St Michael’s Pre-school handbook
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General information

Using the handbook  The staff of St Michael’s Pre-school extends a warm welcome to you and your child.

This handbook has been compiled to help parents be clear about some of the Pre-school’s operations.

There are many ways to obtain updated information about what is happening at St Michael’s. We have newsletters and regular messages which can be found on Cranbrook’s portal. The portal address is portal.cranbrook.nsw.edu.au. Parents are given the login and password to access the portal at the start of the school year. You are encouraged to visit the portal regularly.

The School’s website address is www.cranbrook.nsw.edu.au.

Contacting the Pre-school
Postal address  Cnr Gilliver Avenue and Vaucluse Road
                Vaucluse NSW 2030
Telephone       (02) 9371 9214
Facsimile       (02) 9388 2317
Website         www.cranbrook.nsw.edu.au
Portal          portal.cranbrook.nsw.edu.au

Philosophy

Our philosophy is based on the belief that parents/guardians and staff can work together to provide the best possible foundation for the children’s growth and development.

Early childhood is the most formative period of a child’s development. During this time language, skills, attitudes and concepts are developed within each child.

St Michael’s Pre-school aims to provide an environment that is secure, warm, caring and positive. Educational activities are provided to stimulate imagination, creativity, decision making, and the development of language and expression.

Development of physical, cognitive, social and life skills are enhanced by our program with emphasis placed on each child as an individual and the nurturing of positive self-esteem in order for each child to reach full potential.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to join in the daily program as this encourages continuity and partnership between home and the Pre-school.
About the Pre-school

St Michael’s Pre-school was established in the parish hall by Cranbrook School in 1944. It is a community-based pre-school and is co-educational. The Pre-school is licensed by the Department of Education and Communities and enrolls forty children per day from three years to five years of age.

Children may attend two days (Thursday, Friday), three days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday) or five days (Monday to Friday), subject to availability.

Each day, each group of 20 children has a teacher and a child care worker as the primary educators. An additional part-time member of staff works with all groups and educators in the playground. This allows staff to engage children in experiences in our split-level playground while ensuring supervision. A part-time child care worker (crib break worker) works from 11.30am to 2.30pm each day.

Pre-school aims

The staff at St Michael’s aims to develop:

– a positive self-concept for each child and an increasing understanding and knowledge of the world around them
– emotional security and to have fun through exploration and social interactions
– social awareness and skills that enable each child to have trust in others, to share, to cooperate and to develop positive relationships
– language and communication skills through guided and/or free inquiry
– intellectual skills, reasoning skills, problem-solving skills and understanding of basic concepts through guided inquiry
– physical health through body awareness, sensory perception, and fine and gross motor skills
– creativity through self-expression, language, music and inquiry.

Code of Conduct

Children are encouraged to develop those social skills which will allow them to resolve conflicts and have their needs met without the use of aggressive or destructive behaviour.

When disciplinary situations occur which require adult intervention, staff will provide the child with clear explanations as to why a particular behaviour is unacceptable and then help the child to find alternative, acceptable behaviours.

Pre-school hours

St Michael’s Pre-school is licensed to operate between the hours of 8.45am and 2.45pm, and operates on the four term system with Cranbrook School holidays.

Parents are requested to adhere to these times. No child should arrive before 8.45am. The morning period is very busy as both indoors and outdoors have to be set up before children arrive.

Children at the Pre-school should arrive between 8.45am and 9.15am. Children who come in later may miss out on activities and beneficial learning experiences, which have been especially planned.

Late Fee Policy

The children are the responsibility of their parents after 2.45pm. If the children are not collected by this time, the staff will make every effort to contact the parents and/or emergency contacts and persons authorised to collect their child.

If the staff are unable to contact an authorised person, two (2) teachers will wait at the Pre-school with the child for a reasonable period of time.

Under no circumstances is a staff member to take a child home in a car.
Under no circumstances will a child be given into custody of a taxi driver.

Parents will be responsible for all expenses incurred if they are late collecting children. The rate for late arrival is $1.00 a minute and will be charged to your account.

Parents and authorised persons will be required to sign a late form at the time of arrival.

The Director should be contacted in an emergency.
Starting at Pre-school

Settling in

For many children, starting at Pre-school will be their first experience of being separated from their parents. Many children will experience some anxiety leaving their parents for the first time, and it is important that parents and staff work together to build the special relationship necessary for successful adjustment.

Coping with new faces, routines and limits is not easy. However, once your child has established trust and confidence in his or her new environment and caregiver, the separation becomes a lot easier.

Even if your child has been in an early childhood service before, he/she will still take time to adjust to the new environment and staff.

