

**SOUTHERN GRAMPAINS SHIRE
COUNCIL**

**FAMILY DAY CARE
INFORMATION HANDBOOK**



***Ngatanwarr (Welcome) to Southern Grampians
Shire Council Family Day Care.***

This booklet is designed to help families feel welcome and provides a broad overview of what to expect so they can feel confident about leaving their child with their chosen family day care educator.

This booklet provides guidelines about the roles and responsibilities of families, educators, and the Coordination Unit, and should be read in conjunction with the *Policy Manual, Philosophy, Code of Conduct, and Child Safe Code of Conduct.*

Have a question? For further information, families can contact their educator directly, or one of our friendly Coordination Unit staff.

Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and has a zero tolerance of child abuse.



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CONTENTS

ABOUT OUR SERVICE	
What is family day care?	Page 7
MEET THE COORDINATION UNIT TEAM	
Children’s Services Team Leader and Nominated Supervisor	Page 8
Family Day Care Fieldworker and Education Leader	Page 8
PHILOSOPHY AND CODE OF CONDUCT	
Service Philosophy	Page 9
Service Code of Conduct	Page 10
CHILD SAFE ORGANISATION	
Statement of Commitment to Child Safety	Page 11
Commitment to the Cultural Safety of Aboriginal Children	Page 12
Child Safe Code of Conduct	Page 13
Child Safe Standards	Page 15
Mandatory reporting and Reportable Conduct Scheme	Page 16
COMMUNICATION	
Communication is key	Page 17
Daily information sharing	Page 17
Up-to-date details are important	Page 18
Face Book	Page 18
Harmony Web Parent Portal – News Tab	Page 19
Surveys	Page 19
HOW WE SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES	
Support available to families	Page 19
Fieldworker and Educational Leader Role	Page 19
WHAT HAPPENS TO FAMILY INFORMATION	
Confidentiality of records	Page 20
Who has access to family information	Page 20
Family rights regarding personal information	Page 21
THE ENROLMENT PROCESS	
Government priority of access	Page 22
Parental responsibility	Page 23
Court orders	Page 23
Four important steps to enrol your child	Page 24
Items needed to complete enrolment	Page 24
Accessing the online enrolment form	Page 25
Immunisation History Statement	Page 26
Child Care Subsidy and Customer Reference Numbers	Page 27
Booked Hours form	Page 27
Enrolment confirmation email	Page 28
Confirming the enrolment within my.Gov	Page 28

Alternate care arrangements	Page 29
VISITING AN EDUCATOR FOR THE FIRST TIME	
First Visit Checklist	Page 30
PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR FAMILY DAY CARE	
Settling your child into care	Page 31
Discussions with your child	Page 32
YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATION AND CARE	
Insurance	Page 33
Placements for babies	Page 33
What to bring to family day care	Page 34
Arrivals and departures	Page 35
Sun Safe policy	Page 36
No Smoking	Page 36
Excursions and outings	Page 36
Pets and animals	Page 37
Guiding children's behaviour	Page 38
Kindergarten attendance	Page 39
HEALTH, SAFETY AND NUTRITION	
Incident, injury, trauma or illness of child in care	Page 40
Accident or illness of educator	Page 40
If your child is infectious or ill	Page 41
Coronavirus	Page 42
Administration of medication	Page 43
Nutrition	Page 44
NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK	
Education And Care Services National Regulations 2011	Page 45
National Quality Framework	Page 45
Australian Children's Education and Care Quality (ACECQA)	Page 46
Approved Learning Frameworks	Page 47
FEES AND CHARGES	
Compliance with Family Assistance Law	Page 48
Child Care Subsidy	Page 49
Range of Fees	Page 51
Minimum Fee	Page 52
Administration Levy	Page 52
Absences	Page 53
No notification absence fee	Page 54
Charging practices	Page 54
Standard session hours	Page 55
Casual care	Page 55
Non-Standard Hours	Page 55
24 hours, weekend and overnight care	Page 56
Changes to booked hours	Page 57
Ceasing care	Page 57
Statement of Entitlement	Page 58
Invoice and payment process	Page 59

ATTENDANCE RECORDS, TIMESHEETS AND ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE (PIN)	
PIN – Electronic signatures	Page 60
Sign-in using e-signatures	Page 61
Sign-out using e-signatures	Page 62
Sign-in and sign-out – Multiple children	Page 62
Signing timesheets on educator’s device	Page 62
Signing timesheets remotely	Page 63
HOW FAMILIES CAN BECOME INVOLVED	
Family participation in the program	Page 64
Reconciliation Action Plan	Page 65
How to provide feedback and suggestions	Page 66
COMPLAINTS	
How to lodge a complaint	Page 67
IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION	
Contact details – Department of Education and Training	Page 68
Contact details – Family violence support services	Page 69
Contact details – Local mental health services in Southern Grampians Shire	Page 70
Contact details – Mental health services	Page 71
Contact details – Coronavirus	Page 72
Contact details – Notifications or referrals relating to child protection and wellbeing	Page 72
COORDINATION UNIT CONTACT INFORMATION	
Contact details - Family day care Coordination Unit	Page 73

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY

Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care acknowledges the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our organisation is located and where we conduct our business.

We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present and future emerging leaders. Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care is committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

WHAT IS FAMILY DAY CARE?



Family day care is an approved form of early childhood education and care that focuses on each individual child's development, while providing high quality early learning in an educator's own family home or approved venue for children aged 0-13 years.

Our qualified educators offer a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment for small groups of children across the Southern Grampians Shire.

Some educators may choose to provide education and care on weekdays, weekends, overnight and 24 hour care, for specific circumstances.

Prior to commencement, each educator and their home or approved venue is assessed to meet all requirements in compliance with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* and the *National Quality Standards*. Educators are supported by the approved provider to continue to meet these requirements.

All Australian approved early childhood education and care services participate in the Quality Assessment and Rating process which is overseen by the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

The Coordination Unit refers to the family day care office staff who act on behalf of the approved provider, Southern Grampians Shire Council. The Coordination Unit provides support and guidance in accordance to Government legislation to ensure our family day care educators remain compliant to current policies, laws and regulations.

MEET THE COORDINATION UNIT

CHILDREN'S SERVICES TEAM LEADER AND NOMINATED SUPERVISOR

Kim Ayling has worked in early childhood education and care since 2002. Kim's qualifications include *Advanced Diploma in Children's Services Sector Management*, *Diploma of Children's Services* and *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment*.

Kim has experience working with families and children aged 0-12 years in a variety of roles within various long day care, family day care and occasional care services. These roles, including Assistant Educator, Lead Educator, Director, Assistant Director, Family Day Care Fieldworker, and Educational Leader. Kim has also worked briefly as a Trainer and Assessor for a local Registered Training Organisation.

Kim believes that children are capable, unique people who have individual abilities and talents. Kim believes the role of the educator is to develop close relationships with each child so these abilities and talents can be nurtured and encouraged, positively influencing the child's development and learning and supporting the child's overall health, wellbeing and sense of identity. Kim strongly advocates for children to be provided opportunities to learn life skills through developmentally appropriate risk taking and by practicing resilience within a safe and caring environment.

FAMILY DAY CARE FIELDWORKER AND EDUCATIONAL LEADER

Leesa Hayes has worked in early childhood education and care in a number of various roles since 2003, including Assistant Educator, Lead Educator and Director in a Long Day Care setting. Leesa's qualifications include *Diploma of Children's Services*, *Certificate IV in Training and Assessment* and is currently studying the *Certificate IV in Child, Youth and Family Intervention*.

Leesa was employed as a Trainer and Assessor with a local Registered Training Organisation to teach early childhood education and care prior to gaining the position of Family Day Care Fieldworker and Educational Leader with Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care.

Leesa's passion for high quality education and care makes her the perfect person in her current role. Leesa inspires Educators to create meaningful educational programs which focus on the individual child. Although Leesa promotes a high level of safety within the family day care environment, she also encourages educators to create beautiful and naturalistic play spaces within their family day care homes and approved venues.

SERVICE PHILOSOPHY

Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care believes that when children are supported by respectful relationships, they can achieve the highest outcomes. We are committed to providing a welcoming, safe, loving, and inclusive home environment where children are able to grow, learn, explore, and develop at their own pace.

Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to protecting children's safety and wellbeing, therefore we have a zero tolerance to child abuse and advocate for the best interests and rights of the child. We aim to create an environment that challenges discrimination and fosters the dignity and self-esteem of children, enabling their learning and development to thrive.

Our educators strive to develop kind, genuine, responsive and trusting bonds with each child, which is strengthened through consistent educator/child relationships. Educators take a holistic approach when supporting children's growth and development, focusing on each child's individual strengths, interests and capabilities.

We acknowledge that children learn best during play. We aim to provide age appropriate child-led opportunities for children to sing, dance, laugh, climb, imagine and create. We encourage children to have fun, express their emotions freely, and to develop a love of learning. We want each child to go home with a smile on their face, feeling happy, accepted, confident, and excited about returning to care.

We believe that children are capable and competent learners, and highly value their ideas and rich contribution to our service and the wider community. We endeavour to actively seek children's opinions, and implement strategies to empower them to speak out on matters that concern them.

We support children to learn resilience by providing a warm, loving and safe environment which encourages them to participate fully and allows them to take measured risks and learn from these outcomes.

We understand that a child's growth and development is enhanced when families are involved in their child's education. To achieve the highest outcomes for children, we strive to develop supportive, respectful, and collaborative partnerships with families through open communication and the reciprocal sharing of knowledge and skills.

We believe it is important for children to connect with the natural environment. We endeavour to teach environmentally sound practices that recognise our responsibility to protect and preserve the environment for future generations.

We appreciate that our educators are our most precious resource, and we strive to make decisions with the intention to create a respectful, collaborative, supportive, fulfilling and safe working environment.

We acknowledge that all children, families and educators are unique. We celebrate the diverse culture, beliefs, values and abilities of all members of our family day care community, and endeavor to provide a service that is accessible and culturally safe, where all children and families feel welcome and have a strong sense of belonging.

SERVICE CODE OF CONDUCT

The Southern Grampians Shire Council Code of Conduct (April 2012) applies to Coordination Unit Staff and Educators. The Code of Conduct document is available for viewing at the Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care Office, located at:

Frances Hewett Community Centre
2 Roberts Street
Hamilton, VIC 3300

Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care Service Members Comprise Educators, Families, Children, Coordination Unit, and Sponsor

- High quality care & education services are those which meet the needs of and promote the integrated development of all the children involved in the service;
- The service will strive to meet each individual family's needs within the constraints of the National Regulations & Quality Standards and the Service Policies & Procedures;
- All members of the Service will abide by the Education and Care Services National Regulations & Quality Standards 2011, under the Education and Care Services National Law 2010 and the Service's own Policies;
- The involvement of all members of the Service is critical to the implementation of an effective program;
- All members of the Service will be treated with fairness and respect at all times, irrespective of gender, age, socio-economic status, race, language, beliefs, additional needs and family structure or lifestyle;
- All members of the Service will make use of the Service's conflict resolution processes when a conflict arises between any of the parties;
- All members of the Service will maintain confidentiality standards;
- All members of the Service will provide and promote a positive image of Family Day Care to the wider community;
- This Code will be reviewed on a biannual basis or earlier if deemed necessary.



STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care has a zero-tolerance approach to child abuse and is committed to creating and maintaining a child safe and child friendly organisation where all children are valued and protected from abuse.

Our service will demonstrate this commitment by:

- Providing clear standards to staff, educators and their family members, students and volunteers.
- Embedding child safety and wellbeing in our service's leadership, governance, and culture.
- Empowering children through engagement and involvement when making decisions.
- Advocating for children to understand personal safety, take action and speak out when they feel unsafe.
- Informing and involving families in promoting child safety and wellbeing.
- Adhering to information sharing and record keeping requirements.
- Establishing a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities of children and young people from a culturally diverse, linguistically diverse, and/or LBGTIQ background are respected and valued.
- Having a zero tolerance approach to racism and identifying and addressing any instances of racism.
- Providing a safe and welcoming environment for children living with a disability.
- Inclusion of child safe practices during recruitment processes.
- Regular review and auditing of child safe practices.
- Providing physical and online environments, which promote safety and wellbeing and minimise the risk of harm.

