



# Parent Handbook

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## **MINIMEE WELCOMES YOU TO OUR FAMILY**

We welcome you and your child to what we trust will be an extension of your home. By working together we will provide an environment that promotes high quality care and education.

We are licensed by the Ministry of Education for 50 children, of which 12 are under 2 years old. Within our building there are three learning adventure areas – the Toe Toe room for up to 2 years, the Koru Room for toddlers to 3 ½ years and our Nikau Room for the emerging preschoolers. Children move between the areas when parents and staff feel that they are ready.

### **Centre Philosophy**

Imagine walking into an environment that inspires and respects both children and adults. Art displays, calming music, comfortable reading corners and natural surroundings create the respectful, safe and welcoming learning environment at Minimee and it reflects the children and adults who work in it. Here you will find everything has been carefully designed to instill a sense of belonging and a feel of home. At Minimee we are inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach where the environment is considered as the third teacher, which is why we have invested in creative, well-resourced indoor and outdoor settings. Children are the central focus and will not be pressured to achieve, but instead encouraged to discover and enjoy learning in their own sequence and at their own pace. Projects and investigations are captured from the language of children, their interests, their community (both local and global) and through their family events.

Play is how children learn. All children will have the time, resources and support they need to immerse themselves fully in the play that interests them, encouraging their natural enthusiasm and curiosity whilst developing an understanding of their world and a lifelong love of learning.

At Minimee, the role of the teacher is that of a facilitator. It is important that our teachers learn and grow alongside the children and their families. Our teachers work as a team, building respectful, responsive and reciprocal relationships with families, whānau and children. The teachers at Minimee are passionate and committed to the education and care of young children. They are resourceful, fun and nurturing. We not only acknowledge and value that the teachers have diverse backgrounds, skills and interests, but we celebrate this too. The team at Minimee are reflective and dynamic. They are always striving to do better and make Minimee the best it can be. On-going self-review and professional development is supported and encouraged.

We implement in our practice the four guiding principles of Te Whāriki: empowerment, holistic development, relationships and community and family. We respect that each child is special and unique. We are committed to and value the cultural identity of each individual within the centre. We respect the importance of biculturalism and multiculturalism and incorporate this into our teaching practice. We understand that a child's physical, emotional, intellectual, creative and social growth is interdependent, so our vision is to deliver rich learning experiences for your children to discover, explore, grow and become competent and confident learners.

## **Educational Programme**

At Minimee our child-centred developmental programme is based on the early childhood curriculum – Te Whāriki. We observe children, evaluate their needs and plan activities from these observations. Programmes are formulated to encompass the child's needs, therefore enhancing their unique development. Children will be given guidance as they develop at their own individual pace. Research shows that a child's learning ability increases when they engage in experiences that they are interested in. Along with encouragement from teachers and parents their understanding and knowledge is greatly enhanced.

Play is central to children's development, providing opportunities for both structured and spontaneous activities. It is a unique way to learn about their world and a means of expressing knowledge from previous experiences. Our daily routines also give children a sense of belonging and security from which they gain independence.

Parents/guardians and whānau are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning. These interactive experiences can enrich the children's lives providing them with skills and dispositions to tackle any new challenges.

We provide an atmosphere that is welcoming, warm and accepting to both children and their families with emphasis on a home-like environment. The centre is divided into age-related areas allowing the programme to be tailored to their appropriate development levels, however, the children also make visits to other areas with their teachers.

Our practices and environment reflect the bi-cultural heritage of our community and are interwoven in our curriculum. Children are given the opportunity to develop concepts of dignity and respect for all cultures.

## **Children's Learning Portfolios**

All children's portfolios are accessible online through our e-portfolio company Storypark. Storypark is an e-portfolio that travels with your child/ren from the start to the end of their enrolment. We also have the portfolios accessible in the classrooms.

We encourage you to visit and revisit your child's learning with them. Each child at Minimee will have their own child portfolio. The portfolio is a record of the individual child's learning journey that children, educators and parents/whanau contribute to on an on-going basis.

Educators support the child's progression of learning and development. Progress and outcomes of the learning are documented using narrative stories and photos which are often revisited time and time again by both children and adults alike.

## **Parent/Whanau Dreams and Desires**

We value the knowledge you have of your child and we would love you to share this with us by completing a parent/whanau dreams and desires form. This will enable us to be fully responsive to your child's learning along with their unique personality. You will be given this to you in your welcome pack and we ask that you share with us your dreams and desires that you hold for your child in their early years. These may be things that are important to you and your family, areas of interest that your child has, or anything that is important to you regarding their early childhood care and education.

## **Bookings**

Minimee Early Childhood Education Adventure offers part time and full time sessions between the hours of 7.30 – 6.00pm. Please discuss your requirements with us as we are confident that we can meet most requests.

