



MOUNT SINAI COLLEGE

Early Learning Centre



EARLY LEARNING
CENTRE
POLICIES &
PROCEDURES

MAROUBRA CAMPUS



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Access to Children Policy

Rationale: Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre has a duty of care to the children who attend the ELC.

Aims: Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre Staff will ensure that:

1. No unauthorised person will have access to any child attending the ELC.
2. No child attending the ELC is released into the care of a person unauthorised to collect them.
3. The person collecting them is fit to have the child released into their care.

Implementation: On enrolment

- Parents will be required to provide information regarding those persons who are authorised to pick up their children and to be contacted in an emergency.
- Parents will be required to provide information regarding any court orders affecting access to their children.
- Copies of court orders will be requested by the ELC Director and kept with the child's records.
- Parents will be required to provide the names of any persons whom they do not wish to have contact with their children, in addition to those affected by court orders.
- Parents will be required to provide the ELC with information relating to any changes in people authorised to have contact with or collect their children as necessary.
- Information regarding children's contacts and persons authorised to collect them will be kept on file and updates requested every year.
- This information will be kept on the child's personnel file located in the Director's office.
- The Director will ensure that this information is passed onto the staff responsible for the care of the children.
- MSC ELC will provide information to the parents or guardians responsible for the child, via the Policies & Procedures Handbook and via email at the beginning of the year, as to the ELC's policy regarding our "Access to Children" and the procedures to be followed for access to and the collection of children.

During the day:

- Parents may contact their child any time during the day by calling the ELC's telephone number (9349 4877).
- Parents may ring the ELC any time during the day for any inquiries about their child or to share any relevant information with staff or the Director about their child.
- Parents are welcome to come and visit the ELC at any time during the day.
- Parents may request meetings with their child's teachers and/or the Director.
- Parents will be kept fully informed by the educators about their child's health, wellbeing and conduct at school.
- Formal Parent/Teacher interviews will be arranged once a year to discuss a child's progress and allow parents an opportunity to talk to their child's teacher.
- Parents are allowed access to their child's school records.
- No person will be allowed into the ELC without first checking in with the Security Guard.

Accident & Emergency Policy

In Child Care Centres, accidents may occur due to physical activities or children challenging their abilities. Having First Aid qualified staff and effective policies and procedures in place can assist to minimise the severity of accidents. Children's health and safety will be the priority of staff.

Parents/Guardians are required to provide **written authority** (included in the enrolment form), for staff of the ELC to seek medical attention for their child if required.

Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre will ensure that **immediate and appropriate action** is taken in the event that a child, staff member, volunteer or visitor suffers an acute illness, injury or trauma.

The ELC will **notify** the parent/guardian as soon as possible when a child is acutely ill, had an injury or physical / emotional trauma.

The ELC will maintain **updated records** of all serious incidents, injury, trauma and illness affecting any child whilst in the care of the facility.