You can help your child adjust by:
- visiting the Pre-school with your child several times prior to enrolment. Orientation visits are organised during the year. This experience helps you and your child to become familiar with the environment, staff and Pre-school life
- being confident. If you are anxious you can easily pass this feeling onto your child. Each child will settle differently into pre-school. Some children separate and say goodbye quickly. Other children require a parent to remain until settled
- always telling your child when you are going and that you will return.

Please feel free to phone the Pre-school to ask how your child is faring.

Leaving and collecting children

In the Morning

1. Please sign in with time of arrival on the Sign-in/Out Book which is located on a table in the small room near the entrance.
2. Assist your child by:
   a. placing your child’s bag in his or her locker
   b. bringing your child’s fruit in a clearly named paper bag or labelled container, and placing it in the appropriate fruit basket
   c. placing your child’s water bottle on a tray.
3. On Monday mornings (3- and 5-day children) or Thursday morning (2-day children) should place the sheet bag in the relevant basket. Sun-hat in hat locker or worn if going outside.
4. Place sunhat in hat locker or on child’s head if going outside.
5. Take your child to his or her teacher for a morning greeting.

6. Leave time for a cuddle or for helping your child find an activity. Say good-bye and go! Disappearing without a warning or staying around too long after good-byes have been said will confuse and unsettle your child. It may make him/her even less willing to say good-bye the next day.

In the Afternoon

1. Sign the time of departure and your name in the Sign-in/out Book.
2. Assist your child in collecting his/her bag and belongings.
3. Take your child to his/her teacher to shake hands and say ‘Good Afternoon’.
4. Please take time to read the notices.

Boy’s summer uniform
- Navy blue shorts – straight front, elastic back, pocket
- Sky blue shirt – open neck, short sleeve
- Short grey socks (optional)
- Navy blue sandals – T-bar
- Sun hat – legionnaire cap

Boy’s winter uniform
- Navy Cranbrook tracksuit with Cranbrook School crest.
- Red skivvy
- Grey socks
- Black or navy shoes/sneakers

Girl’s summer uniform
- Navy blue skirt
- Sky blue shirt – either open neck or Peter Pan collar
- Navy blue sandals
- Sun hat – bucket hat

Girl’s winter uniform
- Navy Cranbrook tracksuit with Cranbrook School crest.
- Red skivvy
- Red socks
- Black or navy shoes/sneakers

Clothing is available from the Cranbrook Uniform Shop. All clothing should be clearly labelled with your child’s name.
The program

Each week staff plan a program of learning experiences, which are designed to foster children’s development. These learning experiences will be planned according to weekly observations made of children’s interests. These activities include language and literature, music and movement, art and craft, dramatic play, science and maths experiences, and sensory motor activities to promote physical development and coordination. These learning experiences will be linked to the outcomes of The Early Years Learning Framework.

Children are able to choose for themselves the learning experiences in which they would like to be involved. Staff will support children in making choices, where appropriate. Children are encouraged to develop their independence through the daily routine.

The daily program is designed to provide a balance between children's need for active as well as passive engagement, indoor and outdoor activities, and group and individual experiences.

### Daily routine

**8.45am – Arrival**

During the morning, the 40 children are divided into two groups. A teacher and a child care educator teach a group of 20 children.

**Indoor and outdoor play**

We have both an indoor and outdoor program. One group begins indoors, the other group outdoors. Then the groups change programs.

**10.00am – Preparation for fruit-time**

Children tidy up play areas, use the bathroom and wash their hands. Fruit is eaten on either the picnic mats at the lower end of the playground or at the tables in the front courtyard.

Children help the teachers pack away indoor and outdoor activities just before 11.45am.

**12.00am – Group time**

The children divide into two groups for group experiences such as music and movement, language arts, story and games, etc.

**12.30pm – Lunch time**

Children take part in the bathroom routine for lunch. Lunch is eaten in the front courtyard.

**1.15pm – Rest time**

Children go to the bathroom. They rest on their beds in the small and main activity rooms where they listen to stories and ambient music.

2.00pm – Quiet work time

Children select from a variety of activities such as puzzles, drawing, books, and manipulative puzzles.

**Children may sleep through this period.**

Children who are to attend school the following year have an extension program in the afternoon, later in the year.

2.30pm – Going home time

Children play with free-play puzzles as parents arrive to collect their child.

2.45pm – End of the Pre-school day

Should you wish to talk about any part of the program or your child’s progress, or if you have any concerns at all about his or her care, please feel welcome to talk about them with the Director or other staff members.

### Daily journal

Parents should also access the portal to read more about the children’s experiences and learning. Accessing the portal at least once a week is recommended.

### Children’s journal

Each child has his/her own journal, which reflects his or her investigations and interests throughout the year. The journal provides an overview of your child’s development. You can enjoy looking at your child’s journal throughout the year and see how interests develop over time.

