



# **St Joseph's Early Learning Centre O'Connor**

## **INFORMATION HANDBOOK**

Growing in excellence within  
a Christ-centred community.

# St Joseph's Early Learning Centre Philosophy

St Joseph's Early Learning Centre, as part of St Joseph's Primary School, is growing in excellence within a Christ-centred community and embraces Catholic traditions, values and beliefs. Our nurturing environment provides diverse learning opportunities for every child within our Centre.

Our approach to learning is inspired by Reggio Emilia and guided by the Early Years Learning Framework. Through play, exploration and discovery, in a supportive and enriching environment, we cater for each child's individual learning style and interests. Through observation, analysis and discussion children's learning is assessed and documented.

We value the dedication and commitment of our educators and fully support their continued professional development. We support educators in critical reflection of their practice to enrich decision making about children's learning.

We acknowledge the relationships our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander brothers and sisters have to the land and our natural environment. We share their stories, history and culture within the Early Learning Centre to bring understanding and reconciliation.

## **Belonging**

We value respectful relationships where children and adults share knowledge, insights, discoveries, laughter and celebrations. We support children as they develop social skills, enabling them to communicate their needs and desires appropriately, helping them to better understand the world and their place within it.

## **Being**

We recognise the potential of the natural world and the classroom environment to inspire children. Within these spaces we encourage children to collaborate, communicate, explore, imagine and be. We support children in the way they connect with these environments and promote awareness of the shared responsibility of caring for them and for implementing sustainable practices.

## **Becoming**

We nurture strong relationships with families in order to understand family perspectives and aspirations. We invite families to engage with us to support their child's learning within our Early Learning Centre. Parental engagement in St Joseph's School community is a positive influence on the growth and development of our children at St Joseph's Early Learning Centre.

*Our school stands among an array of magnificent trees that have stood tall and strong over time and through all types of weather. The tree is the symbol for our school, not only because of the connections with St Joseph our patron saint, but also because the tree embodies the characteristics of growth, strength, shelter, support and sustainability.*

# Welcome to St Joseph's P-6 School

**Postal Address:** PO Box 646  
Dickson ACT 2602

**Street Address:** Boronia Drive  
O'Connor ACT 2602

**Phone Number:** 6257 2990

**Email:** [director.elcsjo@cg.catholic.edu.au](mailto:director.elcsjo@cg.catholic.edu.au)

**Website:** [www.sjo.act.edu.au](http://www.sjo.act.edu.au)

**Preschool Office Hours:** 8:30am-3:30pm

**Before Preschool Care Hours:** 7:30am-9:00am

**After Preschool Care Hours:** 3:00pm-6:00pm

**Preschool Hours:** 9:00am-3:00pm

**Vacation Care Hours:** 8.00am—5:00pm

**Director:** Mrs Molly Henson

**Principal:** Mr Cameron Tarrant

**Office Manager:** Mrs Catherine Hemphill

**ELC Account Details:** Name: St Joseph's O'Connor ELC  
BSB: 062786  
Account No: 00026343



## ***Vision***

***Growing in excellence within a Christ-centred community***

## **Introduction**

Welcome to St Joseph's Early Learning Centre, part of St Joseph's P-6 School. St Joseph's is a Catholic Systemic Primary School which was established in O'Connor in 1956.

The Early Learning Centre, with preschool and long day care, accepts children who will be 4 years of age by 30 April in the year of enrolment. The Early Learning Centre commenced in 2011. The Catholic Education Office of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn oversees the Centre.

St Joseph's Early Learning Centre is located in the inner city suburb of O'Connor and is the regional Catholic preschool for the parishes of St Joseph's, Blackfriars (Watson), St Michael's (Kaleen), St Thomas More's (Campbell) and St Vincent's (Aranda). Students are drawn from many Canberra suburbs and because of this we are sensitive in developing a friendly, co-operative, community-minded Centre based upon Gospel values.

Conscious that parents are the prime educators of their children, St Joseph's Early Learning Centre functions with the dedication and energetic support of parents.

We operate our preschool groups with fully qualified Early Childhood teachers and qualified assistants.

