

Southern Cross Early Childhood School



Family Handbook

Preschool – Year 2



ACT
Government
Education



Southern Cross Early Childhood School
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🌐 Web: www.scecs.act.edu.au

Southern Cross Early Childhood School acknowledges that our children learn on Ngunnawal Land.

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Welcome to Southern Cross Early Childhood School!

Our beautiful, caring and nurturing school is one of five Early Childhood Schools in the ACT. Our School provides continuity for children from birth to eight years old in their education, relationships and care. Curriculum and teaching are guided by the latest educational and social research into quality early childhood learning. Through numerous programs we provide support to children and families.

Contact Details

Education Directorate Contact Details

- 13 2281 (6207 0404 TTY)
- www.education.act.gov.au

School Contact Details

Principal

Kelly Booker

Deputy Principal

Elizabeth Marman

Executive Teacher

Emily Hartley

Community Coordinator

Sharon Craft

Business Manager

Emma Muffet

Reception

Nicole Emerton

School Phone number: 02 6142 0020

School Email: info@scecs.act.edu.au

Anglicare: 02 6142 0020

Anglicare Email: southerncross@anglicare.com.au



Within our school we provide integrating services that include:

Anglicare NSW South | NSW West | ACT: Provide early education and care for children from six weeks of age to eight years old. Anglicare offers long day care from 7:30am to 6pm five days per week, before and after school care from 7:30 – 9am and 3 – 6pm five days per week as well as a school holiday program. If you require care for your child, please contact Reception for how to complete an online application form.

Education Directorate: for Preschool to Year 2 children. Encouraging learning through play, explicit teaching of Literacy and Numeracy, Environment Education, The Arts, and much more. All our teaching staff are fully qualified with an Early Childhood or Primary teaching degree. Children’s learning is supported by the *Early Years Learning Framework* for Australia and the Australian Curriculum.

Community Programs: In addition to the aforementioned services, Southern Cross Early Childhood School offers numerous programs for children and families including parenting programs, Stay and Play (playgroup) and Community Gatherings (once per term). For more information, please see the staff at Reception.

School Philosophy

The Education Directorate’s **vision** is that every child and young person receives an excellent education, delivered and supported by highly skilled and valued professionals.

The Education Directorate’s **mission** is that we lead and deliver excellent, inclusive and equitable education where all are safe, valued and able to flourish.

The Education Directorate’s **values** are Respect, Integrity, Collaboration and Innovation.

Southern Cross Early Childhood School provides high quality services and programs to meet individual children’s needs. Wherever possible, services will be seamless and inclusive of families, educators, staff and organisations who will contribute their expertise to ensure the wellbeing and development of all children.

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School, we view children as being capable and competent learners. We believe in creating a close partnership with families and the community so we can work in collaboration to support the capabilities of all children.



Vision

We will inspire a passion for learning across our whole community and provide opportunities for children to play, learn and grow.

Mission

We recognise children as being capable, creative and competent learners.
We partner with their family and our community to nurture their development.
We prioritise relationships, play experiences, quality practice and inclusive environments with meaningful connections to Country.
We respect and value everyone as learners.



Values

respect, resilience, kindness and creativity

Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships

At our Early Childhood School, the educators:

- Ensure that the interests, abilities and culture of every child and their family are understood, valued and respected.
- Encourage children as active participants for sustainability, influencing the quality of life now, and for future generations.
- Respect the views and feelings of each child.
- Initiate warm, trusting and reciprocal relationships with children.
- Provide safe and stimulating environments for all children; and
- Build on children's prior learning and experiences to build continuity for their learning and ongoing development.

Partnerships

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School, we live the belief that '**When we enrol a child we enrol the family**'. As educators we:

- Warmly encourage active participation and involvement by families.
- Provide programs to support families and connect them with external agencies as the need arises.
- Work with families to support children's learning and development at home and in the community.
- Use families' understanding of their children to support shared decision making about each child's learning and development.
- Create a welcoming and culturally inclusive environment where all families are encouraged to participate in and contribute to children's learning and development experiences.

- Are transparent and objective and provide families with information about their children’s learning and development, and about what they can do to further support their children.
- Work collaboratively to share information and plan to ensure holistic approaches to children’s learning and development.
- Actively engage families and children in planning children’s learning and development; and
- Acknowledge the significance of transitions within and across services and schools and ensure that children understand the process and have an active role in preparing for these transitions.

