

# Samaritans



Samaritans Early Learning Centres

## Family Handbook



**Samaritans Early Learning Centres are located at:**

**Newcastle**

41 Darby Street, Newcastle NSW 2300

Ph: 02 4960 7265 | Email: [selc@samaritans.org.au](mailto:selc@samaritans.org.au)

**Woodberry**

11 Lawson Avenue Woodberry NSW 2322

Ph: 02 4960 7250 | Email: [woodberry@samaritans.org.au](mailto:woodberry@samaritans.org.au)

[www.samaritans.org.au/services/early-learning-centres](http://www.samaritans.org.au/services/early-learning-centres)



## **Welcome to the Samaritans Early Learning Centres Newcastle and Woodberry.**

- Not-for-profit community based Early childhood Education and Care services
- Managed by the Samaritans Foundation, Anglican Diocese of Newcastle
- Provide high quality care for children aged 6 weeks to 6 years
- Opened 49 weeks a year, closed for 3 weeks over Christmas/ New Year.

## **SAMARITANS – COMPASSION, INTEGRITY & JUSTICE**

Samaritans offers services in the Central Coast, Newcastle, Hunter, Mid-North Coast and Central Western regions of NSW. Over 100 services support children, youth, people living with a disability or with mental health concerns, parents, families and those who are homeless throughout these communities. Samaritans encourages people to have a voice and be offered choice as we recognise all people are valued members of their community. Samaritans also engages in advocacy to promote justice, reconciliation, peace and dignity for all in our community no matter what their circumstance.

### **MISSION**

We seek to provide unconditional support to people in their needs and to promote just social and economic policies.

### **VISION**

For communities where there is love, peace, justice, reconciliation and dignity for all people. Where there is care for the vulnerable and their environment and where each individual has the opportunity to contribute and participate fully in community life.

### **VALUES**

Compassion, Integrity, Justice

Samaritans teams of educators provide high quality educational and care to the children and their families. This is achieved through a flexible daily program designed to meet the individual needs of children, and most importantly through the interactions and relationships with families and children.

Children are grouped by age to ensure the safety of babies and toddlers, and to offer older children more flexible, creative learning spaces to maximise opportunities for their development and learning.

Samaritans employs dedicated and passionate Teachers and Educators, with a range of qualification and experience, to work in their Early Learning Centres. We recognise the important role our Teachers (University-qualified) and Educators (Diploma and Certificate 3) play in developing relationships with children and families that are central to quality care provision.

Educators are encouraged to be continually updating their knowledge and practice by learning new skills and keeping abreast of current information and best practice.

Teams maintain a high level of professionalism and adhere to the Education and Care Service National Regulations 2012; the Education and Care Service National Law Act 2010 as well as Samaritans Policies and Procedures.

## **Newcastle Early Learning Centre (Darby St)**

Licensed to care for 53 children per day:

- 0 – 2 years are cared for in the **Wattle Room** with up to 10 children and 3 educators
- 2 – 4 years are cared for in the **Gumnut Room** with up to 28 children and 4 teachers/educators
- The **Preschool Room** is for children in the year before school, with up to 15 children and 2 teachers/educators

In addition to the staff above, a non-teaching experienced Nominated Supervisor is employed to ensure the wellbeing of staff and families.

The centre is open for 49 weeks per year, Monday to Friday, 7.00am to 6.00 pm.

## Woodberry Early Learning Centre

Licensed to care for 30 children per day:

- 0 – 3 years are cared for in the **Jarjums Room** with up to 10 children and 3 educators
- 3 – 5 years are cared for in the **Booris Room** with up to 20 children and 3 teachers/educators

In addition to the staff above, a non-teaching experienced Nominated Supervisor is employed to ensure the wellbeing of staff and families.

The centre is open for 49 weeks per year, Monday to Friday, 7.30 am to 6.00pm.

## The National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for early childhood education and care across Australia.

The NQF includes:

1. The National Regulations and The National Law Act
2. The National Quality Standards including the assessment and rating process
3. The National Learning Frameworks.

Samaritans Early Learning Centres are committed to ensuring high quality education and care for all children. Research studies have proven that quality education and care in the early years leads to better outcomes for children.

**The National Quality Standards** consists of 7 areas:

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

## **The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)**

The daily program outlines the experiences the children will be involved in during the day. It is developed as a result of observations and reflections of individual children, considering their interests and strengths.