Our service recognises that all stakeholders have a shared responsibility to accept the *Child Safety and Wellbeing* policy as a high priority. All stakeholders are required to observe child safe principles and expectations for appropriate behaviour towards and in the company of children, as noted in our *Child Safe Code of Conduct*.



COMMITMENT TO THE CULTURAL SAFETY OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN

Southern Grampians Shire Council is committed to providing a culturally safe environment where the unique and diverse identities and experiences of Aboriginal children are respected and valued.

Our service will demonstrate this commitment by:

- Encouraging and supporting children to share their cultural identity, express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Actively supporting and facilitating participation and inclusion within the organisation by Aboriginal children and their families.
- Consulting with families, members of the Aboriginal community and the relevant Aboriginal organisations to identify opportunities to promote and embed Aboriginal culture and practices within our service environment, program and practices.
- Having a zero tolerance approach to racism and identifying and addressing any instances of racism.
- Investigating and responding to reported instances in accordance with Council's Codes of Conduct and Performance and Discipline Policy.
- Acknowledging, appreciating and understanding the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.
- Celebrating and acknowledging significant and culturally important events.
- Acknowledgement of Country at all meetings and events.
- Actively participating in the Reconciliation Action Plan process.
- Developing reciprocal relationships with members of the local Aboriginal community to enhance understanding, knowledge and collaboration.
- Supporting children who wish to explore their culture, including consulting with their family and relevant Aboriginal organisations.
- Acknowledging, appreciating and understanding the strengths of Aboriginal culture and its importance to the wellbeing and safety of Aboriginal children.
- Recognising the importance of our vital role in empowering and sharing the cultural histories and traditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with the children, families, educators, and the wider community.
- Celebrating NAIDOC Week and acknowledging significant events, including National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week.
- Actively seeking feedback from Aboriginal children, families and communities on their experience at our service, particularly how safe they feel expressing their identity, including their culture.
- Advocating for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples voices, stories and truths to be heard through respectful collaboration as the foundation for guiding practice to embed cultural awareness within our community.

CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT – ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

All personnel of Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care are responsible for supporting the safety, participation, wellbeing and empowerment of children by:

- adhering to Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care Child Protections and Wellbeing policy at all times / upholding Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care's Statement of Commitment to Child Safety at all times
- taking all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse
- treating everyone with respect
- listening and responding to the views and concerns of children, particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused and/or are worried about their safety or the safety of another
- promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal children (for example, by never questioning an Aboriginal child's self-identification)
- having a zero tolerance of discrimination and promoting the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- promoting the safety, participation and empowerment of children with a disability (for example, during personal care activities).
- ensuring as far as practicable that adults are not left alone with a child or placing themselves in any situation which could be misinterpreted (for example, changing nappies behind closed doors
- notifying any concerns of or allegations of child abuse or child safety to the Coordination Unit
- ensuring any concerns or allegations are reported to the police and child protection. If an allegation of child abuse is made, ensure as quickly as possible that the child/ren are safe and protected from harm
- encouraging children to 'have a say' and participate in all relevant activities where possible, especially on issues that are important to them
- considering the risks associated with crossing professional boundaries by having face to face or online contact with a child or their family outside of our service, unless necessary and reasonable (for example babysitting, attending birthday parties, or non-work related social media contact))
- promoting cyber, online and mobile phone safety and empowering children and families to be aware of cyberbullying, grooming and trolling and steps they can take to increase online safety and security on all applications and devices accessible to children.

CHILD SAFE CODE OF CONDUCT – UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS

Staff, contractors and their family members, students and volunteers of Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care must not:

- ignore or disregard any concerns, suspicions or disclosures of child abuse.
- develop any 'special' relationships with children that could be seen as favoritism (for example, the offering of gifts or special treatment for specific children)
- exhibit behaviours with children which may be construed as unnecessarily physical (for example inappropriate sitting on laps. Sitting on laps could be appropriate sometimes, for example while giving comfort to a small child or when reading a storybook to a small child in an open plan area)
- put children at risk of abuse (for example, by locking doors)
- do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves, such as toileting or changing clothes
- engage in open discussions of a mature or adult nature in the presence of children (for example, personal social activities)
- use inappropriate language in the presence of children
- express personal views on cultures, race or sexuality in the presence of children
- discriminate against any child, including because of culture, race, ethnicity or disability
- photograph or video a child without the consent of the child (where developmentally appropriate) and written authorisation of the child's parent or guardian.
- upload photographs and videos of a child to any social media platforms without the consent of the child (where developmentally appropriate) and written authorisation of the child's parent or guardian, in accordance with Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care's Social Media Guidelines
- consume alcohol or take illicit drugs under any circumstance while children are present in care in the Family Day Care environment or when on any other outing

If a child is at immediate risk of abuse phone 000.

CHILD SAFE STANDARDS

Our service is committed to putting children's safety and wellbeing first, and endeavours to embed a commitment to child safety within every aspect of our service and take deliberate actions to protect children from physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse and neglect.

Our service operates under the Victorian Child Safe Standards framework, which underpins the *Child Wellbeing and Safety Act 2005*. We are currently in the process of working towards implementing the updated Child Safe Standards, which came into effect on 1st July 2022.

The new Victorian Child Safe Standards set out minimum requirements and outline the actions organisations must take to keep children and young people safe. They provide more clarity for organisations and are more consistent with Standards in the rest of Australia. There are now eleven new Child Safe Standards:

Child Safe Standard 1 – Organisations establish a culturally safe environment in which the diverse and unique identities and experiences of Aboriginal children and young people are respected and valued.

Child Safe Standard 2 – Child safety and wellbeing is embedded in organisational leadership, governance and culture.

Child Safe Standard 3 – Children and young people are empowered about their rights, participate in decisions affecting them and are taken seriously.

Child Safe Standard 4 – Families and communities are informed, and involved in promoting child safety and wellbeing.

Child Safe Standard 5 – Equity is upheld and diverse needs respected in policy and practice.

Child Safe Standard 6 – People working with children and young people are suitable and supported to reflect child safety and wellbeing values in practice.

Child Safe Standard 7 – Processes for complaints and concerns are child focused.

Child Safe Standard 8 – Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills and awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.

Child Safe Standard 9 – Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.

Child Safe Standard 10 – Implementation of the Child Safe Standards is regularly reviewed and improved.

Child Safe Standard 11 – Policies and procedures document how the organisation is safe for children and young people.

For further information about the Child Safe Standards, visit the Commission for Children and Young People's website: www.ccp.vic.gov.au

MANDATORY REPORTING AND REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme has been in operation from 1 July 2017 and already covers a large range of organisations that were introduced in two phases. The scheme seeks to improve how organisations respond to allegations of child abuse and child-related misconduct.

Since 1 January 2019, education and care services and children's services must comply with the scheme as they exercise care, supervision or authority over children, whether as part of their primary functions or otherwise. This requires organisations to notify the Commission of allegations of reportable conduct and to investigate them.

Our service has processes in place that informs all staff, contractors, educators, volunteers, students, families and all other stakeholders to be aware of the legal obligations relating to child abuse and reporting to appropriate authorities, including:

FAILURE TO DISCLOSE

Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.

MANDATORY REPORTING

Any personnel who are mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers, early childhood teachers and educators, principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse. From 1st March 2019, all early childhood educators are mandated reporters, including both family day care educators and Coordination Unit staff.

GROOMING

Grooming offences target communication, including online communication, with a child under the age of 16 or their parents with the intent of committing child sexual abuse. This offence targets predatory conduct undertaken to prepare a child for sexual abuse at a later time with the groomer (aged 18 years old or over) or another adult.

FAILURE TO PROTECT

People who hold a position of authority within a relevant organisation are required by law to make a notification if they know of a substantial risk another adult associated with the organisation may commit a sex offence against a child under 16 years, they have the power or responsibility to remove or reduce that risk but they negligently fail to do so.

Families are encouraged to read our *Child Safe Code of Conduct* and *Child Safety and Wellbeing* policy, which can be accessed by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*, or provided to you upon request. Alternatively, each educator has a copy located in their *Family Day Care Policy Manual*.

Further information regarding Victoria's Reportable Conduct Scheme can be found online by visiting <https://ccyp.vic.gov.au/reportable-conduct-scheme/> .

COMMUNICATION

COMMUNICATION IS KEY

To ensure the family day care experience is positive and enjoyable for all, open communication between families, educators and the Coordination Unit is strongly encouraged.

Families and educators will communicate daily about children's care and education. The Coordination Unit maintains communication with families via email, phone, text message, and via the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*.

Families can contact the Coordination Unit at any time if they wish to discuss their child's care and education, or any other matter with the Coordination Unit. All three Coordination Unit staff work part-time hours spread across the week. Please make sure to leave a message if your call is not answered immediately. A Coordination Unit staff member will return your call as soon as we can.



DAILY INFORMATION SHARING

Upon arrival each day, it is important for families to take a few minutes to share any relevant information with your educator. There may be little things that may affect your child during the day, and having this information will assist your educator to provide the best care for your child. For example, if your child has had an unsettled night or is upset because the family pet has died, this information should be discussed so the educator is aware of how your child may be feeling and adjust their interactions accordingly.

Although your educator recognises the importance of debriefing a parent/guardian about their child's day upon departure, it is important for parents to respect the educator's personal time at the end of the day and to limit this to a brief chat. Educators have other personal commitments, including their own families to attend to at this time.

If you need to share more detailed information, a time should be made that suits both you and your educator.

UP-TO-DATE DETAILS ARE IMPORTANT

It is essential that the educator and Coordination Unit have each family's up-to-date address, work, home and mobile telephone numbers, email address, and any other relevant information. This includes updated hours of care, intended holiday periods, new or updated court orders, and any other change of information or routine that may affect your child.

Families can communicate changes by completing a *Family Information Update* form.

FACEBOOK

Families are invited to like our public Facebook page **SGSC Family Day Care** <https://www.facebook.com/sqscfamilydaycare> .

The purpose of our Facebook page is to provide information to enrolled families and the Southern Grampians community, and to promote our family day care service, including our educators and the wonderful programs they provide.



HARMONY WEB PARENT PORTAL – NEWS TAB

To keep up to date with the latest family day care news and other important information, families are encouraged to click on the *News* tab after signing-in to the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*. All items will be displayed under the *News* tab, with a preview of the text. To view more, families can click on *Read More*.

SURVEYS

Our service has a commitment to provide quality services. Occasionally, families may be invited to complete a voluntary survey or provide feedback.

HOW WE SUPPORT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

SUPPORT AVAILABLE TO FAMILIES

The Coordination Unit supports families by monitoring their child's learning and developmental needs. Families can choose to provide consent for the Coordination Unit and their educator to have direct consultation with many other early childhood services such as Inclusion Support Officers, Maternal & Child Health nurses, Speech Pathologist etc.

Families can contact the Coordination Unit to request contact details for a wide range of family and children's services; local, regional and metropolitan.

FIELDWORKER AND EDUCATIONAL LEADER ROLE

The *Family Day Care Fieldworker* visits each educator regularly. During educator support visits, the Fieldworker monitors the educators, children, the overall care environments, and provides individualised support. Educator support visits are usually unannounced and are conducted at a minimum of every 4-6 weeks.

The *Family Day Care Fieldworker* is also our service's *Educational Leader*. ACEQCA describes the educational leader as having 'an influential role in promoting positive outcomes for children and families. Effective educational leadership builds the capacity of educators by inspiring, motivating, affirming, challenging and extending their practice and pedagogy. This joint endeavor involves inquiry and reflection, and supports ongoing learning and professional development.'

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/resources/educational-leadership> .

Both educators and families can request a planned educator support visit for any reason.

Families are welcome to contact the *Family Day Care Fieldworker/Educational Leader* to discuss aspects of their child's education and care as observed during educator support visits, or any concerns about their child's learning and development.

WHAT HAPPENS TO FAMILY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIALITY OF RECORDS

Keeping child and family records confidential is of the highest priority.