High Expectations and Equity

At our Early Childhood School, the educators:

- Establish high expectations for each child’s learning and development.
- Support children’s learning and development through a combination of child-led and adult-led play-based learning, as well as active teacher-led learning/intentional teaching.
- Ensure that every child experiences success in their learning and development.
- Recognise that all children are capable learners, but some children require quite different opportunities and supports to do this (extra accommodation).
- Maximise opportunities for every child.
- Provide physical environments that support a range of opportunities for learning and physical activity, through the indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- Encourage children to explore, solve problems, communicate, think, create and construct, and
- Use child-centred approaches to explicitly teach particular knowledge and skills.

Respect for Diversity

At our Early Childhood School, the educators:

- Recognise bi and multilingualism as an asset and support these children to maintain their first language and learn English as a second language.
- Promotes cultural awareness in all children, including greater understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ways of knowing and being.
- Support children to develop a sense of place, identity and a connection to the land.
- Build on children’s interests, abilities, cultures and previous learning experiences to extend their thinking, learning and development, and
- Recognise the connections between aspects of children’s learning and development.

Ongoing Learning and Reflective Practice

At our Early Childhood School, the educators:

- Gather information that supports, informs, assesses and enriches decision-making about appropriate professional practices.
- Continually develop their professional knowledge and skills to enable them to provide the best possible learning and development opportunities for all children.
- Promote practices that have been shown to be successful in supporting children’s learning and development.
- Assess children’s learning in ways that inform the educator’s practice.
- Use evidence to inform planning for early childhood experiences and practice.

Enrolment procedures

Children seeking to enter school at the Preschool entry point should be four years of age on or before 30 April in that year.

Applications for enrolment for Preschool are available online from the first day of term 2 each year.

Enrolment is available online at <https://www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/enrolling-in-a-public-school>

Early enrolment for children under compulsory education age is also available to children eligible for English as an Additional Language/Dialect programs, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and Gifted and Talented programs. Further information is available on the Directorate's website at <http://www.education.act.gov.au/>

Hours of Operation

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School, we provide 15 hours of Preschool per week and 30 hours of education for children in Kindergarten to Year 2. School starts promptly at 9am. Children accessing programs from 9am – 3pm may initially find the days a bit tiring. We offer a flexible approach during the long, hot days of summer if parents wish to take their children home early.

Preschool groups commence at 9am. Alternatively, you may like to stay with your child and play, complete a puzzle together or share a book in the library.

A teacher is on duty before school on the black top from 8.40am for children in Kindergarten to Year 2.

When the children arrive each morning, you are welcome to go with them into their rooms at 9am while they hang their bags and settle. Sometimes children may be a little upset during the first few days, but within a few minutes of your departure they will have calmed down. It is often more upsetting for parents and carers - you are welcome to contact the School for reassurance that your child is participating happily.

The educators like to establish a routine for school each day, so it is important that children are at school on time. Sometimes if the child is late it can be a little unsettling for them.

In the afternoons children need to be collected by a parent/carer or a family friend if prearranged. If you are going to be late collecting your child, please let us know by contacting the school on 6142 0020.

Parents need to indicate on the **first day** the arrangements for collecting children at 3.00pm. Please confirm any contact information with Reception.

Parking

Off-street parking is available for families at the Ross Smith Crescent entrance. Please note parking facilities at the Wirraway Street entrance are for staff only.

The Wirraway Crescent entrance is open from 7.30-9.15am each day.

Changes to Details

Please keep staff and the school informed of any changes to address, home/work/mobile phone numbers, email addresses, care arrangements, medical information and emergency contact phone numbers. Please report any changes to Reception.

Curriculum

The Southern Cross Early Childhood School curriculum, birth to eight years, is based upon the principle that all children are capable and competent.

Preschool

The **Early Years Learning Framework** has been developed to ensure your child receives quality education programs in their early childhood setting. This is a vital time for them to learn and develop. The Framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life. **Belonging, Being and Becoming; The Early Years Framework for Australia** can be found at <https://www.acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework>

It is a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to five years. They use the Framework in partnership with families, children's first and most influential educators, to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

The *Early Years Learning Framework* describes childhood as a time of *belonging, being and becoming*.

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they *belong* because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- **Being** is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun.
- **Becoming** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

Kindergarten to Year 2 Curriculum

The school has implemented the Australian Curriculum forming the basis of teaching and learning in The Arts, English, Health & Physical Education, Humanities & Social Sciences, Mathematics, Science and Technologies. In addition to these areas, the school has also woven throughout our learning opportunities and experiences, the three cross-curriculum priorities of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia and Sustainability as identified in the Australian Curriculum.

For further information on the Curriculum at Southern Cross please visit our website

<https://www.scecs.act.edu.au/>



Communication Avenues with Staff

Our School recognises the importance of positive family and staff relationships. We encourage:

- Sharing knowledge to enhance the growth and development of your child.
- Developing positive relationships with families that are based on mutual trust and open communication.
- Developing a sense of belonging to the children, families and staff.