We believe:

- Our Curriculum, the EYLF (Early Years Learning Framework), a play based program, encourages every child to be a competent learner, who can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured
- The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development through our nature and play based curriculum.
- Children learn and develop in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected

Being part of St Joseph's School community is a positive influence on the growth and development of our children.



At St Joseph's Early Learning Centre, our Religious Education Curriculum is guided by the Treasures New and Old Supplement. We work with four units written specifically for preschool aged children across the year. The units are:

Term One: Gathering in Prayer

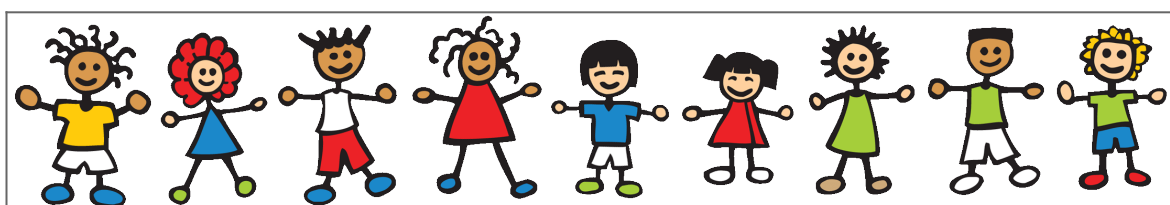
Term Two: Welcoming Church

Term Three: Sensing God

Term Four: Celebrating Jesus' birth

We include Godly Play in the preschool units. Godly play is distinctly about children discovering who God is, not what God did. It invites children to connect faith stories with personal experiences through play, wondering questions and open-ended response.

Teachers at St Joseph's Early Learning Centre implement the National Curriculum for Early Childhood: The Early Years Learning Framework (2009). It recognizes the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy), and social and emotional development.



## **Timetable**

St Joseph's ELC preschool is organised into two rooms; Green Frogs and Blue Geckos.

### **Green Frogs Full time**

Monday-Friday 9:00am-3:00pm



### **Blue Geckos**

**Full time** Monday – Friday

9:00am—3:00pm

#### **Part time**

Beginning of the Week (BOW)

End of the Week (EOW)



Blue Geckos BOW Part time

Week 1 Monday-Wednesday 9:00am-3:00pm

Week 2 Monday-Tuesday 9:00am-3:00pm

Blue Geckos EOW Part time

Week 1 Thursday-Friday 9:00am-3:00pm

Week 2 Wednesday-Friday 9:00am-3:00pm

### **Before School Care**

7:30am-9:00am

Available for children on the days they attend.

Breakfast is included.

### **After School Care**

3:00pm-6:00pm

Available for children on the days they attend.

## Fees Policy

Catholic Early Learning Centres are not-for-profit organisations separate from the primary schools. We do not receive government funding for our students, so the fees are set at a level to cover all of the running costs. Every effort is made to ensure fees are affordable for families.

Please note that families may be entitled to some type of Child Care Subsidy. Contact the Department of Human Services on 136150 or [www.humanservices.gov.au](http://www.humanservices.gov.au) for further information and to receive a Customer Reference Number (CRN).

Fees are to be paid by direct credit into the ELC account. The Centre **does not** have EFTPOS facilities. The BSB and Account Number appear on the bottom left of your fees statement, which is emailed to you fortnightly, and it is essential that all fees are paid by the due date. **Please do not allow fees to accrue as non-payment of fees (up to 15 days outstanding) can result in a loss of place for your child at the Centre.**



Fees must be paid for every day your child is enrolled, including public holidays, regardless of attendance.

Families are asked to give two weeks written notice of their intention to withdraw their child from the Centre. Should families give less than two weeks notice they are still obligated to pay an amount equivalent to two weeks of fees. Two weeks notice is also required for cancellation of Before and After School Care bookings.

On enrolment all families are required to pay an enrolment levy of \$50.00.

A Resource Fee of \$63 per term is charged to cover consumables (paint, craft items, etc).

A Late Pick Up Fee of \$10 per 5 minutes will be charged daily for late ASC pickup after 6pm and late Vacation Care pickup after 5:30pm.

Late preschool pick up after 3.10pm (without notification to the Centre), your child will be enrolled in ASC and ASC fees will be charged for this timeframe.

Excursions and Incursions will be charged to your account as they occur.