We ask that you or whoever is collecting your child that the attendance register is signed in the reception area. These documents are a legal requirement of the Ministry of Education and are also used in emergency situations so therefore it is vital to us to have these completed on drop off and pick up.

## **Fees**

The Fee Policy is displayed on the Information Station in the foyer and on our website. You would have also received one alongside with enrolment form.

To enable us to deliver a high quality service we request that all fees are kept at least one week in advance.

You may choose to pay by cash or automatic payment which is our preferred method of payment.

You will receive a statement weekly via email.

## **Attendance**

Your child's welfare is our primary concern at all times. Only authorised persons known to the Supervisor and staff (as indicated on the enrolment form) will be allowed to drop-off and collect children from the centre; any changes must be notified in writing. If an authorised adult is not personally known to the centre we will require photographic identification in the first instance also a phone call to the parents may also be made to confirm this collection of your child. You may choose to verbally tell a staff member on drop off in the morning or you can call throughout the day and inform that someone else is going to be picking up.

Parents with custody orders must provide a copy to the Supervisor. In the case of a non-custodial parent arriving to collect their child, the Supervisor will be required to contact the police providing a copy of the order for the police to enforce. Children will not be allowed to go home with a parent/guardian in contravention of a custody/court order held at the Centre. However, in the unlikely event of a non-custodial parent gaining access to their child, the Centre cannot be held liable.

## **20 hours ECE**

Minimee Early Childhood Education Adventure offers the 20 Hours ECE subsidy to all children over the age of 3 years.

You will be required to complete a 20 Hours ECE Attestation Form which you can obtain from the centre. This attestation form confirms your child's attendance at Minimee and allows you to access the subsidy. If your hours of attendance should change for any reason; you will be required to complete and sign a change of booking form.

Please discuss with us your enrolment requirement and we can assist you with the allocation and cost of your child's booking using 20 Hours ECE.

### **Sick Days/Public Holidays/Emergency Closures**

Minimee charges full fees for all public holidays with the exemption of Christmas/New Year period. An emergency closure consists of, but is not limited to inclement weather (i.e. snow), natural disasters etc. As with public holidays and emergency closures full fees are also charged for sick days.

### **Holidays**

Where a child is absent for a consecutive period of 1 week or more a holding fee of 50% of the child's normal weekly fee is payable provided that at least 2 weeks written notice is given of the absence. This discount is offered for up to 3 weeks per year.

### **Late fees**

Given that Minimee Early Childhood Education is not licensed to operate outside of its opening hours of 7.30 – 6.00pm, a late fee of \$1.00 for every minute your child is not collected after our closing time will be required to be paid directly to the staff member on duty. We do understand from time to time that you can run late for picking up your child so in these instances a courtesy phone call would be warmly received so we can accommodate staffing.

### **Childcare Subsidy**

Work and Income operates a subsidy for parents whose children attend a Childcare Centre and is subject to an income qualification. Contact Work and Income for further information and forms. Full payment of fees is the caregiver's responsibility until a subsidy has been approved.

### **Cancelling your enrolment**

We require two weeks' notice in writing to cancel your child's enrolment. All fees are required to be paid in full prior to your child's last day of attendance. Any outstanding fees will incur collection costs.

### **Orientation/Settling**

We endeavour to ensure transitioning time for your child is a positive and memorable experience through a supportive environment. Educators will involve both yourself and your child in the process through encouraging conversation, opportunities' and experiences. Celebrating transitions is also encouraged to support the child and parents sense of well-being and belonging within our centre.

### **Parent Involvement**

We operate an open door policy, where parents and family are welcome into the Centre at any time. Parent participation sends a strong positive message to your child that you support them and are part of our child care and learning environment. We strive to ensure that you and your child are happy and feel welcome at our centre. A three-way relationship between parents, caregivers and your child exists in our setting and communication is vital to the success of this partnership.

## **Staff**

At Minimee we are an equal opportunities employer and are committed to staffing the Centres with skilled and caring people. We employ fully qualified staff and also teachers with experience. All in which participate in ongoing professional development.

Our adult child ratio is regulated by the Ministry of Education. The ratio of staff required to work with children is 1 adult to 5 under 2 year olds; and 1 adult to 10 over 2 year olds. We provide a higher ratio of adults to children at our Centre.

## **Students/Volunteers**

At certain times you will notice student teachers and/or volunteers, participating in our daily activities. They are required to adhere to our philosophy and will be supervised at all times. During the practicum component of their course the student teachers will interact with the children, giving help and attention as needed and often provide fun with innovative ideas. During these times they are not part of our required Ministry ratios.

## **Centre Policies and Procedures**

Our operating policy and procedures are located in the reception area. Should you have any questions regarding these, please feel free to ask. The centre regularly reviews our policies and procedures as part of our annual plan. Throughout the year we will ask for parent input. This is a great opportunity to have your say in how our centre operates. We appreciate and value all feedback.