Each child will take his or her journal home at the end of the year.

### Excursions

Excursions will be arranged for the children during the year. We shall need a few parents to help on these occasions.

Parental permission must be given before a child can be taken outside the Pre-school. Written consent forms will be handed out for you to sign before any excursion or outing.

The destination, departure time and mode of transport will be advertised at the time of written consent being obtained.
Parents’/Guardians’ involvement

**Sign-in/out Book**  
Parents must sign their child in and out of Pre-school each day by using the *Sign-in/Out Book*. This is a legally required by Department of Education and Communities.  
An adult (18 years and over) must accompany your child and sign the child in/out.

**Authority to pick up your child**  
Parents need to inform staff of person(s) who are collecting their son or daughter from Pre-school. Parents need to write the authorisation on the *Alternative Arrangements Form* which is located next to the *Sign In/Out Book*.  
If arrangements for your child are changed during the day please telephone the Pre-school.  
If authorisation from parents has not been received, staff are not permitted to let your child accompany any other person. If staff have not met the person authorised to collect your child from Pre-school, some form of identification, (eg drivers’ licence) will be requested.

**Custody and access**  
If a parent is experiencing problems associated with custody and access, please discuss this with the Director. A copy of a current court order is required for our file and we will do our utmost to abide by this. If there is any likelihood of problems associated with the collection of a child, it is the parent’s responsibility to notify the Director of any changes to a court order.

**Change of address**  
It is your responsibility to notify the Pre-school immediately if there is a change of address and phone number. This also applies to changes of work address or phone numbers. It is most important that the Pre-school staff are able to contact you quickly, should the need arise.

**Absences**  
Please inform the Pre-school during the morning if your child will be absent from Pre-school, preferably between 8.00am and 8.45am.

**Safety**  
When entering or leaving the Pre-school building please make sure the front door and child safety gates are closed. Do not allow your child to open, close or climb on the gates.

**Parking of cars**  
Parents must not drive up the driveway to drop off or collect their children. Parking is available on Gilliver Avenue and on New South Head Road. There is access to the Pre-school via stairs at St Michael’s Place. Please take care to park well clear of driveways.

Children’s progress

If you wish to discuss any issues regarding your child, please arrange a time to talk to your child’s teacher.  
The teachers offer two half-yearly parent/teacher chats during the year. This is a good opportunity to discuss your child’s progress. Parents are advised of dates and times for these chats.

Parental involvement

Parents are encouraged to become involved in the Pre-school as this is the best way to become familiar with the program and staff. Through your involvement, your child will develop a sense of continuity between home and the Pre-school which will in turn facilitate his or her adjustment to the Pre-school.  
Try to leave enough time each day for a daily chat with staff. This will enable you to report any significant changes or events happening at home that may affect your child’s day at Pre-school. Likewise the staff will report to you regarding your child’s time at the Pre-school.
Parent Committee

The Pre-school is required to have at least three parents on the Parent Committee each year. The Committee organises events during the year, such as a cocktail party and picnics. This allows children and families to get to know one other.

Food and nutrition

Parents are asked to supply a piece of fruit, lunch in a lunch-box and a drink bottle for their child. The Pre-school encourages a well-balanced and nutritious lunch. Children are not permitted to have lollies, chips, cakes etc. at the Pre-school. We are also nut free. Foods containing nuts or nut products should not be brought to Pre-school in case there are children attending who suffer from a life-threatening allergy. It is recommended that food be stored in a lunchbox with an ice brick or in the refrigerator located in the kitchen. Please refer to our Food and Nutrition Policy, available at the Pre-school.

Parent library

A parent resource library has been established. Books, brochures and articles with information on various topics ranging from health to behaviour management, Pre-school policies and ideas for craft activities are provided.

Please speak to a teacher who will direct you to the library.

Parent notice board

A notice board for parents is located at the Pre-school and notices are displayed on it at the entrance to the Pre-school. Information is also displayed on the School portal.

Please check the notices regularly for any new information.

Portal

St. Michael’s has a site on the School portal. Accessing the portal allows you to find out what is happening at the Pre-school. Parents can see what the children’s interests and experiences are at Pre-school, and read announcements and newsletters.

Parents can access the portal using any computer with internet access. They will be given the log in and password at the commencement of each year.

Toys from home

The bringing of toys from home is discouraged. Not only can they cause conflict, but there is also no guarantee that they will not be broken.

If children want the security of a special soft toy, please ensure it is clearly labelled with your child’s name. During the day, staff may encourage the child to store the toy in a safe place in a bag in his/her locker.