Parent Portal is a secure online platform used to share student information between you and your child's teachers. Use Parent Portal to:

- notify us if your child is sick or explain an absence
- book parent/teacher interviews
- receive academic reports
- receive our school newsletter
- receive messages from your child's teachers
- make payments
- access the school calendar and your child's student timetable.

Parent Portal is used by all ACT public schools from preschool through to year 12. If you have children at other ACT public schools, you don't need to sign up to the system twice. You can access their information from one account.

Newsletters are produced every fortnight with information about what is happening in the School. You can access up to date information on the Southern Cross Early Childhood School website or Facebook page. We use email and Parent Portal as our primary forms of communication. Please let Reception know if you require an alternative method of communication. Most notes sent home are also available for downloading on our website.

Seesaw is a digital portfolio which your child's teacher will add to throughout each term. We hope that the use of Seesaw will enhance the connection between home and school and allow families to have a greater understanding of the learning that is taking place in the classroom.

Teachers will be able to post work samples, photos, videos and voice recordings of your child and the group and you will be able to view and make comment on these. Information posted by or about your child is accessible by you only unless they have worked in collaboration with other children. This is a forum for positive feedback and will be closely monitored by the teachers and members of the executive team.

Educators appreciate the opportunity to talk with families as this ensures valuable insights, and understandings, can be appreciated about a child's individual developmental journey.

Parent/Educator meetings are held as the need arises for your input and feedback.

Morning Muster, each morning, 8.55am – 9.00am gives families from Kindergarten to Year 2 the opportunity to have a brief chat with their child's educator. However, educators like to give their complete attention to children at the start of the day in order to settle the children quickly.

You may leave a message with Reception for the educator to contact you at a convenient time.

Getting to Know You meetings for all families are held at the commencement of the school year.

Communication avenues throughout the year include:

- Family and Educator meetings, end of semester 1
- Written reports, end of semester 1
- Learning Journeys in Term 3
- Written reports, end of semester 2
- Family meetings at educator request

Excursions

Excursions are part of the educational program at Southern Cross Early Childhood School. On enrolment, parents/carers are asked to give permission for their child to go on incidental excursions e.g. walk to the shops. If children use any form of transport, parents/carers will be advised in advance and asked to give permission, in writing, for the child to attend. The adult/child ratio for excursions will be noted on permission notes.

Library

Each class has a designated library time once a week. You will be informed of your child's library day at the commencement of the year. During this time children borrow two library books to take home for a week and participate in programs that develop children's literacy and research skills.

Each child is provided with a cloth library bag as part of the Stationery Pack in Preschool. Library books need to be returned before new books may be borrowed. If a book is lost or damaged, please inform Reception.

Our School also has a comprehensive Parent Library. Please see Reception for borrowing.

Stationery Packs

The school purchases stationery supplies in bulk to ensure all students have the equipment required for their learning. We have made every effort to keep the prices as low as possible. All families will be sent book pack forms at the end of the year for the following year or upon commencement.

Contribution to decision-making

Families are welcome to contribute to the decision-making procedures of the School through the School Board or the P&C.

School Board

Each government school in the ACT is administered by a School Board whose membership comprises the school principal, two elected staff members, three elected members of the parent body and a nominee of the Education Directorate. Elected members normally serve for a two-year period.

The Board is the policy-making body of the school. Its major functions are to:

- determine the educational policies to be implemented at the school,
- assess, from time to time, the needs of the school in relation to the provision of buildings and facilities, equipment, funds, educators and other staff, and make recommendations to the Director General (of the Education Directorate) with respect to the meeting of those needs,
- determine the purposes for which funds made available for the school are to be expended,
- make recommendations to the Director General in respect of the use of the buildings, facilities and equipment of the school for purposes other than school purposes,
- develop relationships between the school and the community and between the school and community organisations,
- make recommendations to the Director General on matters relating to the school.

Responsibility for the implementation of policies established by the Board rests with the Principal and staff. Please see Reception for contact details for the School Board.

Parents and Citizens Association

The P&C plays an important role within the school. Meetings are generally held twice a term and are advertised in the Newsletter and on the school's website. All parents are encouraged to attend the meetings. As well as its more official activities, the P&C provides an informal meeting ground for parents/carers and serves a vital fundraising function for the school. Please see Reception for contact details for the P&C.

Participation of volunteers

Volunteers have a special place in Southern Cross Early Childhood School and assist in many ways. This may include interaction with individuals and small groups of children in a range of different activities.