The Early Years Learning Framework guides all programming through the following elements:

1. Belonging; Being and Becoming
2. Principles and Practices
3. Learning Outcomes

Your child's learning will be evaluated against these elements as the EYLF is embedded in all aspects of the program and is used to guide curriculum decision making, assist in planning, implementing and evaluating your child's learning.

Samaritans uses a digital platform for each child's individual portfolio. This means you can access your child's journey at any time, simply by logging into your account!

## **School Readiness**

Samaritans Early Learning Centres offer innovative school readiness programs. Children are provided with the opportunity to engage in a curriculum to build the skills to support lifelong learning. To support a smooth transition to school, children are encouraged to be curious and confident learners by developing their sense of Being, Belonging and Becoming.

Samaritans school readiness programs are planned and implemented by fully qualified and accredited Teachers with degrees in early childhood education.

School readiness programs include I Can Do It and The Worry Woos Developing Emotional Intelligence Programme. These programs support children in identifying and managing a wide range of emotions.

Dr John Irvine, as the creator of the Worry Woos programme says, "Children's social and emotional wellbeing is fundamental to their happiness, academic progress and future success in life".

In addition to specific school readiness programs, Samaritans play-based curriculums provide children with hands-on experiences to encourage social connections; problem solving; hypothesising as well as numeracy and literacy



skills. Children engage in both planned and spontaneous intentional teaching activities, all guided by knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Learning Framework.

## **Behaviour Guidance**

Samaritans Early Learning Centres educators have training in and use knowledge of Circle of Security as a road map to guide children's behaviour. This unique approach ensures children have opportunities to explore their environment, knowing there is a secure base to return to (through relationship with an Educator), that is safe and secure.

Educators present themselves as positive role models; demonstrated by actions, through use of language and voice as well as mutual respect. Redirection, constructive solutions and positive interactions are the techniques used by Educators to build on the strengths of children and guide their social engagement with others.

Providing children with attention and encouragement as they go about their daily activities ensures learning environments that are peaceful and co-operative to maximise children's growth and development.

## **What To Expect On Your Child's First Day**

Families are encouraged to bring their child to the centre prior to their first day so they can familiarise themselves with their new surroundings. You will meet the educators who will be educating and caring for your child and have the opportunity to talk about your child's specific needs; sleeping, eating, likes and dislikes. On their first day it is suggested you take some time to settle your child and when it is time to leave, say 'goodbye' to your child and let them know you will be back in the afternoon.

You are welcome to ring the centre at any time during the day if concerned about how your child is settling.

## **Arrival and Departure**

Samaritans Early Learning Centres have a digital sign in/out system with Qikkids called KIOSK. You will be required to set this up using your mobile phone number and a unique PIN code. The device is conveniently located in the entry foyer.

***Please read the attached information regarding how to use Qikkids KIOSK.***

Children will only be permitted to leave the centre with parent/guardian or person you have authorised. Anyone collecting a child for the first time will be required to produce photo identification before taking the child. If you need to arrange for a person not previously authorised to collect your child, please contact the centre prior, to arrange.

## **What to Bring**

### **Bottles**

Families are asked to supply bottles for their babies. These can be either formula or breast milk. (Tins of formula can be left at the centre if this is easier for families). The centre provides cow's milk, soy milk and water for all children. Breast Feeding is fully supported at the Centre. Please discuss this with our Educators.

### **Nappies**

We provide nappies for your child. However, if you wish to use your own cloth nappies you may do so.

### **Comforters**

Please bring in your child's special toy or comforter every day. All items need to be clearly labelled.

### **Sheets**

Newcastle: We ask that you supply a single bed sheet set that remains at the centre for the week and is taken home on the last day of attendance for washing.

Woodberry: Sheets supplied by centre.

### **All Children will need:**

- A bag with at least two changes of clothes
- A wide brim hat

Please clearly label all items of clothing, shoes, hats and bag.

It is recommended not to send toys as children may become upset if their toy is misplaced or broken.



## Clothing

We recommend that children:

- Wear clothing that allow them to move freely and fully participate in all activities
- Avoid clothes with cords as they can become entangled on climbing equipment and may pose a hazard at rest time
- Avoid clothing bearing offensive slogans or logos which might offend a particular group or individual
- Wear safe footwear which does not pose a potential health and safety risk when climbing and running. Footwear should be suitable for climbing, running and protect your child's feet (thongs are not suitable). To promote the development of children's self-help skills, footwear that is easy for your child to remove and put back on with minimal assistance is recommended. Infants may require socks – depending on the weather.

Wide brim hats and children's t-shirts with Samaritans logo are for sale, in a variety of colours. If you are interested in purchasing, please ask at Reception.