Regulation 181 and 182 of the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* states specifies the approved provider of an education and care service and a family day care educator:

'must ensure that information kept in a record under these Regulations is not divulged or communicated, directly or indirectly, to another person other than -
to the extent necessary for the education and care or medical treatment of the child to whom the information relates; or a parent of the child to whom the information relates, except in the case of information kept in a staff record; or the Regulatory Authority or an authorised officer; or as expressly authorised, permitted or required to be given by or under any Act or law; or with the written consent of the person who provided the information.'

Families can access further detailed information by reading the *Governance, Management and Confidentiality of Records* policy, which can be accessed by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*. Alternatively, parents/guardians can request a copy by contacting the Coordination Unit.

WHO HAS ACCESS TO FAMILY INFORMATION?

Your information can only be seen by the professionals who are involved in providing education and care to your child within our service. Your relevant details will be provided to your educator, and your contact details to the Southern Grampians Shire Council Accounts Receivable Department to enable invoicing of your care costs.

We release information about the children and families who attend our service only when written permission is granted, if required by law - such as when reporting session details via a third party software system, during a medical or other emergency, or when providing information to a government agency e.g. *Department of Education and Training* (DET).



FAMILY RIGHTS REGARDING PERSONAL INFORMATION

Families have a say in what happens to their personal information.

The information families provide is important because it assists us to provide the right care for each child, and ensures our service remains compliant.

Families have the right to decide what information they wish to share, and can choose to restrict access to their consumer record. Families should be aware this may affect our ability to provide the best possible service, and in some cases may restrict access to the service.

Families wishing to change or cancel their information or consent can contact the Coordination Unit at any time.

Families have a right to request access to their information and ask for it to be corrected if necessary. Please contact the Coordination Unit if you wish to do so, and they will explain the process involved.

Families can contact the Coordination Unit Office Staff on (03) 5551 8484 to discuss any other questions or concerns about what happens to their information while enrolled with our service. Alternatively, you families can email fdc@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au.



THE ENROLMENT PROCESS

GOVERNMENT PRIORITY OF ACCESS

To ensure services are reflecting the Australian Government's intention to assist families who are most in need and support the safety and wellbeing of children at risk in accordance with the *Framework for Protecting Australia's Children 2009-2020*, providers are asked to prioritize filling vacancies as follows:

- **Priority 1** - a child **at risk** of serious abuse or neglect.
- **Priority 2** - a child of a **sole parent** who satisfies, **or parents** who both satisfy, the activity test through paid employment.
- **Priority 3** - any other child.

Any child who gains a childcare place under Priority 3 may be asked to leave the service or to cut back days to allow a higher priority child to be placed. If this occurs, the family will be given a minimum of 2 weeks' notice.



PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

PARENTS

All parents have duties, powers, responsibilities and authority in relation to their children that can only be changed by a court order. The *Education and Care Services Act 2010* refers to these powers and responsibilities as 'parental responsibility'. It is not affected by the relationship between the parents, such as whether or not they have lived together or are married. A court order, such as under the *Family Law Act*, may take away the authority of a parent to do something, or may give it to another person.

GUARDIANS

A guardian, in relation to a child, means the legal guardian of the child also has parental responsibility. A legal guardian is given parental responsibility by a court order.

INFORMAL CARE ARRANGEMENT

In some circumstances, a child may be living with a guardian in an informal care arrangement without a court order. In these cases, the person/s the child is living with and who has the day-to-day care and control of the child is the guardian(s). This person is generally a member of the child's extended family such as grandparents, siblings, aunts and/or uncles.



COURT ORDERS

A court order varying parental responsibility can be made under the *Family Law Act 1975*, the *Children Youth and Families Act 2005* and the *Family Violence Protection Act 2008*.

A court order outlines the powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of a person in relation to a child. It may take away the authority of a parent to do something, or may give it to another person.

If there are any court orders in place relating to the powers, duties, responsibilities or authorities of any person(s) in relation to the child or access to the child, the parent/guardian must ensure they provide a copy of these upon enrolment.

The Coordination Unit and educators must be familiar with any court orders and abide by them as they relate to the provision of education and care of the child.

✓ FOUR IMPORTANT STEPS TO ENROL YOUR CHILD	
1.	<p>Primary Parent/Guardian 1 makes a claim for child care subsidy (CCS) with Services Australia (Centrelink).</p> <p>This can be completed via your Express Plus Centrelink app or by logging into your myGov account on the myGov website or app.</p>
2.	<p>Primary Parent/Guardian 1 and Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care agree on an 'arrangement of care of the child'.</p> <p>This includes submitting the <i>Compliant Written Agreement Enrolment</i> digital form, <i>Booked Hours</i> form, <i>Educator Schedule of Fees and Charges</i> digital form, and a current <i>Immunisation History Statement</i>.</p>
3.	<p>Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care submits an online 'Enrolment Notice' to Centrelink.</p>
4.	<p>Primary Parent/Guardian 1 confirms the enrolment with both Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care and Centrelink:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Primary Parent/Guardian 1 receives an email request from noreply@redbourne.com.au to confirm their enrolment with by clicking into the email and agreeing to the information provided. Primary Parent/Guardian 1 will receive a notification within their online myGov account to confirm the enrolment details submitted by Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care.

✓ ITEMS NEEDED TO COMPLETE ENROLMENT	
Child's <i>Immunisation History Statement</i>	Child's Medicare Number
Child's Customer Reference Number (CRN)	Parent Customer Reference Number (CRN)
Letter of Assessment for Child Care Subsidy (CCS) – <i>accessed within your myGov account</i>	Custody or Parenting Court Orders – <i>if applicable</i>
Your child's regular Doctor details	Contact information for Child Emergency Contacts
Asthma Action Plan – <i>if applicable</i>	Risk Minimisation Plan – Asthma – <i>if applicable</i>
Anaphylaxis Action Plan <i>if applicable</i>	Risk Minimisation Plan – Anaphylaxis - <i>if applicable</i>
Risk Minimisation Plan – Health Condition - <i>if applicable</i>	Additional Needs Information - <i>if applicable</i>
<i>Booked Hours</i> form	<i>Routine Outing Authorisation</i> form
<i>Educator Schedule of Fees and Charges</i> digital form	Email Address
<i>COVID Safe Agreement</i> digital form	Child <i>Birth Certificate</i>

ACCESSING THE ONLINE ENROLMENT FORM

Prior to commencement, families must complete the enrolment process. This consists of submitting a *Compliant Written Agreement Enrolment* form online, *Booked Hours* form, and digital *Schedule of Fees and Charges* form.

Once families have been notified of successful placement, **Parent/Guardian 1** will receive a welcome email containing a link to enrol via the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*.

When families click the email link, the form login page will load and families will be asked to enter their email address and access code before clicking **Next**.

The authentication on the online enrolment form ensures that the data is secure and can't be accessed by anyone other than the intended parent/guardian. Also for security reasons, the link that the parent/guardian uses to access the form will expire in 3 different scenarios:

1. After 14 days.
2. Whenever a new link is issued.
3. Too many incorrect login attempts.

Families should contact the Coordination Unit if their link expires, and another link will be issued. Any progress made should be remembered.

The online enrolment form asks for the personal details of **Parent/Guardian 1** (the 'individual' responsible for the care of the child'), the child being enrolled and their siblings, the child's other parent (if applicable), **Parent/Guardian 1's** partner (if applicable), and the name and contact details of Authorised Contact people listed.

Examples of information families will be asked to share when completing the enrolment form includes:

- Age, place and date of birth, immunisation status, allergies, medical needs, CRN, and living arrangements of the enrolled child
- Place and date of birth, contact details, CRN, workplace details of **Parent/Guardian 1**, and any other Parent/Guardian's listed in the enrolment form.

The information collected assists the service to determine how best to meet each child's needs, and all other information is collected due to legal requirements and government regulations.

IMPORTANT

The parent/guardian who is listed as the **Parent/Guardian 1 on the enrolment form must be the same person who is claiming the Child Care Subsidy payments through Centrelink.**

Parent/Guardian 1 must also be the person who signs the *Compliant Written Enrolment* form, the *Booked Hours* form and the *Educator Schedule of Fees and Charges* form.

IMMUNISATION HISTORY STATEMENT

Under the Australian and Victorian government's 'No Jab, No Play' and 'No Jab, No Pay' legislation, it is a requirement that all children attending a childcare service must be fully immunised.

To have an enrolment confirmed for a child in family day care, parents/guardians **must** provide:

- a **current** *Immunisation History Statement* from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR)

AND

- the statement must show that the child is **up to date with all vaccinations** that are due for their age, or that they are able to receive.

The *Immunisation History Statement* from the AIR lists vaccines your child has received and, if applicable, which vaccines are due in the future and when. Where applicable, medical exemptions may also be listed.

An *Immunisation History Statement* from the AIR is the only type of immunisation record accepted by early childhood education and care services for the purposes of confirming enrolment, and must be provided within the two months prior to the child starting at the service.

The Medicare logo and Australian Government crest must be present and identifiable to be considered a valid *Immunisation History Statement*. For example, if the statement is page two of a letter from Medicare, both pages need to be presented to the service to confirm enrolment.

You can obtain a copy of your child's *Immunisation History Statement* anytime by accessing your online myGov or Express Plus Medicare account, visiting the Medicare office, or by phoning the Australian Childhood Immunisation Register on 1800 653 809.

Please inform the Coordination Unit staff if your child is not immunised or up to date with their immunisations. They will assist you to assess your eligibility to meet the medical exemption or the grace period criteria.

Under the 'No Jab, No Play' legislation, parents/guardians are obligated to provide the current *Immunisation History Statement* **each time** your child's immunisations are updated.

For further information, families can visit the Better Health website:

<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/campaigns/no-jab-no-play>

CHILD CARE SUBSIDY AND CUSTOMER REFERENCE NUMBERS

The customer reference number (CRN) for **Parent/Guardian 1** and the child must be provided upon enrolment. The Family Assistance Office (FAO) allocates these, unless you will not be claiming child care subsidy (CCS). Each CRN uniquely identifies each family and child, allowing reconciliation of a child's usage of care.

Each family's combined family income, the activity level of both parents/guardians, and the type of early childhood education and care service determine the level of child care subsidy your family will receive. The current hourly rate cap for family day care is **\$11.80** per hour per child.

It is the family's responsibility to apply for child care subsidy prior to commencement, otherwise full fees will be charged. Families can apply by accessing their Centrelink online account through the myGov website.

An estimate of what family's may be entitled to can be accessed by entering their details into the online Service's Australia *Fee Estimator* located at:

https://www.centrelink.gov.au/custsite_pfe/pytmfinderest/paymentFinderEstimatorPage.jsf?wec-appid=pytmfinderest&wec-locale=en_US#stay .

BOOKED HOURS FORM

Upon enrolment, your educator will give you a **Booked Hours** form, which **Parent/Guardian 1** will be asked to agree to and sign **prior to the commencement of care** and **prior to any changes in care arrangements**.

The hours on this form are an agreement between **Parent/Guardian 1** (Responsible Parent) and the educator about the hours you will be charged for, **regardless to whether you use the hours stated**.

Please note that additional charges will apply if you use outside of the hours agreed to on the *Booked Hours* form.



ENROLMENT CONFIRMATION EMAIL



Once you have submitted the *Compliant Written Arrangement Enrolment* form online form, signed *Booked Hours* form, digital *Schedule of Fees and Charges* form, and any other relevant documents, the Coordination Unit will send **Parent/Guardian 1** an *Enrolment Confirmation* email via noreply@redbourne.com.au (our 3rd party software provider).

When you receive this email, you will be asked to either 'confirm' or 'decline' the stated details of enrolment with your educator.

If you believe the details are not correct, you must decline the enrolment and state a reason. The Coordination Unit will receive a notification and will review the enrolment.

Once the enrolment has been updated, the Coordination Unit will re-send the enrolment confirmation email for **Parent Guardian 1** to accept if correct.

CONFIRMING THE ENROLMENT WITHIN myGOV

Once you have confirmed your child's enrolment, you will need to access your online myGov account where there will be a notification asking **Parent/Guardian 1** to confirm the submitted enrolment details.