Arrival, Departure & Parking Procedures

- Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre is open from Monday to Thursday from 7.30am to 6pm. Friday hours are 7.30am – 4 pm.
- We are closed for all Jewish holidays, public holidays (see Mount Sinai College website for MSC term dates and holidays).
- A security guard is present at all times at MSC between 7am and 6pm daily.
- Please ensure you treat the security guard with respect and listen to their instructions for safe parking.
- Parents are asked to please not park in or across the MSC driveways at any time.
- Parents are asked to please not park in or across neighbouring driveways outside the MSC Hannan Street.
- Please do not leave children asleep in your car and expect the security guard to mind your sleeping child.
- Before parking or leaving the MSC, make sure there are NO children or families behind or in front of you.
- Please make sure children are supervised when getting into and out of cars.
- Please DO NOT let your child run into the ELC driveway unsupervised.
- In the event of an emergency, the driveway and surrounding areas will be used for emergency vehicles to gain easy access to the ELC.
- To ensure maximum security for your children please make sure the Security Gate at the MSC is always closed securely when entering and leaving.
- Please do NOT allow your child to stand or swing on the security gate.
- Please arrive by 9.15am so that your child has the opportunity to engage in the valuable learning experiences and activities provided, socialise with friends and spend a relaxed, unpressured early morning at the ELC.
- Educators are responsible for signing their child in and out of the ELC upon arrival and departure, in an official *Student Attendance Register* iPad.
- Essential information needs to be shared with your child's teacher upon arrival at the ELC. This can be done verbally but if the teacher is busy please email the ELC as soon as possible.
- Staff will be available to greet families, to support children to participate in an activity, to assist with separation for both adults and children and to say goodbye.
- Parents need to communicate any changes of routine with staff. It is important that staff and families communicate regarding medication, change of routine, a person other than a known authorised adult picking up a child or a change in time of arrival or departure for a child. These must be known by staff to ensure the safety and wellbeing of each child.
- As children leave each day, staff will be available to greet families and communicate about their child's day. Any important messages will be passed on to the parents or authorised persons, including changes in the child's routine, accident reports or medication needs.
- Communication is essential between staff and families during arrival and departure times to ensure children's safety and quality of care.
- The Director and staff will check all children have been signed in and out of the ELC each day.
- If a child is to be collected by a person other than the parent or authorised person, the staff must be notified.
- NO CHILD will be released to a person other than the parent or authorised person, if the staff has not been notified. A nominated person who is unknown to the staff will be asked for identification before the child is released into their care. No child will be released to a person less than 18 years of age.
- If a person wishes to collect a child and there is no authorisation on the Authority to Collect Form, the parent will be contacted. If the parent cannot be contacted the child will not be released. The child's emergency contact will be contacted if the parent cannot be contacted by closing time.
- In an emergency a parent may ring the ELC to authorise another person to collect their child. Please contact the ELC on 9349 4877 or by email to your child's class teacher.
- Under no circumstances will a child be given into the custody of a Taxi driver.
- Under no circumstances will a child be released into the care of a staff member, unless that staff member has been given permission in writing by a parent to take the child home.
- Staff have a Duty of Care to determine if it unsafe for a parent or authorised person to collect and transport a child home due to intoxication or other influences. In this situation the other parent or emergency contact will be contacted to collect the child.
- Where a court order exists pertaining to a child, a copy must be given to the ELC to be placed on file. All staff will be made aware of the orders and non-custodial parents will not be allowed to collect their child. If a non-custodial parent refuses to abide by the ELC's policies, the police and custodial parent will be contacted.

Additional Needs Policy

Introduction: *"We will work to ensure children and families with additional needs can exercise their rights...We will work to ensure that children are not discriminated against on the basis of gender, age, ability, economic stature, family structure, life-style, religion, language, culture or national origin."* (Early Childhood Australia: Code of Ethics: In Relation to Children, Section 1)

Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre is informed by the beliefs and principles of the Jewish Faith. We welcome all children into our school, and work towards offering each child the best possible program according to his/her needs and rights. Central to our work is the building of relationships, between families and educators, children and educators, children and children. This is further extended in offering our families links to one another, and thereby opportunities to form meaningful connections and relationships with one another.

"All children need to know that others care about them, knows them well and are interested in what they do, think and feel." (Guide of the National Quality Framework; Quality Area 5: Relationships with children; Pg. 124)

Goals: Inclusion Support

- All preschool-aged children and their families are welcome at Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre.
- We meet with our families to gather information and history to prepare for the children in the year before entry.
- We work closely to ensure the voice of each child, their parents, the ELC Educators and outside agencies are listened to in this process.
- As a result of our pre-entry meeting the child and family are offered appropriate placement into our ELC.
- We liaise in the process of getting to know the child.
- We carefully observe/assess, refer to others and document our observations as we develop a holistic understanding of the child.
- We value all expressions of the child. Each child comes to us with their unique character and abilities to join our school community.
- We create welcoming and inviting environments that offer clear messages of purpose. These planned environments (indoor and outdoor) give each child another opportunity to develop tools in order that they may better understand and navigate their surroundings.
- These environments take into consideration the physical requirements and needs of individual children, including accessibility to entries, playrooms, bathrooms and outdoor play areas.
- The ELC applies for funding for our children where appropriate. These monies are dedicated to higher staffing ratios for our classrooms, and also allow for additional resources and specialised training.
- The children are offered a programme of opportunities to enhance full inclusion, small group experiences and one-to-one experiences to consolidate specific skill development from outside therapies.
- Term meetings are organised to develop shared goals for our children. All stakeholders are invited.

Assessment of Children Policy

Introduction: Critical reflection and careful planning increase the value of children's time in education and care by ensuring that the educational program and practice responds to children's interests and scaffolds their learning. This will guide our service in developing the educational program and practice. Planning is also important in ensuring accountability to families and children, management, funding and regulatory bodies.

Goals

Each child who attends our service will be observed and considered in the ELC setting. According to the Education and Care Services National Regulations #74, we ensure that a written record is kept for each child, for the purposes of the education program:

- I. Assessments of the child's developmental needs, interests, experiences & participation in the education program.
- II. Assessment of the child's progress against the outcomes of the education program.

