

# Early Learning Centre

*Discover, imagine and create.*

**Parent Handbook**

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# Welcome to Mount Carmel College's Early Learning Centre

Mount Carmel College Early Learning Centre (ELC) is a small Tasmanian based organisation that provides high quality education and care for children from 3 years of age during term time. Our ELC is located within the College grounds with access from Nelson Road. We offer an Early Learning Program, Before School Care, After School Care and Holiday Care.

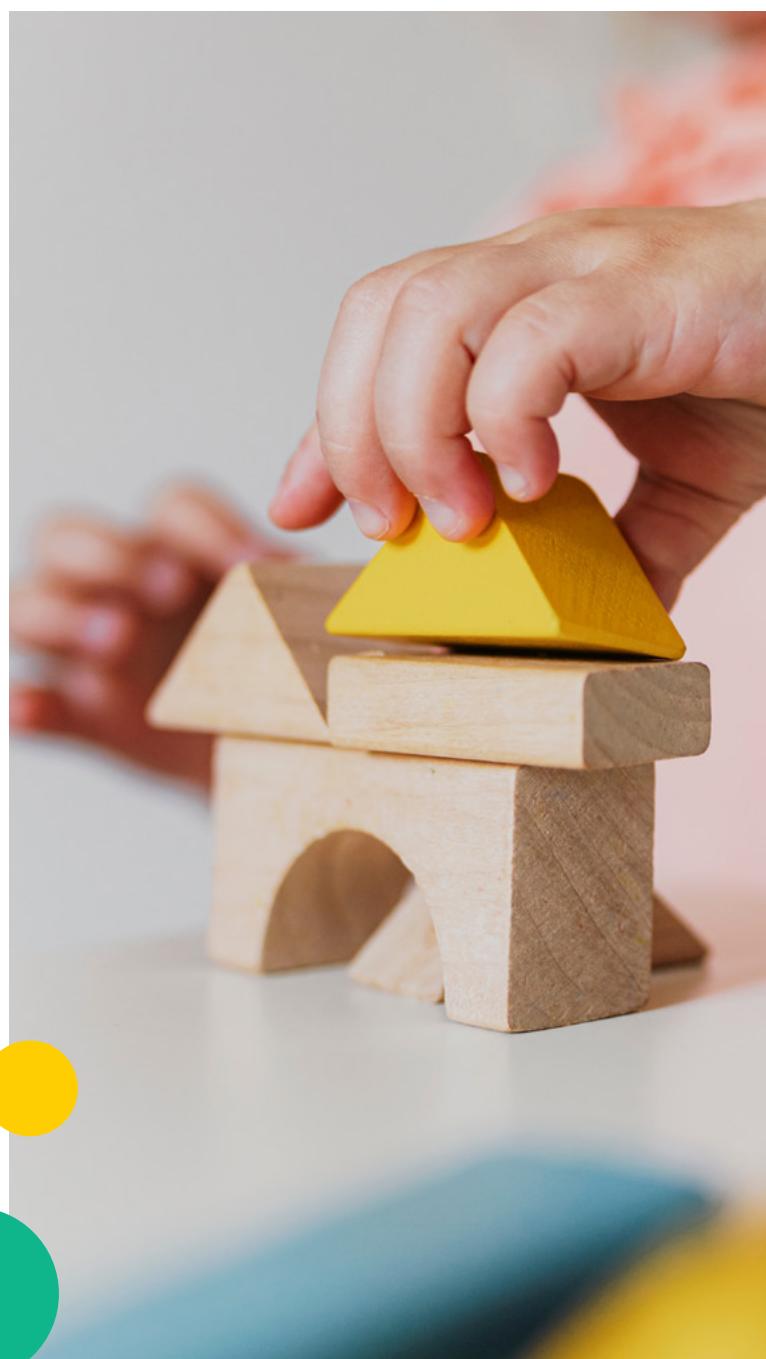
<b>Early Learning Centre</b>	7:30am – 6:00pm
<b>Before School Care</b>	7.30am – 8.30am
<b>After School Care</b>	3.05pm – 6.00pm
<b>Holiday Care</b>	7.30am – 6.00pm
<b>Student Free Days</b>	7.30am – 6.00pm*

Our staff are dedicated educators who provide children with a safe, secure and nurturing environment across all programs. Each child is encouraged to learn through adventure and discovery.