Please note – if this action has not been completed within your online myGov account, you will not receive child care subsidy payments and Parent/Guardian 1 will be invoiced for the full amount owing for all education and care services used.

ALTERNATE CARE ARRANGEMENTS



Changes to educator's situation and circumstances may change at any time. Although educators do their best to avoid disruptions to care, families may occasionally need access to alternative care options. If needed, families are encouraged to contact the Coordination Unit who will endeavor to provide the option of another educator if possible.

Families are strongly encouraged to consider other possible alternative options to ensure they are prepared for these unavoidable situations, because there are usually limited vacancies available with other educators.

VISITING AN EDUCATOR FOR THE FIRST TIME

FIRST VISIT CHECKLIST

The first visit to a potential educator can be a daunting experience. This list has been compiled to assist you to ensure that all necessary areas have been discussed with your potential educator.

We encourage families to note down any questions they may want to ask and discuss with the educator during the visit. Educators will be keen to know about your child's needs, and will want to inform families about their education and care service.

Families are welcome to organise a second visit or to contact the educator with a follow-up phone call to have further discussions with them before making a decision to enroll.

Families should notify the Coordination Unit within **1-2 business days** with their decision of whether or not they wish to enroll.

CHECKLIST

- Viewed all areas of the home/venue & outdoor environment used for family day care.
- Discussed days/hours the educator works and days/hours you require.
- Discussed educator's philosophy, experience and professional development aims.
- Discussed educator's family make up i.e. other family members at home (not applicable for a FDC in-venue service).
- Looked at educator's resume and/or portfolio (if applicable).
- Discussed and observed the educator's program/experiences offered.
- Discussed daily commitments of the educator (if applicable).
- Discussed your child's routines, eating & sleeping patterns, health and toileting.
- Discussed behaviour management strategies you use at home and strategies the educator will use.
- Discussed your child's likes & dislikes & experiences enjoyed.
- Discussed any special requirements that your child may have. e.g. asthma, allergies.
- Discussed any comfort items your child may have e.g. special toy or blanket.
- Discussed fees and charges.

To ask questions before or after the visit, families can contact the Coordination Unit on (03)5551 8484 or email fdc@sthgrampians.vi.gov.au.

SETTLING YOUR CHILD INTO CARE



It is important to take the time to implement an orientation/settling in process to ensure the rest of the family day care experience is a happy, positive experience for children and families. Educators have a great deal of experience assisting children to settle into care and the following are some ideas about how to help this process.

It's essential for children to attend when visiting the educator for the first time so they can meet the educator and the other children in care. It helps to visit on the same day as the family intends to enroll for so they can meet the children who will be in care with your child.

If possible, arrange an orientation/settling-in period with the educator, beginning with a few hours of care and building up to the required time. Remember that every child is different and will settle into care differently. Siblings will not necessarily react or behave in the same way. Be guided by your child and the educator.

Share as much information about your child as possible so that the educator can use this knowledge to assist your child to settle in. For example, if your child dislikes getting her hands dirty, the educator would use this knowledge to better understand if your child does not show interest in playing with play dough or sand.

Talk to your child about family day care to give them an idea of what it involves. For example, that they will be going to another home where there will be a nice person to care for them and other children to play with. Make it sound like a positive and fun experience (which it is!).

When leaving your child in care, please make sure to tell them that you are going. As tempting as it sounds, you should never try to slip away unnoticed as this will cause a great deal more upset once the child suddenly realises you have 'disappeared'.

Remember, one of a child's greatest fears is for their parent/guardian to leave and not return. Be sure to reassure your child that you will be coming back to collect them. It is important to tell them what time you will be coming back and try to make sure that you are not late, especially during the initial settling in period.

If your child becomes upset, crying and clinging to you, offer reassurance, tell them you will be back, give a kiss & cuddle and then leave. Try not to hover or leave and then come back, as this will only cause more upset. Your educator will be more than happy for you to phone them once you get to work or wherever you are going to check how your child is going. Many children will cry and become upset when their parent/guardian leaves, but once out of sight, they usually settle and are happy to play and join in.

Your child may like to take a special item with them that will provide a feeling of security, such as a teddy or blanket. If they do, you must make sure this item is not forgotten because your child may become very upset if they look in their bag for the security item and it is not there!

Families must be aware that what occurs at home cannot always occur at family day care. Your Educator will have up to three other pre-school children to care for, and there are regulations, policies and procedures your educator must comply with.

Consider the routines you have at home and whether they will be appropriate for a family day care environment.

DISCUSSIONS WITH YOUR CHILD

It is important to prepare your child for commencing family day care. The better prepared your child is, the easier the settling-in period will be.

- Discuss family day care with your child at home in an encouraging and positive manner.
- Talk about the fun experiences your child will have and meeting new friends.
- Have discussions about the educator and the other children so they become 'known' to your child.
- Tell your child there will only be a small group of children and they will have lots of opportunities to spend time with the educator.



INSURANCE

Each educator has public liability insurance coverage. However, as a safeguard, we advise all families to have an accident insurance policy similar to that of school insurance as well as medical and ambulance cover.

PLACEMENTS FOR BABIES

Due to frequent changes in routines, educators need additional information when a baby is in their care. For example:

- Feeding method e.g. breast-fed or bottle-fed.
- How parents/guardians place baby into the cot to sleep.
- If baby is accustomed to sleeping in a dark or light room for sleep.
- If music, a dummy, special blanket, or any other comforter is used for sleep and/or comfort when awake.
- Baby's usual sleep pattern e.g. how often and how long.
- Is baby used to being taken for walks in the pram.
- How parents/guardians usually comfort baby.

Providing consistency between home and family day care assists children to remain content and comfortable. It's important for parents/guardians to discuss their child's usual routine and preferences with the educator prior to commencing care and whenever changes occur.

There may be practices that occur at home that will be unable to be implemented by educators.

Examples of practices that will be unable to occur at family day care include:

- Placing baby to bed with a bottle.
- Carrying baby for the majority of the day.
- Any type of physical restraint of a baby.

Parents/guardians must ensure their breast-fed baby can drink from a bottle prior to commencing care. Even when mothers plan to visit through the day to feed their baby, there may be an unforeseeable circumstance when this cannot occur and educators will have to feed baby instead.

It's best if baby is already comfortable drinking milk from a bottle prior to commencement of care if parents/guardians intend to provide the educator with expressed milk in bottles for the day.



WHAT TO BRING TO FAMILY DAY CARE

CLOTHING

Parents/guardians must provide:

- Adequate clothing for the day to allow for at least one change, including socks and shoes. More changes are needed for children who are toilet training.
- Adequate footwear e.g. gumboots and slippers for winter, sandals and sneakers for summer.
- A sun-smart hat (legionnaire, wide-brimmed or bucket).
- Clothing that offers protection from the sun.
- Sunscreen.
- Sunglasses are suggested during summer.
- Warm clothing such as, coats, hats & gumboots for cold/wet weather.
- Waterproof pants or overalls are recommended for outside play.

Educators will respect the dress practices of diverse cultures, unless doing so creates a conflict to the well-being and safety of the child. For example, if a child is dressed in warm clothing on an extremely hot day then this would not be in the best interests of the child. In this case, all parties are expected to enter discussion with the aim of reaching a compromise in the best interests of the child.

NAPPIES

Parents/guardians must supply adequate nappies, pre-moistened nappy wipes and nappy-change cream (if applicable) for the day.

It is also important to provide plastic nappy covers (where applicable), bibs and several changes of clothing for very young children.

Before educators can use nappy-change cream, parents/guardians must provide written authorisation by completing a *Medication Record - Authorisation to Administer Medication* form.



SLEEP AND REST

Opportunities for sleep and rest periods will be provided for all children in care. Although not always possible, educators will endeavor to mirror children's home sleep routines when attending family day care. To ensure consistency, families are encouraged to discuss any changes in their child's sleep routines with their educator.

Educators will ensure children are dressed appropriately when going to sleep – removing the top layer of clothing and shoes unless the child wishes to remain fully clothed. No hoodies or hats are to be worn.

Some children need to bring a comforter from home. This may be a teddy bear, favourite blanket, or another item they find special. Families must ensure educators are aware of the comforter item, including the familiar name of the comforter. Families will help avoid unnecessary distress and create a more settled sleep environment for their child by remembering to bring their comforter to each session. For babies aged under 7 months old, *Red Nose* advises that no soft toys and other objects should be placed in the cot.

BATHING

No child should arrive for care unchanged or unwashed from the night before. Daily bathing of children is the parent/guardian's responsibility, except for during overnight care and emergency situations.

ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

At first, some children may fret when parents/guardians leave, however educators are professional, resourceful and caring people who will do their utmost to help settle each child into family day care.

It is essential for children to be taken into the educator's home/venue and are received by their educator before parents/guardians sign the child in, says goodbye and departs. It is **never** acceptable to drop a child in the street or driveway and for them to find their own way to the door, or to hand over a child to another member of the educator's family who answers the door.

A child must never be left at family day care without acknowledgement from their parent/guardian of their departure.

Children must be collected by a parent/guardian or authorised contact, as listed within their enrolment form. No child may depart with another person without the written consent of the responsible parent prior to the time of collection.

During **emergency situations only**, where all of the above-mentioned contacts are unavailable, parents/guardians may contact the educator to provide authorisation for the child to be collected by another responsible adult. The name, address, telephone number and the name of the adult collecting the child must be provided. The person collecting the child will be asked to provide this information and will be asked to present their driver's license before allowing the person to enter the family day care home or approved venue.

We urge families to please be punctual when collecting children at the end of the session. Communication between families and educators is strongly encouraged and this is a good time to provide verbal updates about children's progress and to share other relevant information. However, if a more in-depth conversation is needed, families can make an appointment to meet with educators at another mutually convenient time.

During arrival and departure times, families must remember to sign their child in and out via *Harmony Web*, using the educator's device. Attendance records are a legal requirement, and must be completed accurately.

SUN PROTECTION POLICY

Our service is accredited under the Sun Smart early childhood program, which is conducted by the Cancer Council Victoria and Victoria Health.

Our *Sun Protection* policy requires parents/guardians to provide an appropriate hat (legionnaire, wide-brimmed or bucket), protective clothing and sunscreen for you child. Appropriate sunglasses are also encouraged as current research is showing our children's eyes are now more exposed to sun damage than in the past.

Families can refer to our *Sun Protection* policy, which can be accessed via the *Harmony Parent Portal*. Alternatively, the Coordination Unit can provide a copy upon request. If further information about sun protection is needed, families can ask their educator or contact the Coordination Unit.

NO SMOKING

To protect the health of educators, children, and parents/guardians, there will be no smoking while family day care children or families are in attendance.

Family day care children and families will not be subjected to anyone smoking in the educator's home/venue, vehicle, during excursions/outings, including during visits to and from educator's friends and family etc. This applies to all educators, educator family members, parents/guardians and any other visitor to the family day care home or approved venue.

EXCURSIONS AND OUTINGS

Educators are encouraged to take children on outings to the local park, playgrounds, visits to the library etc.

Educators conduct a comprehensive transport-specific risk assessment when children are transported via vehicle as part of an excursion or outing. Appropriate car restraints and seat belts must be used at all times when travelling in a vehicle, and children must be properly restrained according to state government regulations.

Parent/Guardian written authorisation must be obtained from parents before children are permitted to go on any outing. Outing authorisations for routine outings remain current for 12 months. Educators must obtain new parent/guardian authorisation before each non-routine outing.

Educators also undertake a comprehensive risk assessment for all outings, which parent/guardians are encouraged to view prior to signing any outing authorisation forms.

PETS AND ANIMALS

The *National Quality Standards* encourages educators to understand and appreciate the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land. Pets help children from a young age learn to care for other living things. They can teach a sense of responsibility, caring and tolerance. They can offer many opportunities for developing observational skills and provide basic natural science experiences. If educators wish to have a pet at the family day care service, they must make all decisions in consultation with the Coordination Unit and family day care families.

While there are many benefits to providing children with access to animals and keeping pets in family day care, there are matters to consider for the safety and wellbeing of both the children and the animals concerned, prior to choosing a pet or having an animal visit the service. A risk assessment must be conducted when deciding the type of animal and the way the children will engage with it.