## Fee Schedule - 2020

	Hours	Cost Per Day
Preschool	9:00am-3:00pm	\$75.00
Before School Care	7:30am-9:00am	\$22.00
After School Care	3:00pm-6:00pm	\$33.00
Full Day ELC	7:30am-6:00pm	\$130.00
Vacation Care	8:00am-5:00pm	\$81.00

Resource Fee - \$63.00 per term

Excursion Fee - charged to statements

Enrolment Fee - \$50.00 at time of enrolment

Enrolment Bond - \$100.00 on acceptance of a place

After School Care Late Pick Up Fee - \$10 per five minutes

Vacation Care Late Pick Up Fee - \$10 per five minutes

**Note: All the above fees are subject to increase in December each year**

## St Joseph's Early Learning Centre Uniform

Girls and Boys

- **Purple** polo shirt with school crest
- School polar fleece with school crest (optional)
- School wide brim style hat - navy (optional)

All items are available for purchase at the School Uniform Shop

### 2020 TERM DATES

Term One:	Begins 3 February Ends 9 April
Term Two:	Begins 27 April Ends 3 July
Term Three:	Begins 20 July Ends 25 September
Term Four:	Begins 12 October Ends 18 December

# Our School Prayer

Dear Jesus,  
I offer you today  
All that I do, think and say.  
I offer you my work, my prayers, my play.  
I shall do my best to make them pleasing to you,  
And with your help,  
My whole day will be my gift to you.



## GENERAL INFORMATION

***Before and After School Care:*** The Early Learning Centre grounds are open to Preschool and Foundation children attending Before School Care from 7:30am each morning and remaining open to children attending After School Care until 6:00pm each afternoon. Children are not permitted on the Preschool grounds outside these times.

***Supervision:*** Preschool commences each morning at 9:00am and concludes at 3:00pm.

***Parking:*** Parents parking is available in the Parish carpark next to the church. Please park and walk your child to the preschool via the footpath. Parents are requested to exercise caution when parking and driving on and around the Preschool and school grounds.



***Birthdays:*** Parents are welcome to bring cupcakes or individual treats to celebrate your child's birthday. Please provide a full list of ingredients. Should you not wish your child to eat the provided cakes, please supply an alternative that we can freeze or store at the Centre.



## Start preparing your child a month before the BIG day!

During this time you should start to encourage your child to be independent. Help your child learn to manage and take care of the things they will use on a daily basis at school.



For example:

- Discuss with your child how they will use the bathrooms (toilets) independently at preschool. It is important that you explain to them that they will be allowed to go to the toilet whenever they need to. They also need to flush the toilet and wash their hands after using the toilet.
- We ask that you please pack a labeled spare change of clothes in a plastic bag. Put them in the front pocket of your child's school bag - 'just in case'!
- Encourage your child to put their hat on when going out to play. When they come inside, practice putting their hat in a designated place. Don't forget to talk about the 'No Hat, Play in the Shade' rule in line with our Sunsmart Policy, remind them that they need to wear a bucket hat outside if they want to play.



- Preschool children only need to wear the St Joseph's School polo shirt and a wide brim hat of their choice. If you would like the school jumper, that is optional. When choosing clothes and shoes for your child please consider how easy they are for children to pull up and down or take off and put on. They will need to do these self-help skills as independently as possible.
- Please try to send your child with Velcro rather than shoelaces!

### What to bring

**School bag** - This can be the St Joseph's bag or it can be any bag that is large enough to fit your child's belongings in it.

**Hat** - 'No Hat, Play in the Shade' is the school policy. School hats can be purchased at the School Uniform Shop.

**Cot size sheet** - We will be having quiet time during the afternoon. We will provide the mattress but please bring your own labeled fitted sheet and flat sheet in a pillowcase/cloth bag.

**Library Bag** - a soft cloth bag (labelled).

**Change of clothes** - in plastic bag in front pocket of your child's bag (socks, undies, pants, shirt)

**One box of tissues** - to share.

**Sunscreen** - please apply prior to arriving each day. Children apply sunscreen, if needed, with adult supervision before outdoor play, but parents are encouraged to apply sunscreen on their child each morning before arriving.