\*Centre closed on annual staff training day

## Our Vision for Reconciliation

We recognise and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the traditional custodians of the land on which our early learning services are offered. Our staff are committed to building partnerships based on trust, respect and recognition of the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Equity, integrity and respect is at the centre of what we do when our educators create high quality early learning experiences inclusive of all children. We are working towards creating an Action Plan that the College will implement from ELC to Year 10.



## Location

Mount Carmel College is located on picturesque grounds in Sandy Bay just 10 minutes from Hobart. Our Early Learning Centre can be accessed from Nelson Road or via the main entrance off Sandy Bay Road.

## Facilities

The service is in a separate building within the College grounds and has spacious open areas, quiet rooms, excellent educational and play resources and a playground designed to meet the needs of young children. The children also have regular access to the College's specialist facilities including the O'Brien Resource Centre, Cahill Centre, Music, Dance Studio and Physical Education equipment.

## Our Philosophy

At Mount Carmel College our Early Learning Centre we believe that play fosters a child's imagination enabling them to explore the world at their own level. Our programs have a play based approach to learning and aims to support young children to individually grow and develop their love of learning, faith in Christ and their own identity with integrity. Our meaningful learning experiences support the learning needs and abilities of all children. We strive to provide children with the opportunity to explore and extend their imagination, problem solving skills and creativity.

We believe that when a child is holistically supported and guided in their learning environment they are more likely to achieve great success that is meaningful to their individual experience.

We strive to create and maintain a vibrant educational environment where children are nurtured and guided by experienced educators. Our educators aim to create a space for children that welcomes them and promotes a sense of belonging. We often collaborate with students, families and other early years professionals to create an environment that is safe, inviting and engaging for everyone.

Our ELC believes that strong partnerships with children and their families are an integral part of individual learning success. Our educators work with families to build positive relationships with children and create lifelong learners.

## School Life

Our Early Learning students will be invited to attend whole school and Primary events throughout the year. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Primary Prayer
- Assemblies and Masses
- Book Week
- Athletics Carnival
- Mount Carmel Day events
- College Arts Festival

## Our Educators

Mount Carmel College ELC operates in accordance with government regulations. The staffing ratio is 1:10. Our staff are qualified professionals who are passionate and experienced Early Childhood Educators.

Each educator strives to build partnerships with families and positive relationships between each other and the children. They plan and implement programs that cater for individual needs, interests and abilities for children. Educators participate in ongoing Professional Learning throughout the school year.

## Our Commitment to Child Safety

Our service is committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children is maintained at all times whilst being educated and cared for by educators and staff at Mount Carmel College. We promote a child safe environment that minimises the risk to all children in our care from all types of abuse, harm and neglect.

We have a zero tolerance for inappropriate behaviour towards children and any breach of child protection law. Any allegation or concern will be responded to promptly by management.

## National Quality Framework

Our service complies with the Australian Government's National Quality Framework (NQF) which consists of the legislative framework of the Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, the National Quality Standard and a rigorous assessment and rating system. Our educational program and curriculum are based on the Australian Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF). We regularly self-assess our practices against the National Quality Standard and strive for continuous improvement through our Quality Improvement Plan (QIP). The QIP assists our service to identify quality aspects of care we are already providing and assists in developing future goals for further improvement. Families are welcome to provide feedback and suggestions for improvement.

Additional information about the NQF can be found at [ACECQA/nqf/about](http://ACECQA/nqf/about)

## Early Years Learning Framework

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) was developed to ensure all children in early childhood education and care settings across Australia, experience quality teaching and learning through play-based, holistic learning. The EYLF is made up of learning outcomes, principles and practices which educators use in their documentation of children's learning and in their reflection and planning. Fundamental to the EYLF is a view of children's lives as characterised by belonging, being and becoming.

## Educational Program

Our play-based program focuses on each child's unique needs and interests. We partner with families to ensure their child's culture, abilities, and ideas are central to their learning. In our Early Learning program, we offer specialist classes of PE, Japanese, Music, Dance and Library.

We encourage independence and the development of self-help skills through routine activities and interest-based projects. Students contribute to regular prayer routines and are encouraged to learn about the Catholic faith through discussions and attending College Mass.

All planning and programming is completed on a private online platform, Storypark. We invite all families to view, comment and contribute to their child's learning updates.

A big part of our curriculum is Nature Play. We plan regular visits to Lambert Park where we foster a deep appreciation and respect for the natural environment. This immersion in the Tasmanian outdoors not only inspires creativity and wonder but also builds a vital connection to Country. Through this direct experience, children begin to build an understanding of First Nations culture and people.