To assist schools in providing a safe environment and a positive educational climate, volunteers are asked to comply with the *Code of Conduct for Volunteers*. This code of conduct has been formulated to clarify the type of conduct that is expected of volunteers when participating in programs and activities in ACT Government schools.

- Observe similar standards of behaviour and ethical conduct to that required of staff. For example, you are expected to act within the law, be honest and fair, respect other people (including students), and work to the best standard of your ability.
- Appreciate that educators have a special duty of care for students that cannot be delegated or transferred to others. Appreciate also that the principal is the spokesperson for the school.
- Appreciate that children have rights and aspirations. Treat children with dignity and respect.
- Observe confidentiality in respect of all information gained through your participation as a volunteer. All information held by schools should be handled with care. Some information is especially sensitive. Sensitive and/or personal information requires additional caution in the way it is treated. For example, volunteers should not discuss nor disclose personal information about children, staff or children's parents/carers to others.
- Accept and follow directions from the principal/supervisor and seek guidance through clarification where you may be uncertain of tasks or requirements. You may need to familiarise yourself with the Directorate's policies and guidelines on particular issues.
- Observe safe work practices which avoid unnecessary risks, apply reasonable instructions given by supervisors and report to the supervising staff and school administration any hazard or hazardous practice in the workplace.
- Report any problems as they arise to your supervisor including incidents, injury or property damage.

Under Legislation introduced in 2013, volunteers undertaking more than the legislated number of hours are required to complete a *Working with Vulnerable People* check. Please see Reception for the information if you are interested in working at our school in a volunteer capacity. All volunteers need to sign in and out of the school at Reception.

Participation in school activities

Families are welcome to share their special skills, interests and diverse family cultures with the school. Families are encouraged to participate in social activities to enable families to meet each other and form a sense of belonging to the school. Families can help in the following ways:

- sharing knowledge and expertise of craft, cooking, music, storytelling, job skills etc.
- interacting with the daily program
- listening to children read
- cataloguing, covering or shelving books in the Library
- assisting with laundry
- working bees in the gardens, etc.
- joining the Southern Cross Early Childhood School P&C Association

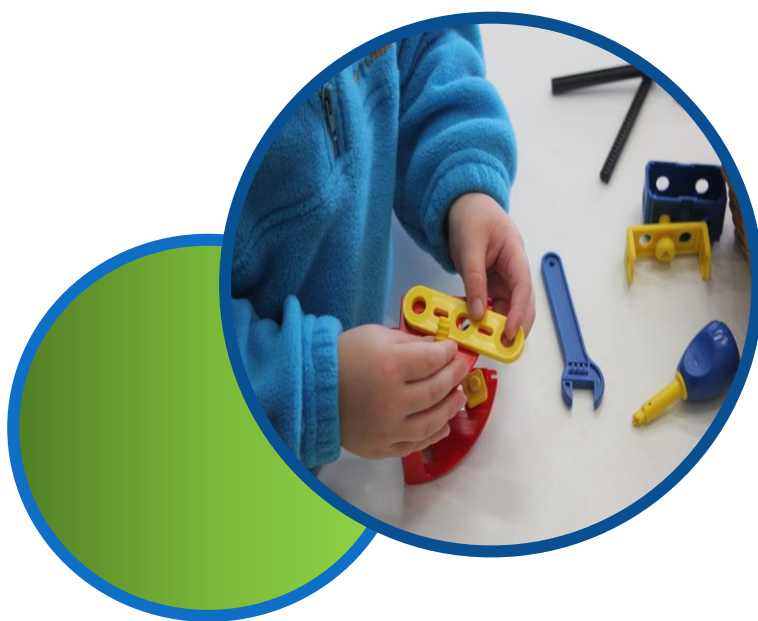
Family Engagement Coordinators

The Family Engagement Coordinators initiative is part of the **Be You** mental health framework used at Southern Cross Early Childhood School. This initiative looks to provide opportunities for families to connect and develop strong, supportive relationships through family play dates after school and on weekends. Each class has a Family Engagement Coordinator who works with other coordinators in their child's year level to organise events that meet the needs and interests of the families.

Responsibilities:

- connect with coordinators from other classes in the same year level to plan one event each term.
- work with the school's community coordinator to develop ideas and publicise the event.
- provide information about the event to the P&C for insurance purposes.
- coordinate and link families at the event.
- provide photos and/or a brief account of the event for our school newsletter.

This is a great way to make connections with other families at school. If you are interested in taking on this role, please see Reception for more information.