Sheet basket

Each week your child should bring a bag with his or her name on the outside which contains a sheet to fit a cot-sized bed. This bag should be placed in the cane basket. The sheets will be sent home weekly to be laundered.

Children's lockers

The children’s lockers are located in the main activity room and the hallway outside the children’s bathroom.

Each locker has space for a child's bag and possessions.

A small back pack or lunch pouch is recommended.

Each student is allocated a locker. Lockers are shared by children who attend 2 or 3 days, but not on the same day.

Children's work is sent home via the lockers.

Fruit baskets

The fruit baskets are located in the main activity room. Please place your child’s fruit (morning tea) in a clearly named paper bag or recyclable plastic container, and place it in your child’s group fruit basket.

We are happy to cut and peel your child's fruit if required.

Birthdays

You are invited to send a cake and candles to the Pre-school on or near your child’s birthday. Please let your child’s teacher know if you wish to do this, as we need to take children with food allergies into account.

What to bring

1. A piece of fruit for morning tea
2. Lunch in a lunch-box and a drink
3. A bottle for drinking water
4. A complete change of clothes and a pair of underpants for those unexpected accidents, in a plastic bag
5. Sheet bag with a sheet and a blanket
6. Sun-hat or cap to wear outdoors
7. Jumper or jacket to wear during cooler weather
8. Photos: We would appreciate a set of four passport size photographs to be brought in when your child commences Pre-school. These photographs will be used to identify your child’s locker, name card, class and group.

Sunscreen

The Pre-school provides Cancer Council SPF 15 broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen for the use of all children. If your child needs a different sort of sunscreen, please provide the appropriate type, clearly marked with your child’s name. Sunscreen should ideally be applied before leaving home as it takes 20 minutes to become effective. Please note that when applying sunscreen, cover all exposed skin but do not rub it in completely. It should be left to be absorbed naturally. Parents should apply sunscreen to their child on arrival at Pre-school if they have not done so at home.
Health Policy

Accidents

If your child is injured while at the Pre-school, a staff member will contact you as soon as possible.

You will receive feedback from staff as to what first aid treatment was applied and any other relevant information.

All members of Pre-school staff hold a current St John’s Ambulance Senior First Aid Certificate, with additional training in Asthma and Anaphylaxis. Therefore appropriate First Aid measures will be taken as needed. We will comfort your child to ensure that he or she feels safe and calm.

The staff will endeavour to protect the safety of all children at all times. However, accidents do happen and in the event that your child needs to see a doctor or dentist a staff member will inform you immediately. If we cannot contact you then we will call the emergency contacts nominated on the Enrolment Form.

If the illness or injury requires emergency treatment the Director will call for an ambulance and then call the parents, as the immediate treatment of the child and the child’s safety are paramount. The Pre-school requires a signed consent form to arrange emergency care (Pre-enrolment Form). Should parents and emergency contacts be unavailable, the Pre-school will automatically contact emergency care.

Medication

If your child has to take medication during the day, please refer to the centre’s Health Policy, which is available at the Pre-school. Please do not leave medication in your child’s bag.

Anaphylaxis and Asthma policy

The school has policies and procedures in place for the treatment and management of students who suffer from Anaphylaxis and Asthma. These policies are available, upon request.

Infectious diseases

If your child is diagnosed as having an infectious disease, it is your responsibility to notify the Director immediately.

Parents will be notified of any cases of significant infectious diseases by way of a notice at the entrance to the Pre-school.

Immunisation

Parents are requested to lodge an Immunisation Certificate for their child at the time of enrolment.

If no certificate is provided or your child has not been immunised, he/she may still enrol at the Pre-school.

However, if another child is suffering from one of the vaccine preventable diseases, children with no certificate or those who are not immunised will be excluded from the Pre-school for the duration of the outbreak of the disease.

The health and safety of all children are of major concern to staff and parents at St Michael’s Pre-school. Since the Pre-school does not have separate facilities for the care of sick children, parents are asked not to send sick children to the Pre-school.

More importantly, staff/child ratios prevent the staff from providing the degree of individual care and comfort that a sick child needs.

Staff will ask you to take your child home if it is felt that he or she is not well enough to attend.

If your child falls ill while at the Pre-school, a staff member will contact you as soon as possible. We may request that you collect your child if the illness makes your child uncomfortable. Children commencing at pre-schools are often susceptible to infection because of close contact with other children.

Parents should ensure that they have made alternative arrangements for their child if he or she falls sick.

It is essential that parents inform staff of any health-related problems. A child’s life could depend on staff having the right information, (eg history of convulsions). If your child suffers from any allergies or chronic conditions, this should be discussed with staff, so that they know how they should attend to your child if necessary.

Please read the full Health Policy available at the Pre-school.

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