## Documentation

Our educators record the children's ideas, thoughts and experiences, and the processes they work through to come to new understandings. Many of these are shared with parents via our online Learning Management System, Storypark. Student learning is documented through individual and whole group plans.

### What does documentation look like?

- Photographs or videos
- Transcripts of small group discussions
- Children's symbolic representations of their theories and ideas (drawing, sculpting, painting)
- Collaborative projects
- Observations
- Descriptive learning snapshots and stories



### Individual plans:

We document valuable learning moments of each child and use the information to plan specific play and learning experiences. This information is documented in the Individual Learning Plans and shared with families each term. The document is always changing and continuously being updated by staff. We invite families to share feedback on their child's learning journey.

### Whole Group Plan – Term Curriculum:

Our Early Childhood Teacher and Centre Manager work in collaboration with both Educators and children, to plan an intentional Curriculum for each term. The curriculum is based on goals for each child, whole group learning goals and College community events. Families are encouraged to engage in the program and are always welcome to participate. We encourage parents' feedback on our program, verbally or in writing.

## Outside School Hours Care

The ELC provides Outside School Hours programs including before school and after school care during school term. These programs provide a nurturing space for children to spend time relaxing and having fun in the transition times between home and school. Our Holiday Care program is a leisure based program that operates during each school holiday period. It is run by a mixture of regular permanent and casual educators. This program welcomes children aged 3 years and above.

## Communication

We encourage families to communicate with staff and access information about our Early Learning and School-aged programs by following the guide below:

- **Storypark:** for learning updates, routines and day to day running information (Non-urgent matters)
- **KidSoft Parent Portal:** notifications, bookings and general communication
- **Emails:** whole school communication
- **Phone calls:** general enquires and emergencies
- **Scheduled Meetings**
- **College newsletter and website:** general information

## Enrolment

All families interested in enrolment for ELC should join the waitlist via the Parent Portal: <https://parent-portal.kidsoft.com.au/create-account/MountCarmel>

When a position becomes available, families on our waitlist will be invited to come in for an enrolment discussion and a tour of our Centre.

All families wanting to book Outside School Hours Care (OSHC), please contact the Centre Manager for a booking link and sign up to the Kidsoft Parent Portal.

Once children are enrolled in ELC or OSHC, all bookings must be made via the Parent Portal.

To avoid charges and any distress it is important that families check their bookings via the Parent Portal.

5. Parents/Carers are required to give a minimum of two weeks' written notice via KidSoft Parent Portal of any cancellations or changes to bookings.
6. Fees may be changed at any time at the discretion of the management. Parents/Carers will be given at least one month's notice of fee increases.
7. Enquiries regarding fees should be directed to the Accounts Department via [accounts@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au](mailto:accounts@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au)
8. Statements are produced fortnightly in arrears and are sent via email. Please advise any changes to your email address.

## Charges

Early Learning Centre (ELC)	<b>\$114.20</b>
3-4 year old program	
Full day 7.30am – 6.00pm	
Before School Care	<b>\$16.25</b>
After School Care	<b>\$41.25</b>
Holiday Care and Student Free Day (Excursion costs additional)	<b>\$81.60</b>
Late Pick Up Fee (for every 5 minutes after 6.00pm)	<b>\$32.60</b>
Absent Sessions	<b>100% of session fee</b>

There is no charge for Public Holidays.

Families who anticipate, or are experiencing difficulty in paying fees should contact the College Accounts Department.

## Bookings

Bookings may be adjusted during the year, and must be made via the Parent Portal.

### How to Make a Booking:

- Login into your Parent Portal account.
- Click the Menu button and select 'bookings'.
- Select 'Make a booking'.
- Choose the date you would like to book and select 'I want to make a recurring booking'. Select 'next' and choose Long Day Care.
- You will need to select 'confirm booking'.

### Casual Bookings:

Casual bookings are available two weeks in advance to the required booking date, however a place is not guaranteed if our numbers exceed our licensed places. All casual bookings must also be made through the Parent Portal.

Attending part of a session – will incur full session fee.

Please note that the centre is closed for the term school holidays and student free days, however, your child will have access to the holiday care program during this time. More information will be provided closer to the end of each term.

## Visits from Mount Carmel College Students

As part of our strong community connection with Mount Carmel College, we are fortunate to welcome visiting students from various year levels throughout the school year.