## Nutrition and Meals

All meals and snacks are provided. They are prepared daily, on site, by a qualified cook. The Centres follow The Good for Kids Good for Life Program, which aims to instill lifelong good nutritional habits.

A weekly menu is displayed at the centre and on the closed Facebook page. The weekly menu is planned to ensure that all 5 food groups are catered for and children are receiving the recommended serving size. This information is on the menu.

Specific dietary needs can be catered to, e.g cultural or religious beliefs; allergies; coeliac; vegetarian.

It is important to celebrate special occasions. If your child is having a birthday and they would like to share a cake with friends at the centre, an ice-cream cake can be ordered at Reception.

## Allergies

If your child has an allergy, Educators need as much information as possible. The centre will require an Allergy Emergency Medical Plan letter from the doctor that clearly states your child's allergy and the first aid management required. This will need to be updated each year.

## Fees and Costs

### The Child Care Subsidy:

In 2018 the government introduced the child care subsidy to support working parents with children attending registered Early Learning Centres.

Prior to starting at a Samaritans Centre, you are advised to:

1. Set up a MYGOV account
2. Get in touch with Centrelink to let them know your child will be attending a centre
3. Provide the Centre with your customer reference number and your child's customer reference number

Visit [www.education.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-0](http://www.education.gov.au/early-childhood-and-child-care-0) for more information.

### Fee Relief:

In 2023, the NSW Government announced fee relief for children attending Long Day Care. This means if your child turns 4 years old on or before 31 July 2023 you will receive up to \$2,110 in fee relief.

For more information click, the link below

[Preschool fee relief in Long Day Care \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://nsw.gov.au/preschool-fee-relief)

## Fees

### Newcastle

The current daily fee for children 0-2 years old is \$139.50 per day. The daily fee for children 2-3 years is \$133.50 per day. The daily fee for children 3-6 years is \$129.00 per day. This includes meals and beverages, nappies and lotions e.g. sunscreen, nappy cream etc. **Woodberry** The current daily fee for children 0-3 years old is \$119.00. The daily fee for 3-6 years old is \$117.00 per day. This includes meals and beverages, nappies and lotions e.g. sunscreen, nappy cream etc.

Fees are payable for all absences e.g. illness, holidays. Samaritans does not charge fees for public holidays.

## Payment

Fees are paid fortnightly through Debitsuccess. Statements are produced fortnightly and available by email or hard copy.

## **Other Costs**

### ***Annual Administration Enrolment Fee***

\$120.00 per child enrolled and payable when your child begins care and at the start of every following year.

### ***Cot Sheet Fee (Infants Only)***

\$15 for a year every week day of attendance ie if your child comes 5 days per week it will cost \$75 for the year.

### ***Late Fee***

\$10.00 can be charged for every 5 minutes a child remains after closing i.e. if you are 15 minutes late it will cost \$30.00 (this assists in paying overtime to staff)

## **Cancelling your Child's Care Arrangement**

If you wish to cancel one or more days of enrolment 2 weeks' notice is required. If you are leaving the centre and do not attend during these 2 weeks the Child Care Subsidy will not be paid by the government, therefore **full fees** will be charged.

## **Confidentiality**

All information that is shared between families and staff is considered confidential and will not be released to any other parties as per Education and Care Services National Regulations & Law and Samaritans Policy. All written documentation will be stored in a locked cupboard accessible only to relevant staff.

## **Excursions/Incursion**

Throughout the year the children are given the opportunity to attend incursions where people are invited to come into the centre e.g; science on the move; storytellers; musicians etc.

All excursions will be conducted in line with the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Families are welcome to and encouraged to attend both incursions and excursions.

There may be a small fee for such events.

## **Health and Safety**

### **Smoking and Alcohol**

In accordance with Education and Care Services National Regulations & Law, Samaritans Centres are smoking and alcohol-free zone at all times. Under no circumstance are families or staff allowed to smoke or consume alcohol.

### **Sun Protection:**

Families are asked to ensure their children:

- Wear sun smart clothing e.g. sleeves that cover the shoulders
- Wear a brimmed sun hat
- Apply sunscreen first thing in the morning.

The Cancer Council's guidelines in relation to SunSmart play are followed.

### **Immunisations:**

Your child must be fully immunised. A copy of the immunisation schedule must be provided to the office after every immunisation.

## Sickness:

You are asked not to send your child to the centre if they are unwell.

The responsible person in charge of the centre is authorised to refuse a child's admission if they believe it is in the best interests of the child and/or other children for your child to not attend.