Animals will be kept clean and regularly wormed. Every farm animal (horse, sheep, goat, cow etc.) and dogs or other potentially dangerous animals will be made inaccessible to all young children.

To avoid potential injury or harm to the child or animal, children will always be directly supervised when they have contact with animals.

Due to the high-risk factor and in acknowledgement of the interests of the animal, all dogs must be inaccessible to children at all times, with exception to a registered Guide Dog. A full risk assessment must be completed and approved by the Coordination Unit prior to a Guide Dog having access to the family day care area.

For more detailed information, families can read the *Animal* policy, which can be accessed by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*. Alternatively, a copy can be provided upon request by contacting the Coordination Unit.



GUIDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOUR

Educators understand the importance of building positive, respectful, secure, reciprocal relationships with the children in their care.

Educators will endeavor to develop collaborative relationships with all families. Maintaining consistent two-way communication with parents/guardians assists educators to develop a broader understanding of each child's level of developmental within the context of their unique home and cultural environment.



Educators will consult with parents/guardians regarding any challenging behaviour within a reasonable timeframe.

Information exchanged between educators and families may include:

- Behaviour guidance strategies implemented at home.
- Parent/guardian feelings about their child's behavior.
- Recent events that may be influencing the child's behavior.

Educators aim to promote each child's positive self-concept by using behaviour guidance strategies that help develop confidence, resilience and self-awareness. Chosen behaviour guidance strategies will be constructive, age-appropriate, and culturally sensitive.

When inappropriate behaviour is about to occur or is occurring, educators will generally redirect the child towards another activity or play space and actively seek out the underlying cause of the behaviour.

If a child displays inappropriate behavior consistently, educators will:

- Make sure the expectations of the child's behaviour are realistic and appropriate to their age and developmental level, including their current strengths and capabilities.
- Ensure the child understands the limits and expectations.
- Discuss the behaviour with the child's parent or guardian to ensure expectations and adult responses to the child's behaviour remain as consistent as possible between home and Family Day Care.
- Make sure the child's needs are being met.
- Reflect on the pedagogical decisions to ensure the situation or the environment are not contributing to or creating a problem for the child. For example, the educator may reflect on the Family Day Care routines, transitions, play spaces, activities provided, grouping of children, noise levels and lighting of the room.

- Ensure the same behaviour is responded to in a consistent manner.
- Reflect on their own mood and energy levels and how this may have an impact on the child's behaviour.
- Provide positive behaviour models for the children and activities for the children in an environment that enhances the learning of acceptable behaviour.

Educators will never use:

- Any form of corporal punishment.
- Any action which includes psychological abuse.
- Frightening methods of control and discipline.
- Behaviour guidance strategies associated with food (includes force feeding or refused food), rest, toilet training or isolation.

Families are encouraged to read the *Interactions with Children, Families and Staff* policy, which can be accessed by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*. Alternatively, a copy can be provided upon request.

KINDERGARTEN ATTENDANCE

Attending kindergarten is a valuable part of every young child's life. Although many educators are unable to drop-off or collect kindergarten children, they will attempt to support families with alternative arrangements. For example, many families arrange for friends or relatives to drive their child between kindergarten and family day care.

Families can ask educators about their ability to conduct kindergarten drop-offs and collections. Additional travel fees may apply. These are outlined on the *Educator Schedule of Fees and Charges* form.



HEALTH, SAFETY AND NUTRITION

INCIDENT, INJURY, TRAUMA OR ILLNESS OF CHILD IN CARE

Educators cannot care for sick children. Parents/guardians will be asked to collect their child from care if they become unwell during the day.

If a situation is extremely urgent, educators will seek medical attention immediately by calling an ambulance. **It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to pay any ambulance and medical charges.**

In the event of any emergency, the educator will notify the Coordination Unit and parents/guardians (or authorised contact if the parent/guardian is unavailable) as soon as possible. If needed and safe to do so, Coordination Unit staff will attend the educator's home or approved venue to assist.

An *Incident, Injury, Trauma and Illness Record* must be completed and signed by both the educator and parent/guardian. This form is then filed at the Coordination Unit and a copy provided to the educator. Upon request, parents/guardians can be provided a copy also.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) will be notified in the event of a serious incident. For example, an injury, incident, trauma or illness involving hospitalisation, or the need to seek a medical practitioner or dentist.



ACCIDENT OR ILLNESS OF EDUCATOR

If an educator is injured or becomes ill, all parents/guardians will be notified. If alternate care is needed, the Coordination Unit will endeavour to provide options for alternate care with another family day care educator, if possible.

Please be aware this is not often possible due to other educators having their full ratio of children in care, but we will try our best to find alternate care.

IF YOUR CHILD IS INFECTIOUS OR ILL

Children are not permitted to attend family day care if they are infectious or otherwise unwell because this may jeopardise the health of the educator, the educator's family, the other family day care children and families.

Families should contact their educator or the Coordination Unit if they are uncertain about bringing their child into care. In certain circumstances, a medical certificate may be requested before a previously ill child can return to care.

If a child has contracted an infectious disease, families must notify the educator and the Coordination Unit immediately. Educators are guided by the Health Department's *Minimum Exclusion Periods From Primary Schools and Children Services For Infectious Diseases Cases and Contacts*, which can be viewed by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal* or provided upon request by contacting the Coordination Unit.

Children may be excluded from care until a medical certificate or other acceptable form of evidence of recovery from infection has been provided.



CORONAVIRUS

Our service is committed to minimising the spread of COVID-19, and continues to review and implement precautionary measures and guidelines as recommended by the *Australian Government Department of Health and Department of Education and Training*.

Ensuring the health, safety and well-being of our children, families and educators is paramount. It is important to ensure everyone complies with all physical distancing, facemask, hand hygiene, QR check-in, mandatory COVID-19 vaccination, reporting, isolation and quarantine requirements, as outlined in our COVID Safe Plan.

We provide new families a copy of our COVID Safe Plan upon enrolment. We endeavour to update our COVID Safe Plan regularly, and families can access the most recent version by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*, and searching under the *My Service* tab. Alternatively, a copy can be provided upon request.

There will be sanitizer and hand washing facilities readily available at the service, and we encourage all adults and children to use these facilities as soon as they arrive, and prior to leaving the service.

Families must their child home if they are unwell or potentially unwell, including if they are displaying any of the symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Family members and children with temperatures 37.5 degrees and above will not be permitted to enter the service. Any child who seems unwell or who develops a temperature above 37.5 degrees during a session of care will be sent home. Please **do not** give your child Panadol, Nurofen or any other temperature reducing medication prior to attending care.

Any person (educator, staff member, child, parent/guardian, student, visitor or contractor) who is displaying COVID-19 symptoms **will not be permitted to attend the service under any circumstance.**

Any person (educator, staff member, child, parent/guardian, student, visitor or contractor) who is **confirmed** to have COVID-19, they must notify the Coordination Unit and their educator immediately, follow the current guidelines as directed by the *Department of Health, Department of Education and Training*, and as stipulated within our service's current COVID Safe Plan. A confirmed case of COVID-19 **must not** return onsite to the service until they have completed the quarantine period and have **zero symptoms**.

If your child is displaying any of the symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19), however mild, they must get tested. Seek advice from a healthcare professional who can advise on next steps. You can phone the coronavirus (COVID-19) hotline on **1800 675 398** for help and advice.

The mental health and wellbeing of educators, staff, children and parents/guardians is important. The following resources are available as support through this challenging time:

- [Mental health resources - COVID-19](#)
- [Beyond Blue](#)
- [Headspace](#)

- [Black Dog Institute](#)

Each family is asked to complete and sign our digital *COVID Safe Agreement* form upon enrolment and we ask families to update this agreement annually. Our digital COVID Safe Agreement form can be accessed here:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/SouthernGrampiansShireCouncil/COVIDSafeAgreement>

ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION

The *Medications Management* policy ensures that all family day care children are administered medication safely and appropriately for their age with signed parent/guardian permission, and with medical authorisation.

An educator or staff member must not give a child medication unless:

- The parent/guardian has given their consent in writing by completing an *Authorisation to Administer Medication* form.
- The medication is part of a *Medical Management Plan* for treatment of chronic illnesses approved by the child's doctor.
- In an emergency / life-threatening situation such as anaphylaxis or asthma requiring administration of medication.

All medication provided by parents/guardians must be:

- In the original packaging and have a current expiry date.
- In the case of prescription medication, given only to the child for which it was prescribed.
- In the case of non-prescription medication, appropriate for the age and condition of the child.
- Correctly labelled with the child's name, dose to be given, and instructions for storing and use.

An *Authorisation to Administer Medication* form must be accurately completed, **signed and dated** by the child's parent/guardian or other authorised contact person as indicated on the child's enrolment form **before** the educator administers medication to the child. The only exception to this requirement is in the case of a child experiencing an anaphylaxis or asthma emergency.

Upon collection of their child, the parent/guardian must also sign the *Authorisation to Administer Medication* form to acknowledge that the medication has or has not been administered.

Families can view the *Medications Management* policy by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*. Alternatively, a copy can be provided upon request.

NUTRITION

We encourage families to provide healthy food for their child. The *Nutrition* policy stipulates that no lollies, soft drinks or nuts be brought into care. Attending family day care burns up a lot of energy, and most children tend to eat more than usual when in care. Educators will monitor each child's food intake, and will inform families if more food is required next time their child is in care. There may be an additional cost when an educator has to provide a snack or meal to a child.

Families are encouraged to read the *Nutrition* policy, which outlines the expectations regarding the provision of meals and snacks. Families can view the *Nutrition* policy by logging onto the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*. Alternatively, families can talk to their educator or contact the Coordination Unit to request a copy.

Families can also ask their educator or Coordination Unit staff for further information about nutrition or to discuss ideas for types of food to pack in their child's lunchbox.



NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK, REGULATIONS & APPROVED LEARNING FRAMEWORKS

EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS 2011

All family day care services must comply with the *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011*.

The *Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011* can be viewed online here:

www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653

NATIONAL QUALITY FRAMEWORK

The *National Quality Framework* (NQF) provides a national approach to regulation, assessment and quality improvement for early childhood education and care and outside school hours care services across Australia. The *National Quality Framework* introduced a new quality standard in 2012 to improve education and care across long day care, family day care, preschool/kindergarten, and outside school hours care services. Changes to the National Quality Framework commenced in 2017 to ensure quality education and care in Australia continues to improve in the most efficient and effective way.

The *National Quality Framework* includes:

- National Law and Regulations
- National Quality Standard
- Assessment and Quality Rating Process
- Approved National Learning Frameworks

We have continual improvement processes in place to ensure our practices and procedures are being reviewed, enhanced and evaluated. Our service has a *Quality Improvement Plan* (QIP) in place. The *Quality Improvement Plan* is a component of the assessment and rating process, in addition to the Coordination Unit and selected educators being visited and assessed by an Authorised Assessment Officer from the *Department of Education and Training* (DET). Our service may also receive random compliance visits by an Authorised Assessment Officer at any time, which involves the Authorised Officer visiting both the Coordination Unit and selected educators.

Families can request a copy of the *Quality Improvement Plan* by contacting the Coordination Unit. Currently, our service has been assessed as *Working Towards* the National Quality Standards.



AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION & CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY (ACECQA)

The *Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority* (ACECQA - pronounced *a-see-kwa*) is an independent national authority that assists governments to administer the *National Quality Framework* for children's education and care.

ACECQA works with the Australian and state and territory governments to:

- Implement changes that benefit children birth to 13 years of age and their families.
- Monitor and promote the consistent application of the Education and Care Services National Law across all states and territories.
- Support the children's education and care sector to improve quality outcomes for children.

ACECQA is an independent national authority based in Sydney. It is guided by a governing Board whose members are nominated by each state, territory and the Commonwealth. The Board is accountable to the Education Council.