One of the highlights for our Early Learning Centre is the regular involvement of the Year 9 Child Studies class. During term time, Year 9 students visit the ELC weekly to fortnightly. While here, they engage in play and interaction with the children and complete elements of their Child Studies assessments. Their learning is guided by the Early Years Learning Framework and the programming cycle, with support from their teacher and our ELC educators. All visits are fully supervised.

If you have any questions or concerns, or if you prefer that your child does not participate in these interactions, please contact the Centre Manager.





## Enrolment Process

We invite families who are interesting in learning about our service to email [enrol@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au](mailto:enrol@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au) to organise an enrolment discussion with a member of our Early Learning management team. We encourage families to follow the step by step process of enrolling:

1. Enrolment discussion
2. ELC Tour
3. Create an account by following the steps sent in an email.
4. Wait for acceptance
5. Begin completion of online enrolment form

All bookings and enrolments are completed online via our online management system, Kidsoft.

## Settle Visits

Settle Visits are an important part for your child and family to connect to our Service. We encourage each child to attend our Service in the company of a family member before they start their first day with us. This gives you and your child the opportunity to gain an understanding of our program, the layout of the room, where to put your child's belongings, provide educators with additional information about your child and how we can best support their transition and settling in period.

Our Centre Manager will contact you to arrange suitable times and days for visits. We recommend 2x 1-hour sessions.

If your child is reluctant to attend, a plan will be made to support the transition from home to the school.

## Transition to School

During Term 4, children enrolled in our ELC and continuing onto Kindergarten at Mount Carmel College will participate in an orientation program with our Kindergarten teachers. This program is held in Term 4 each year.

ELC and Kinder teachers work closely together to communicate the individual needs of each child. Children will be already familiar with our College grounds and teachers, enabling a smooth transition to take place in our close school community. More information will be communicated with families in the later part of the year.

## Arrival and Departure

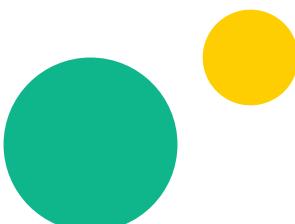
Parents are responsible, each day, for signing their child in AND out of our programs via the electronic attendance system, Kidsoft. This is a government requirement. On arrival please check with staff to ensure that any relevant information about your child is shared.

Please note if you are unable to collect your child personally from the Centre, the person you nominate to collect your child must be over the age of 18 and added as a contact on the KidSoft Parent Portal. The Centre must also be called to notify the educators. Children will only be released to parents or nominated persons.

All children should be collected from the Centre prior to 6pm. If you are unavoidably delayed, a telephone call is appreciated – 6216 7920 (direct to the Centre). Charges of \$32.60 per child, for every 5 minutes after 6.00pm apply.

## Late Collection of Children

- If there are children still present at the Centre upon closing, it is best practice to ensure a minimum of two Educators remain until all children are collected.
- If parents/carers know that they are going to be late, they should make arrangements for someone else to collect their child(ren). Parents/carers must also notify the Centre of these changes.
- If parent/carers have not arrived by 6:00pm, the Centre will attempt to contact them via phone. If parents/authorised persons are unable to be contacted the Educator in charge will call the alternative contacts, as listed on the enrolment form, to organise collection of the child(ren).
- If by 6:00pm neither the parent or any of the authorised nominees are available or contactable, the Centre may need to contact the police and other relevant authorities as listed below. In addition, either the Principal, Deputy Principal or Business Manager will also be contacted.
- Child Protection Agencies and Regulatory Authority  
Child Care Hotline 132 111  
Tasmanian Police 131 444 or 000 if in an emergency  
Department of Education and Care
- If the child is taken to an alternative safe location, for example a Police Station, a sign will be displayed at the Centre notifying parents/carers of the child's whereabouts.



## What You Need to Bring

### A Backpack

For independence, we work towards all children being able to recognise and open their own bag. You can help by allowing them to be involved in selecting their bag and taking ownership of it. Please ensure it is large enough to hold all their belongings and is clearly labelled.

### Spare Clothing

Every now and then, accidents occur, and it may be necessary for your child to get changed into a fresh set of clothes. Please include a complete change of clothes every day which can stay in your child's bag... just in case!

### Weather Appropriate Clothing

Please pack a warm jacket and beanie during the cooler months.

### Nappies

Our service supplies wipes for all children, however we ask that families provide nappies or pulls ups, as required.

### Drink Bottle

A labelled drink bottle is required every day for water. Children are able to refill their drink bottle when necessary throughout the day.