If a child becomes unwell whilst at the centre, staff will endeavour to contact you or your emergency contact/s.

If your child has a temperature we will endeavour to bring the temperature under control by sponging, keeping the child quiet and giving water. We will NOT administer paracetamol as this can mask serious illness and you will be asked to collect your child as soon as possible.

Samaritans has many practices and procedures in place to reduce cross infection and keep children well. This includes:

- Washing hands entering and leaving the premises
- Educators washing hands throughout the day
- Educators wearing gloves when handling food; changing nappies and wiping noses
- The daily washing of toys
- Daily cleaning of the centre
- Notifying families should there be an outbreak of any infectious disease

A child starting a course of antibiotics must be kept at home for at least 24 hours from the start of the first day of treatment.

## Medication

Medication will only be given under the following circumstances:

1. A medication form must be completed and signed by the parent/guardian for all medication. (please see the Medication Folder in each playroom). The staff member receiving the medication will also sign the medication form once they have checked details. The staff member who gives the medication to the child will also sign the form once the medication has been administered. A staff member who witnesses the dose will also sign the medication form.
2. Prescribed medication will ONLY be given if it is in its original container with the label clearly showing the child's name, the name of the medication, the administration instructions and the expiry date.

3. Children on long-term medication e.g. asthma medication, must have a letter and an Action Plan from their doctor stating the reasons for the medication. This must be updated every 12 months for staff to continue giving the medication. In addition, a medication form must be filled out every day.
4. Over the counter medication such as cough and cold mixtures will only be administered by staff if the medication is accompanied by a letter from the Doctor authorising it. Medication will be given for two days only. Medication forms must be filled in for the administration of these medicines.
5. Paracetamol may be given if we have authorisation from a Doctor. However, only one dose of paracetamol will be administered during the course of the child's day and it will only be given for one day. Under no circumstance will paracetamol be administered without written consent by a family member and Doctor.
6. Herbal medications will only be given if they are accompanied by a letter from a person qualified to administer such medications. This letter must state the name of the child, the reason for the medication and the dosage. The name of the medication and the dosage must also appear on the bottle.
7. Medications must be handed to a staff member after completing a medication form, and under no circumstances is medication to be left in a child's bag or locker. Staff will place medication in the refrigerator or medicine container.

## **Child Protection**

Children and young people have a right to grow up in healthy communities, which offer safety from abuse, protection from harm, security of accommodation and stability of care.

All Teachers, Educators and staff at Samaritans centres are mandatory reporters and have a responsibility to ensure the safety, welfare and wellbeing of every child and young person who comes in contact with the organisation.

Educators will work in a co-ordinated and co-operative manner with those responsible, to ensure the protection and timely intervention where they believe children and young people are at risk of harm. Families will be informed of Educators concerns and advised of their actions.



## **Safety and Emergency Procedures**

Emergency evacuations are practised with the children and staff 4 times a year. Evacuations may be necessary in the event of a fire, chemical spill, bomb scare, earthquake, gas leak, siege or other emergency. Emergency procedures are displayed in all play spaces.

## **Accident Forms**

If your child sustains an injury whilst at the centre basic first aid will be applied to ensure the child's safety. An accident form will be completed by the educator and you will be asked to sign this on collection.

If a child sustains a more serious injury while at the centre the family will be contacted immediately and asked to come and collect their child. An ambulance will be called if required.

## **Grievance Procedure**

Families who are dissatisfied with any aspect of the education or care their child is receiving, or has received at the centre, are encouraged to discuss their concerns with the Nominated Supervisor.

If you are left feeling the matter has not been resolved, or would like to take it further, you should speak to the Community Services Manager with delegated responsibility for Samaritans Early Learning Centres on 0400 668 987. Alternatively, you can make a complaint through Samaritans Head Office on 4960 7100.

If the concern regards licensing, you could contact the Central Licensing & Regulatory Support on 1800 619 113.

Samaritans requests families to raise concerns sooner rather than later, as unresolved issues can quickly get out of hand and work to noone's advantage.

## **Policies and Procedures**

A copy of Samaritans Early Learnings Policy Manual is available for you to look at any time. Please ask any of the team to assist you.

Support on 1800 619 113.

We would ask you to raise any concerns you may have sooner rather than later, because unresolved issues can quickly get out of hand.

## **Polices and Procedures**

A copy of the services policy manual is available for you to look at any time. Please ask one of our team to assist you.



Thank you for choosing

**Samaritans**



**Samaritans Early Learning Centres**

We hope you and your children have a long and enjoyable association with the centre.