**Morning tea** - Bring healthy snacks; cheese, vegetables, rice crackers, popcorn etc. in a small labelled container.

**A piece of fruit or vegetable** - bring own fruit/vegetable cut up in a small container for afternoon tea.

**Lunch Box** - Bring a healthy lunch: sandwich, pasta, rice, yoghurt, etc. and a health snack or two. A small ice brick is required inside the lunch box to keep all food chilled.

If attending BSC or ASC, a healthy breakfast or afternoon tea will be served.

**Water bottle** - Encourage your child to drink water from a drink bottle and show them how to open and close the lid. Please only bring water in the bottle. Please take home each day to wash and replenish. Please refrain from bringing juice or juice boxes, cordial, soft drinks or flavoured milk.

We promote healthy foods rather than non nutritious foods. Such foods are:

- \* Packet chips
- \* High sugar lollies
- \* Chocolates and chocolate bars
- \* All cordials and soft drinks
- \* Take away foods and highly packaged, processed foods

If these foods come to the Centre, a sticker will be placed on the food item to remind parents the item is not allowed to be consumed at the Centre. This is in accordance with our Healthy Eating and Nutrition Policy and Procedures.

All food not eaten will be sent home to inform you of what your child has eaten during the day.

### **WE ARE A NUT FREE SCHOOL**

**Please remember we have some children with life-threatening allergies to nuts . Please DO NOT include any foods that contain these ingredients.**

**LABEL EVERYTHING!** Show your child their full name written on their school bag, hat, drink bottle, cot sheet, library bag, change of clothes and lunch box.

## FIRST DAY OF PRESCHOOL

The first day is a very exciting event, but it can also be a little confusing! Please read the following points carefully as they explain in detail what will happen and what you will need to do when you arrive on this special day!

**The first week of Preschool for 2020 begins on Monday, 3rd February 2020.**

- At preschool you **MUST** sign your child in and out everyday. The door opens at 9:00am, you must take your child into the classroom each morning after using the hand sanitizer next to the door.
- Please help your child find their name tag, put their morning tea in the morning tea basket, fruit snack in the fruit snack basket, lunch bag on the shelf, drink bottle in the drink rack and place their bag in their locker.
- You are welcome to sit with your child and do some activities and help them settle in. Please be bright, cheerful and
- matter-of-fact
- about leaving your child.



At about 9:20 we will encourage the children to come to the welcome mat. This is the parents cue to leave.

If we feel that your child is too distressed and is unlikely to settle we will contact you immediately. We have your child's best interests at heart.

## **ABSENCES**

If your child is absent for any reason please notify us. This should be followed up with a written note which may be provided by email, or by completing a 'Parent Note to Explain Absence' form available from the office.



Government childcare benefits are payable on absences up to 42 sessions per financial year. Additional absence days for illness etc may be claimed providing a doctor's certificate supports the absence.

## **MEDICATION**

Sick children should not be sent to the Early Learning Centre. Parents will be notified if a child becomes ill during the day. Please ensure that your contact and emergency details are kept up to date by notifying the Early Learning Centre when these change.

If your child requires medication while at the Early Learning Centre please inform the teacher on arrival. Please make sure all medication is in the original packaging, labelled with the name of your child and has written instructions of dosage and time to be given. No medication will be administered unless written authority is provided.

If your child is ill in the morning, we ask that you keep them at home as illness can spread quickly between young children.



## **ASTHMA, ALLERGY AND ANAPHYLAXIS**

If your child requires asthma, allergy or anaphylaxis medication according to their asthma/allergy/anaphylaxis plan, it is a requirement that the following be provided to the Centre:

### **Asthma -**

- \* a current Asthma Plan signed by your GP
- \* an asthma spacer and mask
- \* asthma medication labelled clearly with the child's name

These are left at the Centre at all times.

### **Allergy/Anaphylaxis -**

- \* a current allergy/Anaphylaxis plan signed by your GP
- \* allergy/anaphylaxis medication labelled clearly with your child's name

These are left at the Centre at all times.

On receipt at the Centre, you will be required to complete a permission form to allow us to administer medication.

## ASSISTING IN THE CENTRE

There will be plenty of opportunities for parents to assist in the centre, including:

- Parent Visit Roster
- Excursions
- Sharing skills
- Parent Committee

Please come and discuss with staff if you would like to be involved in any way.