### Sun Hat and Sunscreen

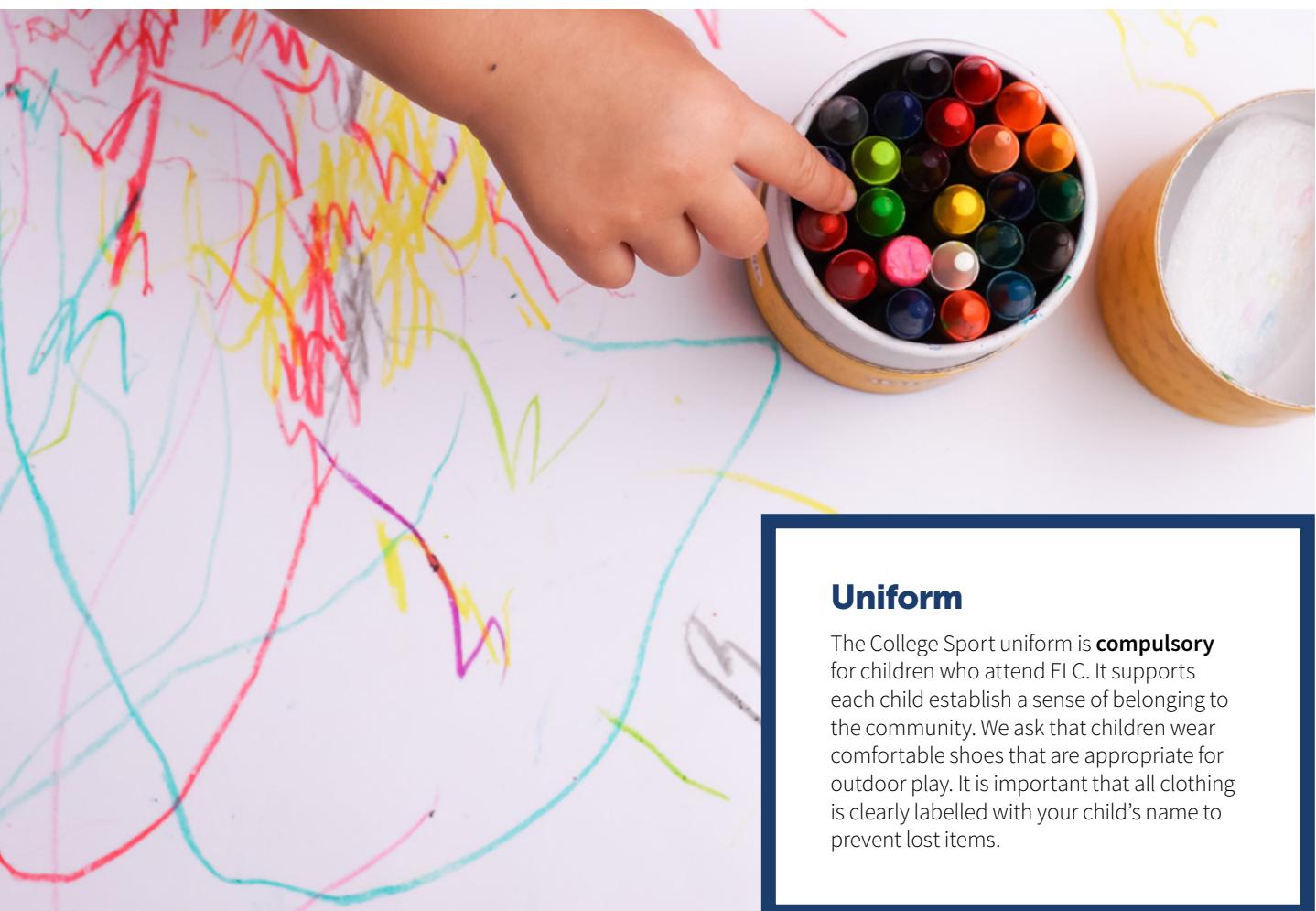
A protective sun hat (either broad brimmed or legionnaire hat) must be worn every day when playing outside for protection against the sun. Please make sure to include it in your child's bag every day regardless of the weather conditions. If your child requires their own sunscreen we ask that it is clearly labelled and the non-prescription medication form is completed.

### Morning Tea and Lunch

Morning tea can be sent in either a medium-sized snap-lock bag (which can be reused) or if you prefer a small container, clearly labelled with their name. Any pre-cut fruit or dairy products must be placed into the fridge.

Children are asked to bring their lunch in a lunch box with a lid that they can open. We ask you to clearly mark your child's name on the bottom of the box and lid.