Student Welfare and Management

At Southern Cross Early Childhood School, we value that everyone is an individual and that we all have the special qualities that make us who we are. It is important that children are treated with respect-valuing their uniqueness and what they bring to the school. We provide a supportive, welcoming and culturally inclusive educational environment where children feel safe and happy. The school has a **Wellbeing & Behaviour Guideline** that outlines the steps for addressing student welfare and management issues. This is available on the school's website and in the Family Section of our Library.

Transitions

Your child is a member of the Southern Cross Early Childhood School community. By enrolling your child into the school your child will automatically move on from Preschool to Year 2 in our School. As with all transitions the staff will ensure that familiarisation for children from Preschool through to Year 2 is successful.

At the end of Year 2 all children need to transition to a primary school, usually within their Priority Enrolment Area (PEA). The school provides a transition program for children and families commencing in Term 3 of the preceding year.

Child Protection Practices

All employees in schools are mandated to report any case of suspected child abuse. Failure to notify suspected physical and/or sexual abuse of children is a criminal offence. Staff will deliver lessons to children in protective behaviour and safe behaviours. Staff will also deliver lessons to enhance social and emotional skills.

Attendance and Absences

Families are required to ensure their child/ren attend school each day. The class roll is marked each day at 9.15am. Arrival after 9.15am is recorded as a partial absence; children arriving after this time are required to be signed in at Reception. You will receive an absence notification via SMS if your child is not at school by 9.15am. Parents are responsible for notifying the school of their child's absence. All absences must be explained within a week of the absence occurring. The preferred methods to notify the School are to use Parent Portal to explain your child's absence OR reply to the SMS you receive regarding your child's absence.

Examples of a reasonable excuse for a child's absence may include:

- illness, including recovery from major illness, injury or medical conditions,
- medical or dental treatment,
- bereavement,
- religious or cultural observation.

Please refer to the Policy Folder in the Parent Library for more information.



Eating Times

Southern Cross Early Childhood School is a Health Promoting School and therefore encourages children to bring healthy, nutritious food to school each day.

Parents/carers are urged to provide children with healthy snacks and lunch which will enable the staff to assist in the development of lifelong healthy eating habits. Please limit highly processed foods, those high in salt or sugar. All children will need their own drink bottle with water only. For further information please refer to the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy* which can be found at https://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/school-administration-and-management/food-and-drink/act-public-school-food-and-drink-policy/act-public-school-food-and-drink-policy

Please note: Southern Cross Early Childhood School is an allergy friendly and nut aware school due to the inclusion of children with life threatening anaphylactic allergic conditions. We ask that children do not bring nuts or foods containing traces of nuts to school e.g. peanut butter or Nutella sandwiches.

Preschool

All groups have *Munch and Crunch* time starting at around 10am. Families are asked to provide a piece of fruit, vegetables or protein, such as cheese, in a labelled container. Please send these cut up and ready to eat in class. We find that *Munch and Crunch* helps children keep their energy levels consistent throughout the morning, aiding their concentration.

During the day children need frequent drinks but please do not send cans of soft drink, juice or drinks in glass bottles. We recommend that children have a drink bottle containing water, which they keep in their classroom.

Children need to bring a healthy lunch and afternoon snack with them each day. Lunch time is around 11.30am, and snack time around 1.30pm however these times do change as we are guided by the children.

Kindergarten to Year 2

All classes have *Munch and Crunch* time starting at around 10am. Families are asked to provide a piece of fruit, vegetables or protein, such as cheese, for their child to eat in class. It would be greatly appreciated if this food could be prepared in advance e.g. the apples and oranges are peeled and cut as children find prepared food more appealing than a big apple! *Munch and Crunch* helps children keep their energy levels consistent throughout the morning, aiding their concentration.

At our school we have two main breaks with lunch time at 11am until 11.50am with eating time from 11am until 11.10am. The second break, recess, at 1.30pm – 2pm. Please make sure your child knows which food is for lunch, and which food is for their afternoon tea snack. The educators do check, but it is helpful if the child has the food in two separate packages. It is important to remember that children need nutritious food at school and that fruit is a much better alternative than junk food for a snack. Some children have far too much food, which takes a long time to eat. If you ask your child to bring home uneaten food, you will be able to judge the amount needed.



During the day children need frequent drinks but please do not send cans of soft drink, juice or drinks in glass bottles. We recommend that children have a drink bottle containing water, which they are able to keep on a table in their room as well as an extra drink for break time. As children in K-2 eat their lunch and recess outside they need to bring food they can manage easily.

Food Allergies and Anaphylaxis

Southern Cross Early Childhood School is committed to providing an 'Anaphylaxis Friendly' environment, minimising exposure to particular foods such as peanuts and tree nuts, eggs, dairy, gluten and particular fruits. Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction which is potentially life threatening. Most cases of anaphylaxis occur after a person with a severe allergy is exposed to the allergen to which they are allergic, usually a food, insect sting or medication (ASCIA guidelines for prevention of anaphylaxis in schools, pre-schools, and childcare: 2012 update).

