children’s Services Award 2010 is United Voice, and you can find out more about United Voice, and join if you wish, at www.unitedvoice.org.au. United Voice are also active in campaigning for government funded pay increases for early childhood educators. Go to www.bigsteps.org.au for more information on their campaign for professional wages in the sector

Teachers employed under the Educational Services (Teachers) Award 2010 can join the Independent Education Union. Both unions can provide support to members who have any issues with their employment situation or interactions with management. To find out more about the IEU or to join, you can go to <http://www.ieu.asn.au/>.

Privacy Policy Statement

We are committed to protecting your privacy, and the privacy of our families and fellow colleagues, and we abide by the National Privacy Principles contained within the Privacy Act.

Privacy of your personal information is important to us and we conduct our business with respect and integrity, and it is our expectation that you will uphold the privacy and confidentiality values of the Centre.

See our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* for more information.

Feedback and Grievances

At Wattle Early Childhood Centre, we aim to foster positive relations between all staff, volunteers and management. Every person has the right to a harmonious and responsive working environment. Solutions are sought to resolve all disputes, issues and concerns that impact or affect the day to day wellbeing of the organisation in a fair, prompt and positive manner.

In the event of a dispute arising in the workplace, the procedure to be followed to resolve the matter will be as follows:

1. Volunteers and staff are encouraged to initially meet between themselves in an effort to resolve the issue.
2. If this does not resolve the issue, the volunteer or staff member should request a meeting with the Centre Director.
3. If the matter is not resolved at such a meeting, it shall be arranged for further discussions between the volunteer or staff member and Centre Director. A member of the staffing sub-committee may also be involved in any such meetings at this point.
 - a) If the issue directly involves the Director, the matter will be referred to the Staffing Sub-Committee.
 - b) If the issue directly involves the Staffing Sub-Committee, the matter will be referred to the Parent Management Committee Office Holders.
 - c) If the matter remains unresolved, it may be referred to an independent party to initiate mediation.
 - d) Volunteers and staff may have a representative of their choice accompany them in these meetings to witness proceedings.

All confidential conversations/discussions will take place in a quiet area away from clients and other staff, and may be scheduled after hours to accommodate the needs of all individuals in the workplace.

Useful Websites

<http://wattleecc.org.au/>

http://www.det.act.gov.au/childrens_policy_and_regulation

<http://acecqa.gov.au/>

<https://www.education.gov.au/early-years-learning-framework>

<http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au/families/information-sheets/information-sheet-index>

<http://www.childreduceducatorsact.org.au/videos/>

http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/ocyfs/services/care_and_protection

<http://www.janetlansbury.com/>

<http://www.magdagerber.org/blog/magda-gerbers-rie-philosophy-basic-principles>

<http://thepiklercollection.weebly.com/>

<http://www.unicef.org.au/Upload/UNICEF/Media/Our%20work/childfriendlycrc.pdf>

<http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/>

<https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/national-employment-standards>

https://www.fwc.gov.au/documents/documents/modern_awards/pdf/ma000120.pdf