

Before & After School, and Vacation Care Service

Family Handbook

The Kids' Castle provides quality Before & After School Care for children of Castle Cove Public School, and Vacation Care service for children aged 5-12 years from any primary school.

The Kids' Castle is accredited and is a Not-for-Profit organization run by a parent committee in conjunction with the Director.

The Kids' Castle is located within Castle Cove Public School near the infants' playground. 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 4 KEYS Philosophy guides everything we do

K - kind and knowledgeable

E - engaging, entertaining and empathetic

Y - you – child-centred programming

S - sensitivity and sustainability

Our policies

Our policies can be viewed on our website. This Handbook attempts to capture the intent of our policies. However, we recommend that all parents take the time to familiarize themselves with the detailed information of our policies. Our Policies take precedence over this document.

Our website

Our website (www.thekidscastle.com.au) provides additional information about the Centre and our Services. We recommend all parents become familiar with the website.

Service management structure

The Kids' Castle Before & After School Care is a non-profit, community-based organization. It is administered by a Parent Management Committee. The Management Team 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 committee employs the Director and other staff to oversee the day to day running and operations of the service.

Your smiley TKC permanent staff members are:

Roy Faulkner	Director of Fun/ Nominated Supervisor
Anna S	Administrative Director
Vivien W	Assistant Director

*Other casual educators on duty will be shown on the noticeboard at the centre

Any new staff will be introduced in our newsletters and notice board.

Our experienced Staff are dedicated and motivated to meet the needs of the children. The Staff will listen, respond to and respect each child whilst promoting good self-esteem and modelling positive behaviors.

The staff team will not discriminate against anyone, based on their race, cultural background, religion, gender, disability, marital status, income or any other reason. There will always be a minimum of two staff on duty: 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 Director 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 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 have a problem with the Centre or its staff, please arrange for an appointment with the Director. These issues will not be discussed in front of staff or the children.

If the complaint is not handled to the parent's satisfaction, parents or caregivers are encouraged to contact The Kids Castle Management Committee President. A meeting will then be arranged with the Director and the TKC Management Committee President to resolve the problem. The Management Committee President can be contacted by written correspondence addressed to:

The Kids Castle President C/- The Kids' Castle, Castle Cove Public School, Kendall Road, Castle Cove, NSW2069.

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 or play individually. We have a policy that everyone is to be included and are always welcome to join in at any time.

Essential skills are learnt through the various activities planned for the children such as art & craft, block play, cooking, sport and both small and large group games. A weekly program is developed by educators in conjunction with children's ideas and suggestions. The weekly program can be viewed at centre. Children are encouraged to be supportive and respectful of other's ideas or interests in the Centre.

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 a good self-esteem.

Daily Program

MORNING

7:00 am Educators arrive and prepare centre- For child protection laws and licensing laws, we cannot take any child before 7:15am

7:15 am Children start to arrive, have breakfast, quiet games, read, finish homework or art & craft

7:45 am Free-play outside with some organized games/Indoor play

8:30 am Breakfast finishes, pack away time and finish morning off with indoor or outdoor games

9:15 am Educator walk children over to school.

AFTERNOON

3:25 pm Children's names are marked off, afternoon tea served, and daily announcements are made

4:00pm Free play on oval or outdoors, organized games/Art & Craft/Music/Indoor activities

5:30 pm Pack up time, indoor games, reading, quiet activities

6:00 pm Centre Closes

Homework

Homework is an optional extra. If you wish for your child to do some extra work, please organize with your child. Educator 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.* However, if you require your child to receive extra support with homework or reading during TKC session times, please speak with Roy, our director. We also offer coding (Scratch Junior), robotics and access to iPads for Reading Eggs and Math's Seeds. We also offer coding class to design 3D printing for years 4, 5 and 6 children.

Parent Participation

We welcome everyone to visit the Centre at any time. 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. We also have a suggestion box near the sign in screen.

Food

Children attending Before School Care will be offered a light breakfast between 7:15am and 8:30am. 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 always have access to fresh drinking water at the Centre. Parents must advise the Director (Roy) or Admin Director (Anna) or Assistant Director (Viv) of any special dietary requirements. Please see Xplor Home App for the term menu.

For Vacation Care, children are required to bring their own food for morning tea, lunch and snacks. Children are provided with a light breakfast (from 7:15am to 8:30am), and a light afternoon tea. Fresh fruit is available during morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea time.

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, the Centre is a "Nut Free Zone". **PEANUT BUTTER, NUTELLA** and other nut-based products are not provided and should not be sent with the child for Before or After School Care, or Vacation Care.