Further information, including the National Law and the National Education and Care Regulations can be accessed on the ACEQA website www.acecqa.gov.au



APPROVED LEARNING FRAMEWORKS

Educators closely observe each child in care and use these observations to document and plan individual learning outcomes for each child in accordance to one of the three approved learning frameworks:

- 'Being, Belonging, Becoming' *Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)*, - 0-5 years
- *Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (VEYLDF)* – 0-8 years
- *My Time Our Place (MTOPI)* – School age children

The educational program will focus on addressing the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child, while considering individual differences.

Families can access the approved learning frameworks online here:

<https://www.acecqa.gov.au/nqf/national-law-regulations/approved-learning-frameworks>



COMPLIANCE WITH FAMILY ASSISTANCE LAW

As the Approved Provider, Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care service has responsibility for all operations, including fees, to ensure compliance with the Family Assistance Law. The *Payment of Fees* policy can be accessed via the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*, under the *My Service* tab. Alternatively, a copy can be provided upon request.

Educators will discuss their fees with families during the initial interview, and families will be provided with a copy of the *Educator Schedule of Fees and Charges* form upon enrolment.



CHILD CARE SUBSIDY

The child care subsidy (CSS) is an Australian Government payment which assists families with the cost of childcare. Child care subsidy is paid directly to early childhood Approved Providers and passed onto families as fee reductions.

According to the Department of Education, families must meet certain eligibility criteria to get child care subsidy.

Parents/Guardians must:

- care for their child at least two nights per fortnight, have 14% share of care, or receive Family Tax Benefit for their child
- make a co-contribution to their child care fees at an approved child care service
- meet residency requirements

Their child must:

- meet immunisation requirements
- not be attending secondary school (unless an exemption applies)
- be 13 or under (except in certain circumstances).

IMPORTANT:

From 11 July 2022, children who haven't attended a session of care in 26 consecutive weeks will no longer be eligible for child care subsidy, and will have to reapply if they wish to resume care with a service.

The level of child care subsidy a family receives depends on their circumstances:

1. Combined family income.

When a family has a combined income that equals \$72,466 per year or less, they will receive child care subsidy for 85% of the total fees and levies charged or up to the relevant hourly rate cap, whichever is lower. The hourly rate cap for family day care is currently \$11.80 per hour per child. Any fees and levies charged that fall above this cap will be charged at full fee.

When a family reaches a combined income between \$72,466 to below \$177,466 per year, the subsidy decreases to 50%, gradually tapering down 1% for each \$3,000 the family earns.

Follow this link to view all calculations:

<https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-much-you-can-get/your-income-can-affect-it>

2. Number of children in care.

When a family has more than one child aged 5 years or under in care, they will get a higher subsidy for their second child and any other younger children.

They will get an extra 30% on top of their income tested rate for eligible children, up to a maximum of 95%.

Follow this link to learn more about the

<https://www.dese.gov.au/child-care-package/child-care-subsidy/family-eligibility-and-entitlement/higher-ccs>

3. Activity level.

The Activity test relates to the activities the individual or their partner undertake each fortnight. Exemptions may apply. The type of activities may include paid work, study, training courses to improve work skills or employment prospects, voluntary work, unpaid work experience or internships, unpaid work in a family business owned by an immediate family member, actively looking for work, and actively setting up a business which is not yet operating.

The number of hours of subsidised care a family receives is determined by the person with the lowest number of hours per activity per fortnight. To receive 36 hours of Child Care Subsidy, you will need to participate in 8-16 hours of activity per fortnight. If you participate in between 16-48 hours per fortnight you will receive 72 subsidised hours. If you participate in 48 hours or more of activity per fortnight, you will receive 100 hours of subsidised care.

Exemptions apply for parents who cannot meet activity test requirements.

3. The type of approved childcare service used.

The hourly rate cap which the child care subsidy applies to will depend on the type of service you choose to enrol. The **2022-2023** hourly rate cap for family day care is \$11.80 per hour per child.

To receive the Child Care Subsidy payment, the *Child Care Subsidy Assessment* must be completed. Families can complete the assessment through their Centrelink online account via the *Express Plus Centrelink* app, or by logging onto their myGov account on the myGov website or app.

A guide to completing the Child Care Subsidy Assessment can be accessed at www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/child-care-subsidy/how-claim .

An estimate of what your family may be entitled to can be accessed by entering your details into the online Human Services Fee Estimator located at: https://www.centrelink.gov.au/custsite_pfe/pymtfinderest/paymentFinderEstimatorPage.jsf?wec-appid=pymtfinderest&wec-locale=en_US#stay

Remember, families are responsible for applying for Child Care Subsidy prior to commencement, otherwise full fees will be charged.

RANGE OF FEES

Each educator charges individual fees, as approved by the Team Leader of Children's Services. As part of the enrolment process, **Primary Parent/Guardian 1 must** agree to and sign the digital *Educator Schedule of Fees and Charges* form.

Educators have the opportunity to increase their fees at the beginning of each financial year period. Prior to each new financial year period, **Parent/Guardian 1** must agree to and sign an updated version of their educator's *Educator Schedule of Fees and Charges* form, which will outline any changes to your educator's fees.

The educator range of fees for the **2022-2023** period are outlined below.

EDUCATOR MINIMUM AND MAXIMUM FEES 2022-2023

FEE (PER HOUR)	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Booked Standard Hours (8am-6pm)	\$9.20	\$10.00
Non-Standard Hours (6pm-8am)	\$9.50	\$15.00
Casual Standard Hours (8am-6pm)	\$10.00	\$11.00
Casual Non-Standard Hours (6pm-8am)	\$10.00	\$15.00
Saturday Hours (conditions apply)	\$12.00	\$15.00
Sunday Hours (conditions apply)	\$15.00	\$16.00
Public Holidays	\$10.00	\$15.00

ADMINISTRATION LEVY 2022-2023

Administration Levy (per hour per child)	\$1.55
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MISCELLANEOUS FEES 2022-2023

ITEM	MINIMUM	MAXIMUM
Snack (per serve)	\$1.50	\$5.00
Breakfast (per serve)	\$2.00	\$5.00
Lunch (per serve)	\$3.00	\$8.00
Dinner (per serve)	\$4.00	\$9.00
Nappies (each)	\$0.50	\$2.00
Travel (per kilometre)	\$1.00	\$2.00

ABSENCE FEES 2022-2023

An **Absence Fee of 85% of the normal Booked Fee** is applicable when a child does not attend their normal booked day, or when a family has booked an extra casual day in advance and their child is unable to attend.

MINIMUM FEE

The minimum fee charged per day is one hour.

ADMINISTRATION LEVY

Besides educator fees and charges, families are charged an *Administration Levy* of **\$1.55** per hour per child. The levy applies to the first two children in a family only. There will be no levy applied for any subsequent children.

In addition to the processing of timesheets and administration, the *Administration Levy* contributes a small percentage of the total costs incurred by council to ensure all regulatory requirements are met. This includes costs associated to the day-to-day operation of the service, maintenance of licenses, insurances, software, and the employment of qualified staff who ensure our service remains compliant.

Any increases to the *Administration Levy* will be communicated to families prior to each new financial year period.

ABSENCES



Families will be charged an absence fee of **85% of their usual routine booked fee** when a child does not attend their routine booked session or any additional booked casual day. The child care subsidy (CCS) applies to 52 allowable absence days per financial year.

Some families may be eligible for additional absence days for reasons as defined in the Family Assistance Law.

EXAMPLES OF REASONS FOR ADDITIONAL ABSENCE DAYS

1. Illness. Families may be eligible for additional absence days if they use 31 or more of the initial absence days due to illness. Families are encouraged to visit a medical practitioner to obtain a medical certificate when their child is ill.
2. A child lives with a person who is ill.
3. A child is attending pre-school.
4. Alternative arrangements have been made on a pupil-free day.
5. A child has not been immunised against a particular infectious disease, the absence occurs during an immunisation grace period and a medical practitioner has certified that exposure to the infectious disease would pose a health risk to the child.
6. A child is spending time with a person other than their usual parent/guardian due to a court order or a parenting plan.
7. The service is closed due to a period of local emergency.
8. A child is unable to travel to the service during a period of local emergency (up to 24 days afterwards).
9. The parent/guardian cares for a child has decided the child should not attend the service for up to 7 days immediately following the end of a period of local emergency.

EXTENSIVE PERIODS OF ABSENCE

If a child is absent for a period of 26 weeks or more, the enrolment will automatically end. Even when an absence of more than 14 week is planned, a new enrolment notice must be submitted by the service once the child recommences after the absence. If a child is absent for more than 6 weeks due to being overseas, the enrolment will be automatically ended.

Please contact the Coordination Unit to discuss if any of the above circumstances apply to you.

NO NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE FEE

Families must notify their educator of their child's absence from care as soon as practicable.

A \$20 payment (which is not subsidised by the child care subsidy) may be charged when there is no notification to an educator of a child's absence within at least one hour prior to the commencement time of the educator's session.

CHARGING PRACTICES

When a child's actual attendance is less than the hours booked, families are charged for the number of hours as agreed to on the *Booked Hours* form.

Families are charged based on 15 minute blocks, with 5 minutes or less as a standard for both booked and casual care.

Once additional time becomes 30 minutes or more, families will be charged at their educator's casual rate. Here are some examples of how the above rules work.

Child 1 – Booked 8am -5.30pm

Signed in	Time charged from	Signed out	Time charged to
8.30am	8am as that is the booking.	4.45pm	5.30pm as that is the booking.
7.58am	8am as less than 5 minutes before the booked time.	5.33pm	5.30pm as less than 5 minutes after the booked time.
7.54am	7.45am as more than 5 minutes before the booked time.	5.40pm	5.45pm as 10 minutes after the booked time.
7.35am	7.30am as 25 minutes before the booked time and more than 5 minutes before 7.45am. The extra half hour will be charged out at the Educator's casual rate.	5.51pm	6pm as 21 minutes past the booked time & more than 5 minutes from 5.45pm. The extra half hour will be charged out at the Educator's casual rate

Child 2 - Casual

Sign-in and Sign-out Times	Times Charged
8.47am to 5.40pm	8.45am to 5.45pm
9.10am to 3.44pm	9am to 3.45pm
7.13am to 12.35pm	7.15am to 12.45pm

EDUCATOR'S STANDARD SESSION HOURS

Standard session hours vary between educators, and these hours are generally between 8 to 10 hours per day. Occasionally educators may have circumstances which allow them to book a half-day session, but generally most educators choose to book full day sessions only, based on their standard session hours.

This means that the *Booked Hours* form will state the educator's standard hours, and by signing the *Booked Hours* form or *Harmony Booking Change Request* form you will be invoiced for the standard session hours on that day **regardless of your child's actual physical attendance**. This includes a family requiring a split day (e.g. 11:00am – 2:00pm). The reason for this is that it can be very difficult for educator's to fill varying half-day vacancies throughout the week.

There may be certain situations where an educator can be flexible when booking a families session, so families are encouraged to discuss their needs with both the Coordination Unit and their educator to ensure optimum care arrangements are met.

It is important for families to communicate on a daily basis with their educator regarding arrival and departure times, especially if there are changes to the usual times. This will assist their educator in planning the routine and curriculum for the day, and will assist with ensuring the educator remains compliant and within Government regulations regarding numbers of children in care.

CASUAL CARE

Once families use **30 minutes or more over** their booked hours (as stated on the signed *Booked Hours* form or approved *Harmony Web Booking Change Request*), the extra time will be charged out at their educator's casual rate.

Any days used **additional to your normal booked hours** (as stated on the signed *Booked Hours* form or approved *Harmony Web Booking Change Request*), families will be charged at their educator's casual rate.

Families are asked to notify your educator as soon as possible if wishing to cancel any extra casual care.

NON-STANDARD HOURS

A non-standard fee applies to all booked or casual care that occurs between 6pm and 8am (unless the hours are part of a 24-hour care period or weekend care which may attract a specific hourly fee).

24 HOUR, WEEKEND & OVERNIGHT CARE

24 hour care and overnight care can only be provided to families under specific circumstances. **Parent/Guardian 1** must provide supporting documentation, and the care must be approved by the Coordination Unit prior to the care occurring.

EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES

- **Work- related circumstances** - Includes attendance at work-related conferences, busy seasonal farming periods, work hours that occur at night or on the weekend (such as shift workers or employees working in the hospitality field).
- **Other specific circumstances** - Includes hospitalisation, illness or injury, attendance at a funeral or wedding, respite for a single parent, or in the case of a two-parent family where neither parent is available to care for the child.

The Coordination Unit will ask **Parent/Guardian 1** to provide documentation that supports the need for 24 Hour care. This can be in the form of a signed statement from a medical practitioner, a letter from an employer, or a statutory declaration detailing the work requirements if self-employed.

The Coordination Unit will ask you to provide the reason for the care so that the specific circumstances can be ascertained prior to giving approval for overnight and weekend care.

You will be asked to submit a form requesting 24 Hour, Overnight or Weekend Care to the Coordination Unit for approval prior to the care occurring.

Late submissions will not be accepted unless due to an emergency.

If needed, families may still request either 24 hour, overnight or weekend care for other reasons that do not fall into the allowed categories. In these circumstances, families will not be allowed to claim child care subsidy (CSS) payments on the fees and levies charged, and pre-payment may be required. This type of care must still be approved by the Coordination Unit prior to the care occurring.

CHANGES TO BOOKED HOURS

Families needing to change their booked hours should discuss with their educator. In circumstances where changes are unable to be accommodated, families are encouraged to contact the Coordination Unit. All efforts will be made to find alternative care. A new *Booked Hours* form must be completed for all changes to booked hours.



CEASING CARE

Families must provide a **minimum of 2 weeks notice** prior to ceasing care by submitting a *Ceasing Care* form to the Coordination Unit. You can access our digital *Ceasing Care* form by clicking on this link:

<https://www.cognitofoms.com/SouthernGrampiansShireCouncil/CeasingEnrolment>

We understand that families' circumstances may change. We ask that families please consider their educator when intending to cease care, and understand that by providing your educator with as much notice as possible, you will be supporting your educator to have a continuity of income because you will be giving them sufficient time to interview and enroll new families to fill your child's place.

Similarly, educators must provide a minimum of 2 weeks' notice. However, educators will strive to provide additional notice where possible.

STATEMENT OF ENTITLEMENT

Consistent with Australian Government requirements, our service must provide families with a usage statement every two weeks.

A *CCS Statement of Entitlement* is issued to each family every two (2) weeks via email. The statement will show the cost of the care provided, hours charged, actual hours used, and the child care subsidy (CCS) usage for that period.

The calculations on the *CCS Statement of Entitlement* are estimations calculated by our third party software provider and may be subject to change, depending on changes to individual family circumstances. For example, if a family has a debt with Centrelink, at times they may recover this money via the child care subsidies. When these circumstances arise, families should contact Centrelink directly for further information.

Families are encouraged to contact the Coordination Unit if they disagree with the information on the *CCS Statement of Entitlement*, or have further questions about the details on the statement.

Parent/Guardian 1 can view their determination of entitlement at any time, using their online Centrelink account. Parents/Guardians will receive a notice of all determinations of entitlement during each quarter from Centrelink.

Families can read an additional fact sheet regarding how to interpret the *CCS Statement of Entitlement* by accessing the *My Service* tab in the *Harmony Web Parent Portal*. Alternatively, we can email a copy upon request.

IMPORTANT-CCS Statements of Entitlement are not an invoice requesting payment. Families will be issued a separate invoice requesting payment from the Southern Grampians Shire Council Accounts Receivable Department.



INVOICE AND PAYMENT PROCESS

Family day care invoices are issued to families every two (2) weeks via email.

Terms of payment are 14 days. Families who are having difficulty paying their account are encouraged to contact the *Children's Services Team Leader* on (03) 5551 8484 or email kayling@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au to discuss payment arrangement options.

When a family has not made payment or contacted *Children Services* to arrange a payment arrangement within 14 days, a reminder letter will be issued requesting payment. If still no payment or contact has been made, a final notice letter will be issued.

Failure to pay an account may result in suspension of current education and care arrangements until such a time that payment or a payment plan is made.

Payment options available include:

- In person at the Council Business Offices located at 111 Brown Street (opposite Coles car park).
- Posted – addressed to Locked Bag 685 Hamilton 3300
- Bpay.
- POST Billpay via telephone or internet.
- Centrepay arrangements can be set up through accessing your online Centrelink account via the my.Gov website so that an amount you choose will be paid fortnightly to the Council from your Centrelink payment. Families should contact Centrelink for advice if you are unsure how to these payments up.

Families can contact the *Council's Accounts Department* for all account queries by either visiting the Council Business Offices located at 111 Brown Street or calling (03) 5573 0444.



ATTENDANCE RECORDS, TIMESHEETS AND ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE (PIN)

PIN - ELECTRONIC SIGNATURES

It is a regulatory requirement that all children are signed in and signed out each session. Families will complete this action via the Harmony Web third party software on their educator's device, using an electronic signature (e-signature).

Prior to the first day of care, a system generated PIN will be emailed to each parent/guardian and authorised contact person via email. There will be an option for families to change the PIN to a number of their choosing. The PIN can be changed to any 4 to 8 digit combination, unless there is a clashing number or weak security number e.g. 1111 or 1234.

In addition, different PINs will be issued to the authorised contact persons who have been given written parental permission to collect the child from care.

HELPFUL TIP: When changing your PIN, please note that Harmony Web does not allow zero (0) to be the first number.

PIN SECURITY

Your PIN should never be shared with anyone else. Encryption technology will secure your PIN.

FORGOTTEN PIN

Families should notify the Coordination Unit if they have forgotten their PIN. The family will receive an email with the newly generated PIN.

INCORRECT PIN ENTRY

In the event that a PIN is entered incorrectly more than 5 times, the PIN will become invalid and an '*Invalid PIN*' error will occur when attempting to use the PIN. Families should contact the Coordination Unit to request for a new PIN to be issued.



SIGN-IN USING E-SIGNATURES

When families arrive to drop their child off into care, the educator will have the *Harmony Web* e-signature screen open on their device. The following process should be followed to sign a child into care:

1. Click on the child's name and the *PIN Entry* window will open.
2. Select your name and enter your unique PIN. Once the PIN has been entered, click *OK*.
3. Select *Sign In* from the available options. A new screen will display, detailing the child's name and the current time. There is also options for writing a comment or marking the child as *Not Present*.
4. After checking the details are correct and adding a comment regarding the session (if applicable), click the *Sign In* button.
5. If your child is absent, click the *Not Present* button and then the *Sign In* button. Once clicked, this button will change to red.
6. Once the child has been successfully signed into care, a *Thank You* message will appear.

HOW TO SIGN-IN FOR CASUAL CARE

When a child attends care on a day they are not usually booked in for, they must follow this slightly different process:

1. From the *Harmony Web* e-signature screen on the educator's device, click on the child's name to open the *PIN Entry* window will open.
2. Select your name and enter your unique PIN. Once the PIN has been entered, click *OK*.
3. Select *Sign In* from the available options. A new screen will display, detailing the child's name with a *Grey Tick* beside it. There will be other available options for writing a comment and adding another session.
4. Click on the *Grey Tick* beside the child's name and photo. This will change it to a *Green Tick*.
5. A *Time In* and *Time Out* box will then appear underneath. Enter the **expected** *Time In* and *Time Out* for that day using the time selector.
6. Click the *Add Session* button if the child is attending multiple sessions that day e.g. before and after school care. Enter the additional estimated times into the *Time In* and *Time Out* box.
7. After checking the details are correct and adding a comment (if applicable), click the *Sign In* button.
8. Once the child has been successfully signed into care, a *Thank You* message will appear.

SIGN-OUT USING E-SIGNATURES

The sign-out process is very similar to the sign-in process. When families return to collect their child, the educator will have the same *Harmony Web* e-signature screen open on their device.

The following process should be followed to sign a child out from care:

1. Click on the child's name. The *PIN Entry* window will open.
2. Select your name and enter your unique PIN. Once the PIN has been entered, click *OK*.
3. Select *Sign Out* from the available options. A new screen will display, detailing the child's name and the current time, and a comment box.
4. After checking the details are correct and adding a comment (if applicable), click the *Sign Out* button.
5. Once the child has been successfully signed out of care, a *Thank You* message will appear.

HOW TO SIGN-OUT FOR CASUAL CARE

The usual signing-out process should be followed to sign a child out of care for a session they are not usually booked in for.

SIGN-IN AND SIGN-OUT MULTIPLE CHILDREN

If a family has more than one child, they will be able to sign all children in and out at the same time.

Families can untick specific children if they do not wish to sign-in or sign-out at that time.

SIGNING TIMESHEETS ON EDUCATOR'S DEVICE

At the end of each week or fortnight, families will be asked to view and sign their child's *Timesheet* to verify the details are correct. *Timesheets* contain all the sign-in and sign-out times, absences, charged hours of care and any additional charges (such as food and travel) that have occurred throughout the week.

To verify *Timesheets*, the following process should be followed:

1. The educator will have the *Timesheet* open and ready for each family to view and verify via *Harmony Web*.
2. Select either *PIN* or *PAD* at the bottom of the page. The *PAD* option will allow families to sign using a touch pad device. The *PIN* option will allow families to sign using their unique PIN.

HOW TO SIGN TIMESHEETS USING TOUCH PAD OPTION

1. At the bottom of the *Timesheet* page, select *PIN*. A *Signature* window will appear.
2. Select your name from the drop down list.
3. Using the touch pad, sign in the *Signature* box.
4. Click the *Save* button. The *Timesheet* will now be verified.

HOW TO SIGN TIMESHEETS USING PIN OPTION

1. At the bottom of the *Timesheet* page, select *PIN*.
2. Enter your PIN in the space provided.
3. Click the *PIN Submit* button. The *Timesheet* will now be verified.

SIGNING TIMESHEETS REMOTELY

Many educators send *Timesheets* remotely to **Parent/Guardian 1** via the noreply@redbourne.com.au email.

Parent/Guardian 1 should follow the below process to view all the sign-in and sign-out times, absences, charged hours of care and any additional charges (such as food and travel) that have occurred throughout the week:

1. Click the *Sign Timesheets* link within the email.
2. Enter your PIN.
3. Click the *Log In* button. A list of all *Timesheets* waiting for approval will appear on the screen.
4. Select the *View* button next to the *Timesheet*. The timesheet will open on the screen.
5. Select either the *Approve* or *Reject* button located at the bottom of the page.
6. Clicking *Approve* will send the *Timesheet* back with an electronic verification on the bottom of the timesheet.
7. Clicking *Reject* will prompt you **Parent/Guardian 1** to enter a comment. This allows parents/guardians to notify their educator to any disagreements or errors they have noticed on the *Timesheet*.

Once the *Timesheet* has been *Approved* or *Rejected*, it will no longer appear in the list of timesheets awaiting approval.



FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM

We invite families to participate within the program at their individual educator's family day care service.



Examples of some of the ways families can participate in the program include:

- Participating in any events held at the service.
- Sharing ideas and providing suggestions.
- Join our Reconciliation Action Plan.
- Sharing any talents or skills you may have.
- Sharing oral and written language from another culture.
- Sharing family traditions.
- Provide feedback on policies, procedures and codes of conduct.
- Participating in excursions and outings.
- Writing a comment/feedback on the bottom your child's written observations/programming documents.
- Discussing family pets, family members, holidays, events, and any other significant people, animals or milestones with your educator and/or the other children. Your educator may use this information to extend your child's learning within the program.
- Reading a story or singing a song to the children.
- Play a musical instrument.
- Providing recycled and/or natural resources for your educator to use within the program e.g. cardboard boxes, material off-cuts, piping, sea-shells, leaves etc.
- Bring some photos to share.
- Talk to your educator about what your family did on the weekend.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

Our service respects the First Peoples of this land, and acknowledge the past injustices, and the ongoing inequalities experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since colonisation. We recognise the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and acknowledge the ongoing intergenerational trauma that impacts members of the Stolen Generations and their families.

Our service is committed to working towards a more equal and respectful future and we invite families to join us in developing, publishing and working towards our service's *Reconciliation Action Plan*.

Please contact the Coordination Unit if you would like to find out more information, or would like to join our *Reconciliation Action Plan working group*.



HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS



Our service is always looking for ways to improve the way we do things! We invite children, families and educators to provide their positive feedback and any other comments or suggestions – we would love to hear what you think!

To provide feedback, children and families can contact the Coordination Unit Staff directly, either by calling (03)55518484 or emailing fdc@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au.

Alternatively, feedback can be submitted using our *Feedback and Suggestions* digital form, which can be accessed by following the link below:

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/SouthernGrampiansShireCouncil/FeedbackAndSuggestions>

COMPLAINTS

HOW TO LODGE A COMPLAINT

Families and educators are encouraged to maintain open communication and address any concerns as soon as they arise. Families can contact the Coordination Unit at any time to ask questions or discuss any concerns they may have.

If a parent/guardian wishes to lodge a complaint, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Parent to raise issue with the educator depending on the nature of the issue and their confidence to do so. Open communication will facilitate quick resolution of concerns.
2. If no resolution is reached or if parent prefers to; parent to contact Children's Services Team Leader or Fieldworker. If contact is made via phone, a meeting will be scheduled as soon as possible where the issue will be discussed and documented.
3. If the complaint requires notification to the regulatory authority, the Team Leader or Fieldworker will complete the notification process
4. All complaints will be treated promptly in a fair, positive and confidential manner.
5. The Team Leader will investigate the complaint and liaise with the Coordinator of Community Services.
6. The Team Leader will discuss results of investigation with all parties and seek to implement an agreed plan of action.
7. Continued support, counselling and supervision will be offered, dependent on nature of incident.
8. Outcomes and action plans will be documented and provided to all parties involved.
9. The Fieldworker will monitor the care environment and implementation of action plans.
10. The Team Leader will maintain regular contact with parent as a means of follow up and evaluation.
11. If there has been a breach of contract refer to Family Day Care Tender Specifications and Terms & Conditions.
12. If the complaint is not resolved to the parents satisfaction then the following steps apply:

**1. Complaint referred to the
Community Services Coordinator**
Attempt to resolve issue

**2. If issue still not resolved refer to
Manager of Community & Leisure Services**
Attempt to resolve issue

**3. If issue still not resolved refer to
Manager Organisation Development**

**4. If issue still not resolved it can be
referred to an outside body such as the
State Ombudsman**

At any stage of this process the parent can contact the *Department of Education and Training (DET)* on (03) 5215 5136 or bsw.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au

Further information can be found in the *Dealing with Complaints* policy.

IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION & TRAINING (DET)

SOUTH WESTERN VICTORIA REGION QUALITY ASSESSMENT & REGULATION DIVISION Geelong Office – Barwon South West Area Team

Address: 75 High Street
BELMONT VIC 3216

Phone: 03 5215 5136

Email: bsw.qar@edumail.vic.gov.au

QUALITY ASSESSMENT & REGULATION DIVISION - MELBOURNE

Address: GPO Box 9820
MELBOURNE 3001

Phone: General Advice and guidance
1300 307 415

Website: www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood

FAMILY ASSISTANCE OFFICE

Phone: 136 150

Website: www.familyassist.gov.au

CENTRELINK

Website: www.centrelink.gov.au

DEPARTMENT OF FAMILIES, FAIRNESS AND HOUSING SERVICES

Website: www.dffh.vic.gov.au

myGov

Website: www.my.gov.au

FAMILY DAY CARE AUSTRALIA

Phone: 1800 658 699

Website: www.fdca.com.au

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S EDUCATION & CARE QUALITY AUTHORITY (ACECQA)

Website: www.acecqa.gov.au

CONTACT DETAILS - FAMILY VIOLENCE SUPPORT SERVICES**The Orange Door**

Free service for adults, children and young people who are experiencing or have experienced family violence, and families who need extra support with the care of children.

Email: <https://orangedoor.vic.gov.au/>

Brophy Family and Youth Services

Women, children and young people's family violence services and men's family violence services.

Phone: (03) 5561 8888

Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation

Aboriginal Services.

Hamilton Phone: (03) 5572 5715

Heywood Phone: (03) 5527 0000

Emma House

Women, children and young people's family violence services.

Warrnambool Phone: (03) 5561 1934

Salvo Connect

Coordinates emergency, transitional and short-term housing for adults and families.

Phone: (03) 5572 5822

Phone: 1800 825 955

Safe Steps

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

Services for women and children who are victims of family violence. Also offers a web chat support service (Monday to Friday 9:00am – midnight).

Phone: 1800 015 188

Web Chat Website: <https://safesteps.org.au/our-services/services-for-women-children/family-violence-webchat-support/web-chat-safe-steps-website/>

Victims of Crime Helpline

(8:00am to 11:00pm, 7 days a week) For adult male victims of family violence and victims of violent crime.

Phone: 1800 819 817

Text: 0427 767 891

Sexual Assault Crisis Line

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week) For victims of sexual assault.

Phone: 1800 806292

Men's Referral Service

(8:00am to 9:00pm Monday to Friday; 9:00am to 5:00pm Saturday and Sunday)

For people at risk of family violence. Offers free, confidential, expert support for men and their family and friends.

Phone: 1300 766 491

With Respect

(5:00pm to 11:00pm each Wednesday and 10:00am to 10:00pm on Saturday and Sunday). Specialist LGBTIQ family violence service.

Phone: 1800 542 847

Mens Line Australia

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week). A telephone and online counselling service for men with family and relationship concerns.

Phone: 1300 78 99 78

CONTACT DETAILS - LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES IN SOUTHERN GRAMPIANS SHIRE
<p>Western District Health Services Generalist counselling support service for all age groups. Phone: (03) 5551 8450</p>
<p>Brophy Family service programs including family counselling, support and advise for parenting and behaviour management, group work, meditation and case management as needed. Phone: 1300 543 779 or (03) 5551 8556</p>
<p>Western District Health Services Primary and preventative health services. Frances Hewett Community Centre Phone: (03) 55518480 Hamilton House: (03) 5551 8349</p>
<p>Winda-Mara Aboriginal Corporation Aboriginal Services. Hamilton Phone: (03) 5572 5715 Heywood Phone: (03) 5527 0000</p>
<p>Bethany Child and family services, financial counselling, problem gambling and housing support on a part-time basis in Southern Grampians (Frances Hewett Community Centre) Phone: 1300 510 439</p>
<p>Oz Child Family Law program, family dispute resolution, counselling, emergency relief. Phone: 1300 661 790</p>
<p>South West Health - Early Intervention Dual Diagnosis Provides an early intervention service for people aged 16-25 years, including those 'at risk' of developing a serious mental illness due to a range of vulnerabilities, including substance abuse. Phone: (03) 5551 8418</p>
<p>South West Health - Child Adolescent Mental Health Provides family inclusive assessment and treatment for infants, children and young people up to 18 years of age, with significant mental health concerns. Hamilton Phone: (03) 5551 8418 Warrnambool Phone: (03) 5561 9100</p>
<p>South West Health - Adult Mental Health Service Provides assessment and treatment for people aged 18 – 65 years old who are affected by a serious mental illness. Phone: (03) 5551 8418</p>
<p>Rural Financial Counselling Service Assisting rural farming individuals and families to understand their finances, help identify their options and develop a plan of action. Phone: 1800 735 578</p>

CONTACT DETAILS - MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Beyond Blue

(24 hours, 7 days a week). Mental Health support service for people experiencing anxiety, depression and suicide. Also offers online Web Chat service (1:00pm – 12:00am, 7 days a week).

Phone: 1300 224 636

Web Chat: <https://online.beyondblue.org.au/#/chat/start>

Website: <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

Lifeline Australia

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Crisis support service offering short term support at any time for people who are feeling overwhelmed or having difficulty coping or staying safe. Text service is also available (12:00pm to Midnight).

Phone: 12 11 14

Text: 0477 13 11 14

Website: <https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Black Dog Institute

Mental Health information, resources and support tools.

Website: <https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au/resources-support/>

Headspace

Early intervention services for children and young people aged 12 – 25 years old.

Phone: 1300 276 749

Email: hswarnambool@brophy.org.au

Website: https://headspace.org.au/?gclid=EAlaIQobChMlvO2Flrjz8QIVyhErCh2Abw-cEAAYASAAEqKifPD_BwE&gclidsrc=aw.ds

Smiling Mind

Smiling Mind's digital care packs provide tools and resources for parents/guardians, carers and teachers to support positive mental health for the children in their care.

Website: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

Website: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/kids-care-packs>

App Download: <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>

PANDA

PANDA's National Perinatal Anxiety and Depressions Helpline offers support for individuals and families to recover from perinatal anxiety and depression.

Phone: 1300 726 306

Website: <https://www.panda.org.au/about/contact-us>

Suicide Call Back Service

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Offers free counselling for suicide prevention and mental health via telephone, online and video chat for anyone affected by suicidal thoughts.

Phone: 1300 659 467

Website: <https://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au/>

Kids Helpline

(24 hours a day, 7 days a week). A free, private and confidential telephone and online counselling service for young people aged between 5-25 years old.

Phone: 1800 55 1800

Headspace Warrnambool

(9:00am – 5:00pm, Monday to Friday) For people aged 12-25 years old. Offers support for mental health, physical health, alcohol and other drugs, work and study and homelessness services. Also offers confidential, online phone, chat and email service.

Phone: 1300 276 749

eHeadspace Website: <https://eheadspace.org.au>

CONTACT DETAILS – CORONAVIRUS
<p>COVID-19 Education Hotline (8:30am -5:00pm, Monday to Friday). Offers information about changes to education settings during COVID-19 in Victoria. Phone: 1800 338 663</p>
<p>Disability Information Helpline (8:00am - 8:00pm, Monday to Friday). Access to information and referrals for people who need help because of COVID-19, including access to counselling. Phone: 1800 643 787</p>
<p>Beyond Blue (24 hours a day, 7 days a week). Offers a dedicated 24/7 service for those feeling anxious, stressed, depressed or need assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic. Coronavirus Mental Wellbeing Support Service. Also offers an online web chat service. Phone: 1800 512 348 Website: https://coronavirus.beyondblue.org.au/ Web Chat: https://cmwssonline.beyondblue.org.au/#/chat/start</p>
<p>Eating Disorders Victoria In response to COVID-19, Eating Disorders Victoria has implemented a new Wellbeing Program to assist people living with eating disorders and their support people during these challenging times. This program offers up to 5 free telehealth counselling sessions. Phone: 1300 550 236 Website: https://www.eatingdisorders.org.au/find-support/eating-disorder-wellbeing-support-program/</p>
<p>Head to Help (Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5:00pm). Telephone advice from trained professionals and, if needed, connection to the best support or service for the caller. HeadtoHelp also provides online resources for callers and healthcare professionals. Website: https://headtohelp.org.au/ Phone: 1800 595 212</p>

CONTACT DETAILS - NOTIFICATIONS OR REFERRALS RELATING TO CHILD PROTECTION AND WELLBEING
<p>DFFH Child Protection Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Child Protection Intake Unit: Western Division Intake Unit (rural and regional) Phone: 1800 075 599</p>
<p>After Hours Child Protection Emergency Service (5:00pm – 9:00pm Monday – Friday, 24 hours on weekends and public holidays) Phone: 13 12 78</p>
<p>South West Child FIRST Child and Family Services Phone: 1300 543 779</p>
<p>Police Victoria Police Phone: 000 Hamilton Police Station Phone: 03 5551 9100</p>

COORDINATION UNIT CONTACT INFORMATION

CONTACT DETAILS - FAMILY DAY CARE COORDINATION UNIT	
General Phone:	(03) 5551 8484
General Email:	fdc@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au
Address:	Frances Hewett Community Centre 2 Roberts Street HAMILTON VIC 3300
Postal Address:	Southern Grampians Shire Council Family Day Care Locked Bag 6685 HAMILTON VIC 3300
Team Leader of Children's Services:	Kim Ayling
Email:	kayling@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au
Phone:	(03) 55514346
Mobile Phone:	0418 527 136
Family Day Care Fieldworker and Educational Leader	Leesa Hayes
Mobile Phone:	0429 776 533
Email:	lhayes@sthgrampians.vic.gov.au