It is common for a child with a SEVERE anaphylaxis reaction caused by peanuts and tree nuts (including but not limited to almonds, cashews, macadamia nuts and pistachios) to be part of our school community.

To assist us in providing a safe environment for everyone, we ask that you avoid including foods that may contain peanuts or tree nuts in your child's lunch box. These may include:

- Peanut butter, Nutella or similar
- Baked goods /biscuits containing nuts
- Muesli bars
- Foods containing peanut oil
- Pesto

If you are unsure whether a food contains peanuts or tree nuts, please err on the side of caution and where possible, pack an alternative food in your child's lunchbox.

Food safety tips for homemade lunches & snacks, including Munch and Crunch

Healthy lunches and snacks are important for children and help with their concentration and learning. School lunches however are particularly susceptible to food poisoning, especially in the summer heat. Parents and carers are reminded of a few simple food safety rules to prepare safe and healthy school lunches and avoid the growth and contamination of food poisoning bacteria.

- Before handling food, wash hands with soap and warm running water and dry thoroughly. Lunch boxes and eating utensils should also be washed thoroughly before reuse. Children should also be encouraged to always wash their hands before eating.
- Foods that are prepared the night before, such as sandwiches, should be frozen overnight and then taken out for each day's school lunch. Suitable foods to freeze are bread, cooked meat, cheese, baked beans or vegemite.
- Food brought from home by the preschool children may be stored in refrigerators within the rooms. Please inform your child's educator if this is necessary. The K – 2 rooms do not have fridges. Because food is normally stored in a child's lunch box for several hours, the lunch box needs to be kept cool. This can be done by:
 - Choosing an insulated lunch box or one with a freezer pack or include a wrapped frozen water bottle to keep the lunch box cool.
 - Perishable foods such as dairy products, eggs and sliced meats should be kept cool, and eaten within about four hours of preparation. Do not pack these foods if just cooked, first cool in the refrigerator overnight.

- If including leftover meals such as meats, pasta and rice dishes, ensure you pack a frozen ice block into the lunch box
- Healthy drinks, such as water and milk can be frozen overnight and then stored in your child's lunchbox, helping to keep it cold.

Using the Canteen

The school has a canteen that is open five days per week. If you want to order lunch for your child an order can be placed in the basket at Reception no later than 9.20am each day. The menu is on display at reception or available on the website. The Kindergarten to Year 2 children collect their lunch from the canteen, lunches for the preschool children are delivered to their rooms.

To order a lunch:

- Download the Flexischools app or
- Write the order and cost, child's name and group clearly on an envelope. Place money in the envelope and where possible try to have the correct money. If change is to be given it will be left at Reception for your collection.

Clothing

Southern Cross Early Childhood School has a very appealing and comfortable selection of school clothes. The main colours are bright blue and orange. The colours have been specially selected as they are high visibility and different to all other schools - if the educators take the children on an excursion they definitely stand out. The clothes have also been designed to be comfortable and practical for play based learning. During summer, sandals are sensible footwear, but thongs or clogs are not permitted. It is very helpful if your child can tie up shoelaces and manage other items of clothing. We encourage children to carry a spare change of clothes in their bag in case of accidents or messy play. When the weather becomes colder children need a coat, or at least another layer of clothing, as they spend time outside during break-times. We are fortunate that our building is very warm in winter, so children frequently need to take off a layer of clothing.

All items of clothing are available at very competitive prices from our P&C. These include:

- Broad brimmed sun hats
- Short sleeved collared t-shirts in blue or orange
- Long sleeved collared t-shirts in blue or orange
- Warm polar fleece tops

Order forms are available at Reception.



Sun Protection

Southern Cross Early Childhood School is an accredited SunSmart School. Children and educators are required to wear a broad brimmed or legionnaires hat outside every day except in June and July when the UV levels remain low. Please label hats so that they are easily identifiable. Caps are not acceptable as they can leave ears and necks exposed to sun damage. Broad brimmed hats are available through the School's P&C for purchasing.

Labelling

Please name everything with permanent markers.

Staff will make every effort to locate lost items that are named. Ensure the child's name is clearly visible. Lunch boxes and drink bottles need to be named also. If the name washes off, please keep rewriting it.

School Bags

We strongly recommend that you buy a bag big enough for your child. It may look too big, but we can assure you that children have many things to carry in their bags including coats in winter. Also, educators encourage children to put sweatshirts, lunch boxes and other belongings straight into their bags to avoid losing them, so their school bags need to be roomy. Backpacks with a waist belt as well as shoulder straps are recommended for good back care.