It is **mandatory** that all volunteers possess and display a Working with Vulnerable People card whenever they are in the Centre. ***If you do not have this card, you are not allowed to assist in the Centre.*** This card is obtained via application and is free for volunteers. This application is available from Office of Regulatory Services at [http://www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working\\_with\\_vulnerable\\_people\\_wwvp/forms\\_and\\_fees](http://www.ors.act.gov.au/community/working_with_vulnerable_people_wwvp/forms_and_fees)



## **COMMUNICATION**

If you have any concerns about your child or you are not sure about the procedures at the Early Learning Centre, please do not hesitate to ask your child's teacher, coordinators or the office staff. Weekly parent emails, Seesaw, ELSA and classroom notice boards will help to keep you informed. Further information will be provided via the parent pockets, email and the school newsletter. Please check your parent pocket daily.

## **GRIEVANCE AND COMPLAINTS**

Children and Young People Commissioner on :  
6205 2222.

## **HELPING YOUR CHILD**

### **Religious Education**

Parents are the first to educate their children in faith. They begin this task in the earliest years of life when they provide a home where there is love, acceptance and encouragement. These are the stepping stones to a healthy relationship with God.



Here are some special ways in which parents can share their faith with children:

- Establish a routine where there is time to just be together in a relaxed atmosphere. This is when you can share simple prayers and talk about things that are important
- Remember the importance of being a good example. The image that children develop of God, often stems from how they see their parents.
- Encourage children to make simple choices. They need to practise if they are to grow up to make correct decisions
- Discuss and help your child realise how other people feel as a result of their actions and decisions. Looking at their environment and taking care of a garden or pet is another way children can value life

## **Mathematics**

There are many activities able to be done at home that would help prepare your child to be a good mathematician. Encourage your child to:



- Count aloud common objects around the house eg: pegs, cutlery, apples etc
- Play dice and card games eg: snakes and ladders, number bingo, dominoes, snap and memory.
- Ipad applications eg: 'Counting with Very Hungry Caterpillar', 'Monkey Math', '1, 2, 3 Sheep'

## **Literacy**

Your child will begin to show interest in books and print around them. They will begin to imitate the things they see adult readers doing. Try to:

- Read stories to your child as often as you can
- Encourage your child to choose the books you read together and to handle the books
- Sing and recite nursery rhymes, finger plays and favourite songs
- Enrol your child in the local library
- Ipad applications eg: 'ABC Magic', 'Alphabet Tracing', 'My Name', 'Alphabytes', online stories

## Recycling

We use lots of odds and ends in our program to enhance play experiences. You can assist by collecting the following items on our behalf:

- ❑ Artificial flowers
- ❑ Beads and buttons
- ❑ Clean milk bottle tops
- ❑ Cardboard tubes/rolls (not toilet rolls)
- ❑ Corks
- ❑ Cotton reels
- ❑ Felt and fabric scraps
- ❑ Wishing stones
- ❑ Nuts, bolts, screws, washers
- ❑ Measuring cups/cooking utensils
- ❑ Painting/drawing paper
- ❑ Shells
- ❑ Ribbons/lace
- ❑ Wool, string or rope
- ❑ Tools, woodworking items

Please let us know if you would like to donate any items.



# Checklist for Parents

- ***Everything labelled***
- Allergy/Anaphylaxis Plan and medication (if required)
- Asthma Plan and medication (if required)
- Cot sheets in labelled drawstring bag
- Change of clothes: socks, undies, shirt, pants
- Water bottle
- Bucket hat
- Backpack
- Library bag
- Lunch box with ice brick
- Tissues
- Completed 'All About Me' booklet
- WWVP card for parents who wish to assist at the Centre or on an excursion

## REGIONAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

St Michael's Kaleen



St Vincent's Aranda



St Joseph's O'Connor



St Thomas More's Campbell



Rosary Watson



# Belonging



# Being



# Becoming



**The Early Years Learning Framework**

Notes:





Foundation to Year 6  
ABN 25 787 735 338  
P: (02) 6248 9818  
[office.sjo@cg.catholic.edu.au](mailto:office.sjo@cg.catholic.edu.au)

Boronia Drive, O'Connor ACT 2602  
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Early Learning Centre  
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