## **Meals**

Minimee provides all meals for our children. Our resident cook is trained in Health and Hygiene and you can be rest assured the meals provided are nutritious healthy options.

Our Seasonal menu is available on our information station. The Daily Menu will always be displayed in the reception.

We understand that for some children allergies to food are becoming a very common occurrence. If your child suffers from a food allergy it is vital that you advise us of this as we will request that you complete an Allergy Action Plan for your child. The centre will make provisions where possible to provide options for children with allergies.

We are completely a nut free centre.

## **Clothing**

All clothing, shoes, cuddly's and bags must be clearly named. Because play and exploration can often be wet or messy, children should be dressed in old or their play clothes and a spare change should be packed every day. In winter, rain attire and gumboots are essential, and in summer, sunhats are to be provided for outdoor play and we recommend you apply sun block to your child before the start of every day.

## **Excursions/trips**

Excursions out of the centre will be arranged from time to time, enhancing your child's learning experience. We welcome parents to accompany us on any outing. Excursion slips outlining the trip, transport, cost and adult/child ratio will be given to all parents to complete prior to an outing. Children who are unable to attend the excursion will remain at the centre with a trained staff member.

On occasion we may arrange short walks within the local vicinity; approval for these walks is given on the enrolment form.

## **Child's health**

We ask that any child who is unwell be kept at home in order to reduce the spread of illness throughout the centre. The Supervisor may at his/her discretion refuse to accept any child deemed unwell, as we do not have extra staff available to monitor and care for a sick child; this includes children with severe coughs or colds, vomiting, diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, rashes or raised temperatures. If symptoms develop during the day a parent will be contacted to arrange for the immediate collection of their sick child. –Please see our Illness policy for more details.

The Centre should be advised if the child has contracted a notifiable or infectious disease such as Giardia, mumps, chickenpox etc so that other parent's wider whānau can be advised. The child should be kept away from the centre for the required length of time as per the communicable diseases chart which is on display in the centre and provided in this pack.

## **Vomiting and Diarrhoea**

Vomiting and diarrhoea combined can be a serious health risk to children so should be seen by a doctor immediately. If a child has diarrhea, keep him/her at home. Give only fluids for 24 hours (10 mls per 10 minutes is recommended) – then gradually introduce a light diet. If the diarrhoea still persists, a doctor should be consulted. Usually it is a problem which lasts only one or two days. A child should remain at home for 24 hours after the last bout of diarrhoea or vomiting to ensure they do not infect other children.

## **Medication**

Please advise our staff if your child is taking any medication. All medicines will be kept secure in the kitchen. The medicine book, which is kept beside the sign-in sheet, **must** be filled in before we can administer any medication. Only medication that has a label stating your child's name with expiry date will be administered. Paracetamol (Pamol) will not be given unless prescribed by a doctor.

The centre keeps a First Aid Kit in both the Under and Over two areas, which includes some non-prescription and homeopathic medications for emergencies. Please advise the Supervisor if you would prefer these were not given or used on your child.

## **Immunisation**

We are required to keep an up-to-date list of all children's immunisation status at our centre. Please remember to bring your Well Child Book and a copy of your immunisation certificate with you when you enroll your child at our centre.

If your child is not immunised, a letter confirming this should be attached to your enrolment form. In the case of an outbreak of a communicable disease, your child may be asked to stay away from the centre for the duration of the outbreak.

## **Good News, Stories and Feedback**

Should you have a good news story to share, or you feel that there is a member of staff you feel should be acknowledged for their dedication and hard work please advise a Team Leader or Manager. Our centre staff are as important to and as special to us as they are to you and your children and we would like for them to receive the recognition they deserve.

On the other hand, we can't put things right if we are unaware that there is a concern. We therefore strongly urge our parents and whanau to approach a Team Leader or Manager of the centre if for any reason you are unsatisfied with anything. We would ask that this be done in a timely fashion so that we can discuss your concern and resolve it as quickly as possible.

## **Organisational Structure**

We have appointed ECE Management Ltd to manage the day to day operation of our Centre. They will work with staff and parents to maintain a high standard in our Centre as well as ensuring excellent educational outcomes for the children.

Compliance with the Early Childhood Education Regulations is monitored by ECE Management. Parents are invited to review and contribute to policy development with any decisions concerning their child's care and education.

## **External Authorities**

Our centre must be licensed by the Ministry of Education who cover a range of issues including staff qualifications, equipment requirements, safety issues, programme planning and regularly audit the centre via the Education Review Office. Along with being registered with Civil Defence, we are regularly checked by the Ministry of Health and the Fire Department.

Thank you for joining Minimee Early Childhood Education Adventure.