Hours of Operation

Monday to Friday

Before School Care	7:15am – 9:15am
After School Care	3:25pm – 6:00pm

The Centre is open on **Pupil Free Days** from 7:15am to 6:00pm.
The Centre is closed on public holidays and from 24th December until the 4th of January

Vacation Care Programs available during the school holidays. Please check out our vacation care program on the Kids Castle Website.

Membership Fees

\$30 per child (per calendar year)

An annual membership fee (\$30 per child) applies at time of enrolment/re-enrolment, for the calendar year (January to December). **This fee is non-refundable and will be charged with or without bookings.**

Fee Policy

All fees are to be paid as stated on the invoice. Statements will be emailed to you weekly and available to access from your Xplor Home App at any time. Outstanding fees will jeopardize a place for your child at the Centre. Fees & payment details can be found on [the Kids' Castle website](#).

We aim to provide a quality service that is affordable. Parents will be given at least two weeks' notice of any changes in fees or policies.

Direct debit is the only method of payment for all fees at the Kids Castle. The enrolment process requires all families to have completed and submitted direct debit forms.

If you are having difficulties with payments, please contact us.

Childcare Subsidy (CCS)

Many families who use our service are eligible for Child Care Subsidy (CCS). To access CCS, there is an application process via Centrelink. Otherwise, you will need to check the following details with Centrelink: Once these details are all correct, we will issue you a *Complying Written Agreement* (CWA).

TROUBLESHOOTING - Have you applied for CCS but are not receiving it?

1. Refer to your account on Xplor App and ensure the following details are correct:

- Parent DOB
- Parent CRN
- Child DOB
- Child CRN

If any of these details are incorrect, please notify us.

2. Otherwise, you will need to check with Centrelink:

- Does your family meet the activity test?
- Does your family meet the income test?

Once these details are correct, we will issue you a Complying Written Agreement (CWA). You must follow these steps to obtaining CCS:

Step 1. Log in to <https://home.myxplor.com/> using the Primary Carer's account. If you do not know who the primary carer is, please contact us.

Step 2. Select the name of your child from the dashboard.

Step 3. Select **CWAs** on the child's profile

Step 4. Check through the bookings and the fees. If correct, scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Accept'.

Step 5. After the CWA is signed, the system will require some time for the CCS enrolment to appear in MyGov, please be patient. The steps to confirm the enrolment can be found here [confirm your child's enrolment](#).

Once all the above steps are completed, any CCS a family is entitled to receive will be returned to the centre on a weekly basis and will appear as a credit on the family account. This will mean that invoices from the centre will be for the gap fee only.

More information on how to apply for CCS can be found at: <https://support.ourxplor.com/hc/en-us/articles/360015429272-Parent-Steps-CWA-Approval-and-CCS-Enrolment-Confirmation>

Late Pickup Fee

If your child/children are collected after 6:00pm (by the sign out time in our system), this will be considered a late pickup, hence a late fee will apply: **\$15 for the first 15 minutes or part thereof, followed by \$1.00 per minute thereafter.**

This applies even if you are a few minutes late (by the sign out time in our system) for any reason. If you are unable to pick up your child on time, please phone one of your authorized persons to pick up your child before 6:00pm and inform the Centre immediately.

Please phone the Centre if you are going to be late (late fees will still apply). This will also enable educators 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 operating costs of the Centre.

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 Before or After School Care on a day that your child is not booked in, please request a booking on the Xplor Home App before 12 noon the working day before; **this will be charged at the casual rate for the session.**

If the Centre is not informed of your child's absence before the start of the session (i.e. 7:15 am and 3:25 pm) or if the casual booking is not cancelled with 24hrs notice, **the full fee will apply.**

We accept Emergency Bookings. Please contact the Centre on **0468 481 604**/ email **tkcteam@thekidscastle.com.au** to see if space is available.

Cancellation of Permanent Bookings

If you no longer require a permanent booking at The Kids' Castle for your child, you must advise the Centre in writing giving minimum two (2) weeks' notice. **This must be done via email.** Full fees applied to bookings within the cancellation notice period. To book again within the two-week cancellation period, casual rate applied to the sessions before the permanent spots start after the two weeks period.

Children's Absence

The Centre must be informed if your child is to be absent. **Verbal Messages from the parent/children will not be accepted.** If your child is absent from roll call, 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. **If after 45 minutes a parent or guardian cannot be contacted, the child will be deemed missing, and the Police will be notified.**

The Federal Government allow families to claim a maximum of 42 days of Child Care Benefit 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 or After School Care and Vacation Care.