Voluntary Contributions

During the year your child/ren will participate in a variety of learning experiences that require additional art and craft supplies, cooking ingredients and/or dramatic play props. A voluntary contribution will support us in covering the cost of these items. These contributions made by families, each year, directly support children's education and the learning environment at Southern Cross Early Childhood School. You can contribute at the start of the year or by instalments at any time throughout the year. Please note that the payment of this financial contribution is voluntary. The Education Act 2004 states that your child will not be approached or refused benefits or services if you choose not to contribute. Individual records of contributions are kept confidential.

Money

All money sent to school for excursions etc. is to be given to Reception in an envelope marked with your child's name, class, amount and what the money is for. Receipts will be issued once your payment is processed.

Payments to the P&C are to be placed in the secure black box in the community kitchen near Reception.

Valuable Items at School

We ask that children not bring toys or other items to school, except by prior arrangement with your child's educator, in which case they must remain in school bags for safety. This prevents loss, damage and theft of much-loved toys and possessions. A range of sporting equipment and other activities are available for children's use in the Outside Learning Environment.

Parent Support

Parentlink www.parentlink.act.gov.au is a website which parents/carers can use to access:

- Parents' guides, including electronic order forms,
- A directory of local parenting services,
- Upcoming community events and parenting courses,
- Further readings in relation to the parent guides,
- Links to other useful websites.

Concerns or Complaints

If you have a concern about your child's education and/or care, please have a conversation with your child's educator. You are also welcome to make contact with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Should the need arise the ACT Education Directorate has a policy for complaints resolution. It can be accessed at http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z

Medical Condition Management

Immunisation

The ACT Health Directorate advises that all children attending school in the ACT should be immunised against diphtheria, tetanus, whooping cough, polio, measles, mumps, rubella and HIB (Haemophilus influenzae type b). We would ask that you check your child's present immunisation status to see whether it is complete for his/her age. ACT Public Health regulations require schools to request proof of up-to-date immunisation when enrolling. Failure to provide this may result in your child being excluded from school should an outbreak of an infectious disease occur. A copy of exclusion periods for students with infectious diseases is included at the end of this handbook. Parents and carers are asked to adhere closely to these requirements unless medical advice to the contrary is provided in writing.

Illness and Accidents

It is important that sick children are kept at home for their own comfort as well as the comfort of other children and staff. If a child becomes ill or is injured at school appropriate First Aid will be given and if necessary, parents/carers will be notified and asked to take their child home. If emergency treatment is required parents/carers will be notified immediately and the child will be transferred by ambulance to hospital. All children who have an ongoing condition (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, anaphylaxis) must have a treatment plan completed by parents/carers and their GP and lodged at the school.

Exclusion periods for infectious diseases such as Mumps, German Measles, Measles and Chicken Pox are provided at the end of this handbook.

If a child is to take a **prescription medicine** while at school, written directions and medicine must be left with Reception staff. The permission form can be found on our website at http://www.scecs.act.edu.au/our_school/notes.

Hygiene Procedures

Staff, children and volunteers must adhere to the hand washing procedures. All children are required to wash their hands:

- On arrival
- Before and after eating or touching food
- After toileting
- After blowing their nose and wiping tears and dribbles
- When leaving the school

Head lice are extremely contagious but easily eradicated. Children with either eggs or live lice will be excluded from school until treatment is undertaken and eggs and lice are removed from the child's hair. Please report any cases of head lice to Reception.

Emergency Management Procedures

The School has a policy on emergency evacuations and are required to practise evacuations procedures including lockdown and lockout. All staff and children participate. Parents are notified by email following these procedures.

Insurance and Ambulance Transport

The ACT Education Directorate does not provide any insurance cover for injury, disease or illness to students resulting from school activities or school-organised excursions. Claims for compensation are met where there is a legal liability to do so. Liability is not automatic and depends on the circumstances in which any injury, disease or illness was sustained.

As there is no automatic insurance cover for personal injury if your child is injured at school or during a school organised activity/excursion you should therefore consider whether taking out personal insurance cover for your child is warranted.

This insurance might cover contingencies including medical/hospital expenses, ambulance transport outside the ACT, and cancellation of transport/accommodation or loss of/damage to luggage.

The ACT Ambulance Service provides free ambulance transport for students who are injured or suddenly become ill at school or during an approved school organised activity **within the ACT**.

Diseases - Outbreak Procedures and Exclusion Periods

Personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, covering weeping sores, not sharing food or drinks and not attending school when ill or suffering from diarrhoea are important means of limiting the transmission of a number of common infectious conditions.