Food that needs heating or refrigeration is not appropriate, as educators cannot leave the children to collect food or to heat it for individual children. However, parents can send something hot during the winter months in a wide-necked Thermos. For more information, please see our Nutrition Policy.



### Uniform

The College Sport uniform is **compulsory** for children who attend ELC. It supports each child establish a sense of belonging to the community. We ask that children wear comfortable shoes that are appropriate for outdoor play. It is important that all clothing is clearly labelled with your child's name to prevent lost items.

## Rest and Sleep

Rest and sleep routines vary according to individual needs. We aim to make rest time a relaxed, pleasant time for all children. We provide a safe place for children and play soft music in the background. Your child may wish to bring a security item to have at rest time. Please feel free to discuss your child's rest or sleep needs with educators and ensure all items are labelled with your child's name. Quiet activities, such as puzzles and books are available for those children who do not sleep.

## Birthdays and Other Celebrations

We welcome celebrations from all cultures and backgrounds. If you would like to send something to school with your child to celebrate with their peers please choose a healthy option. Some recommendations for celebrations can be found below:

- Mini pizzas (allergies to be considered)
- Fruit platter or fruit kebabs
- Yoghurt and fresh fruit platter
- Cake or cupcakes (all ingredients to be clearly listed)

Families are required to discuss celebration options with educators prior to the event as we monitor food to ensure the safety of all children and staff. Where cupcakes or cake is provided, a list of all ingredients must be provided to staff. For further information, please see our Celebration Policy.

## Parent Participation and Feedback

Our Service has an Open-Door Policy and actively seeks and encourages families to be involved in the Service. This can range from evaluating and adding input to your child's program and observations, volunteering within the Service and sharing skills and experiences that the children and the program will benefit from and providing feedback.

## Health and Hygiene

Our Service has effective and systematic risk management systems in place to identify any possible risk of hazards to our learning environment and practices.

All staff diligently practice and model personal hygiene measures such as hand washing, cough and sneeze etiquette and disposal of tissues. We request that all children and visitors to our service wash their hands or use the alcohol-based hand sanitiser upon arrival.

## Infectious Diseases

Please inform our staff if your child has any infectious disease or illness so that we can notify the **Public Health Unit** and other families (confidentiality is always maintained).

## Medication

If your child requires medication whilst at our Service, you must complete an Administration of Medication Record to give your consent for an educator to administer prescribed medication to your child. Medication must be given directly to an educator for appropriate safe storage.

Educators can only administer medication that is:

- prescribed by a registered medical practitioner (with instructions attached to the medication or in written form from the medical practitioner)
- in its original packaging and have the original label clearly showing your child's name
- before the expiry/use by date.

Upon collection of your child at the end of the day, you or an authorised person will be requested to sign the Administration of Medication Form.

## Toys

Our ELC is well resourced with lots of toys and books for children to play with. It is best for all home toys to stay at home and we ask that no toys from home are to be played with during the day. It is very difficult for staff to monitor the toys and cannot guarantee they will not get lost or broken. Books and games that can be shared with the group are more appropriate. Please speak to the staff before sending your child to school with something (all items must be clearly named). If your child is finding it difficult to settle into the ELC and would like to bring a toy that will help them feel more comfortable, please contact our staff and work with them on some strategies to help your child.

## Toileting

The daily routine for ELC children includes regular visits to the toilet and reminders to try using the toilet. We understand that every now and then accidents occur, so ask that a complete change of clothes is packed each day in your child's bag. Please refer to the Mount Carmel College 'Toileting Policy' for more information.

## Policies

All Policies, Procedures and Guidelines are located in the ELC building. We invite families to view our policies and become familiar with the policies, procedures and guidelines we have created. Contact our staff if you would like to view them.

## **palawa Country**

361 Sandy Bay Road, Sandy Bay  
Iutruwita / Tasmania 7005  
PO Box 217, Sandy Bay, Tasmania, 7006  
Phone: +61 3 6216 7900 | Fax: +61 3 6216 7999  
Email: [info@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au](mailto:info@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au)

## **Early Learning Centre Hours**

Monday – Friday: 7.30am – 6.00pm

Phone: +61 3 6216 7920

### **Follow us on social media**

 [facebook.com/MountCarmelCollegeHobart](https://facebook.com/MountCarmelCollegeHobart)  
 [instagram.com/mount\\_carmel\\_college\\_hobart](https://instagram.com/mount_carmel_college_hobart)

**[mountcarmel.tas.edu.au](http://mountcarmel.tas.edu.au)**