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

Term 1 - All kindergarten children will be collected from collection point outside of the kindergarten classrooms. Year 1 children will walk down to the centre.

Term 2 to 4 - All kindergarten and Year 1 children will walk down to the centre.

All children on the senior campus will be meeting the educators in the designated areas of the school (next to the school library and administration building), and then walked across to the Kids Castle with TKC educators.

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.

IT IS A LEGAL REQUIREMENT THAT A PARENT OR GUARDIAN PHYSICALLY SIGN THEIR CHILD/REN INTO THE CENTRE- DROPPING THEM OFF AT THE GATES IS NOT ALLOWED.

Please ensure that an educator is aware of your child's arrival.

Parents must sign in via the Centre's device each day when dropping their children off or collecting them. The roll recorded by the Centre's device is a legal document and serves as a safety feature informing educator when children are at the Centre.

An attendance roll is marked every afternoon by educator when the children arrive at The Kids Castle after school. If your child is enrolled, but does not turn up, Staff will notify parents immediately.

The authorized person who is collecting the child from After School Care must ensure that an educator is aware that they are taking a child from the Centre and the child must be signed out via the Centre's device. Children will not be released from the Centre without this being completed. People under 18 years of age are not legally allowed to collect your child/children from the Centre.

We can no longer accept verbal requests for collection of a child, this must be done in email or by letter. The person collecting the child must be on the enrolment form as an Authorized Person.

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

After 6:00pm (by the sign out time in our system), the system will automatically generate a late fee charge. Persistent late pick-ups will incur a possible suspension of service. Letters will follow subsequent late pickup. After 6:15pm if the educator have not heard from the parent, they will ring the emergency phone number. After 6:30pm the Police Department and the Department of Community Services will be called. Two educators will wait with children who have

not been collected by 6:00pm. No child will be permitted to travel home alone.

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

Priority of Access

The Director 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:

1. **First** - a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
2. **Second** - 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';
3. **Third** - 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 authorized persons to collect your child/children. This can be done in person or via email. It can also be done online through the Xplor app.

Illness

The Centre will not accept a child who is contagious (e.g., mumps, measles, chicken pox, influenza, head lice, heavy colds, flu, COVID19 or stomach infections etc.). If a child arrives at the Centre unwell or becomes ill, parents will be notified. The Director reserves 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. **Please remember that dosing a child with Panadol does not prevent them from being infectious.**

Parents will be responsible for any medical expenses incurred on behalf of their child.

Medicines

If a child is undergoing medical treatment and requires medication, the medicine must be given to the Director along with the management plan filled out by child's doctor. Staff cannot administer over the counter medication without written permission. The Director 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/s 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 Education.

Discipline Policy

We encourage our Educators to aim for consistency when dealing with inappropriate behavior. We also emphasize positive reinforcement for appropriate behavior to maintain positive self-esteem in all children. Negative behavior is dealt with in a calm and appropriate manner to achieve a positive outcome. Children will be offered choices if behavior is inappropriate.

Educators will always supervise children and ensure that all the children know the rules and expectations and will offer clear and simple directions for all activities. Children are encouraged to ask Educators for support. Parents will be provided with feedback positive and negative behavior of the child.

A short time out is used for the purpose of calming emotions. Children will then be asked how they could have handled the situation for a better outcome, and the child will give an apology. In moderate cases of negative behavior Educator will complete an Incident Report to document the situation. After three (3) incident reports are written, a meeting with the parent/s may be arranged to discuss the child's behavior. Severe incidents are discussed with the parent/s upon next signing in/out of their child or at the next possible time.

Unacceptable behavior will not be tolerated. The Staff of The Kids' Castle, after consultation with The Kids' Castle Committee and School Principal, reserves the right to suspend or refuse a child's attendance to the Centre.

Lost Property

Please check our lost property basket regularly. Please label all belongings with your child's name. Items of school uniforms will, if possible, be returned to their owners, however, other items of clothing from vacation care, unless clearly labelled will be donated to The Smith Family after three weeks.

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 always remain private and confidential, and only made accessible to relevant Staff and Management members on a need's basis. All records and information are always kept under lock and key. 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 only exception to this is, if we are obliged to share information with an authorised prescribed body under Child Protection Legislation.

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 The Kids' Castle. Please don't hesitate to contact the Service and any of its representatives to clarify any additional information that you may require.