The *ACT Public Health Regulations 2000* require children with the following conditions, and children who have been in contact with the following conditions, to be excluded from school, preschool, childcare or family day care for the periods specified.

Condition	Exclusion period of person with condition	Exclusion of persons in contact with condition
Amoebiasis (entamoeba histolytica)	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*Campylobacteriosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Chicken pox (varicella and herpes zoster)	Exclude until the last blister has scabbed over. The child should not continue to be excluded by reason only of some remaining scabs.	Not excluded Any child with an immune deficiency (eg with leukaemia, or as a result of receiving chemotherapy) should be excluded for their own protection and seek urgent medical advice and varicella-zoster immunoglobulin (ZIG), if necessary.
Conjunctivitis (acute infectious)	Exclude until discharge from eyes ceases.	Not excluded
*Cryptosporidiosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Diarrhoea	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*#Diphtheria	Exclude until— at least 2 negative throat swabs have been taken (the first not less than 24 hours after cessation of antibiotic treatment and the second not less than 48 hours later), and a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Exclude family and household contacts until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer.
Giardiasis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*# <i>Haemophilus influenzae</i> type b (Hib)	Exclude until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Hand, Foot and Mouth disease	Exclude if— child is unwell, or child is drooling, and not all blisters have dried or an exposed weeping blister is not covered with a dressing.	Not excluded
*Hepatitis A	Exclude for at least 7 days after the onset of jaundice and a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Herpes (cold sores)	Exclude young children unable to comply with good hygiene practices while the lesion is weeping. Lesion to be covered by a dressing in all cases, if possible.	Not excluded
Impetigo (school sores)	Exclude until appropriate treatment has commenced and sores on exposed surfaces are covered with a watertight dressing.	Not excluded
Influenza and influenza-like illnesses	Exclude until well	Not excluded
*Leprosy	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer.	Not excluded

*#Measles	Exclude for at least 4 days after the rash appears.	Immunised contacts not excluded. Exclude non-immunised contacts until 14 days after the first day of appearance of the rash in the index case. (b) Non-immunised contacts immunised with measles vaccine within 72 hours after their first contact with the index case are not excluded after being immunised. (d) Non-immunised contacts who are given normal human immunoglobulin (NHIG) within 7 days after their first contact with the index case are not excluded after being given NHIG.
Meningitis (bacterial)	Exclude until well	Not excluded
*Meningococcal infection	Exclude until adequate carrier eradication therapy has commenced.	Not excluded if receiving rifampicin or other antibiotic treatment recommended by the Chief Health Officer. Otherwise, excluded until 10 days after last contact with the index case.
*#Mumps	Exclude for 9 days after onset of symptoms, or until parotid swelling goes down (whichever is sooner).	Not excluded
*#Poliomyelitis	Exclude for at least 14 days after onset of symptoms and until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	Not excluded
Ringworm, scabies, pediculosis (lice), trachoma	Exclude until effective treatment has commenced.	Not excluded
Rotavirus	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*#Rubella (German measles)	Exclude for 4 days after the appearance of the rash.	Not excluded Female staff of child-bearing age should ensure that their immune status against rubella is adequate.
*Salmonellosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
*Shigellosis	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded
Streptococcal infection (including scarlet fever)	Exclude until the person has recovered or has received antibiotic treatment for at least 24 hours.	Not excluded
*Tuberculosis	Exclude until approval to return has been given by the Chief Health Officer.	Not excluded

*Typhoid and paratyphoid fever	Exclude until a certificate is provided by a medical practitioner recommending that the exclusion should cease.	(a) Not excluded unless the Chief Health Officer notifies the person in charge of the school. (a) If the Chief Health Officer gives notice, exclusion is subject to the conditions in the notice.
*#Whooping cough (pertussis)	Exclude for 21 days from start of cough, or for at least 5 days after starting a course of antibiotics recommended by the Chief Health Officer.	Exclude non-immunised household, home based child care and close child care contacts under 7 years old for 14 days after the last exposure to infection, or until 5 days after starting a course of antibiotics recommended by the Chief Health Officer (whichever is sooner).
Worms (intestinal)	Exclude until diarrhoea ceases	Not excluded

A parent/carer of a child with a listed exclusion condition or a child who has been in contact with a listed exclusion condition must notify the school principal or principal carer as soon as possible.

*These conditions must be notified by medical practitioners to the Chief Health Officer

#These conditions must be notified by the school principal or principal carer to the Chief Health Officer.

Version Control

This version of the Southern Cross Early Childhood School Information Booklet was updated in May 2025.

Up-to-date policies and procedures for the ACT Education and Training Directorate can be found at www.education.act.gov.au