Strategies

On entry into the ELC setting, each child will be observed by the teaching team during an observation period. Anecdotal observations, learning stories, running records and documentation of the child's engagement in and response to the learning environment provided, will be used as part of the individual assessment of each child.

Classroom teachers may request that a more detailed observation is carried out by the College Psychologist, who will observe and consider the child in relation to his/her developmental profile. During the observation period, discussion and sharing of information with the teaching team and with parent/s about the child's development will take place. After the observation period, if there are concerns regarding a child's development, a more detailed assessment from outside allied professionals may be recommended to the families.

These recommendations may be for one or more of the following intervention therapies:

- Speech and Language Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physiotherapy
- Hearing Assessment
- Optometrist Check-up
- Global Developmental Assessment
- Paediatric Assessment
- Play Therapy
- Psychological Consultation

The process will include:

- Written permission from the parent/s.
- Screening or further assessment with the relevant therapist (this will be done at the ELC).
- Follow up discussion and meeting to establish an Individual Learning / Education Plan in collaboration with the family and therapists involved.
- Setting the regular follow up meetings, where progress will be reviewed and evaluated, as required.

This process will be followed as part of our regular practice and consideration of each child. In the case of no further intervention required, ongoing observations by the classroom educators will be carried out, and these will be placed both within the individual portfolios as well as on file, and kept for ELC records.

Practices

- We regularly share our observations with families.
- We use photographs to support our documentation, our observations and our understanding of our program, and share this with our families, so that they too have an understanding of the process and the meaning behind our journey with the children.
- We work to ensure "children and families with additional need/s can exercise their rights" *Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics # 7*
- Prior to a child entering the ELC, we ask families to complete a short questionnaire, which will provide a deeper understanding of the child, and his/her life, on entering the ELC.

- In the child's first term, the classroom teacher will arrange a one-on-one parent-teacher dialogue so as to learn more about each child, and have a deeper understanding of their family, their background and their story. This conversation is documented and will form part of the weekly and daily programming for each room.
- A mid-year parent-teacher conference is scheduled for each family, where a detailed sharing of the child's progress through the first half of the year is presented, in relation to the EYLF outcomes. This is not the time to raise concerns, but rather to review them, if there have been any.
- Twice a year, we request that families complete a survey about their child both at home and his parent's understanding of how he/she is progressing at the ELC. This offers classroom teaching teams further information about their child's development and progress.
- A detailed handover profile is developed that will accompany each child on his journey from Prep to Primary School.
- The assessments and observations and records of each child will remain at the ELC for two years, after which will be archived for 24 years at the College.

Bed Linen Policy

Mount Sinai College ELC (Joeys Group) Parents are invited to purchase a stretcher bed-sized fitted sheet and attached covering sheet for their child. These sheets are made from 100% cotton. Parents may also purchase a polar fleece blanket and/or pillow for their child to use during Sleep / Rest Time. Mount Sinai College Educators will label bedding purchased through the ELC prior to the child's commencement day.

Linen will be sent home fortnightly in a drawstring bag on a Friday to be washed, and is expected to be returned the following Monday. Any bedding items brought in from home should be clearly labelled by parents. If a child does not have their bedding with them on any particular day, a clean set of the ELC's spare sheets will be provided for them on this occasion. These sheets will be laundered before re-use.

When stretcher beds are packed away, all sheets, blankets and pillows are placed inside beds when stacked so that no linen touches another child's linen. Damaged linen will be given to parents so that the necessary repairs can be made.

Behaviour Management Policy

Policy Statement: Promotion of a positive approach to guiding children's behaviour within an environment that is supportive, consistent and safe for all children. We believe that each child should have the opportunity to develop a positive self-esteem. Their early experiences influence their wellbeing.

Introduction: Learning to manage feelings and behaviour is an important process for all children. By focusing on each child's strengths and taking a broad view of acceptable behaviour, staff can support each child to develop appropriate personal behaviour and social skills. At all times the **rights and dignity** of the child are respected. Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre will maintain a safe and happy environment for children by following the guidelines of the **Behaviour Management Policy** and thereby guiding children towards positive, considerate and responsible behaviour.

Goals

- To respect and promote the rights of every child.
- To respect the rights of the children in the group.
- To guide and encourage the children towards positive, acceptable and responsible behaviour.
- To enhance the self-esteem of all children in our care.
- To do what is best for the child under the circumstances.
- For children to learn how to practise consideration towards one another and to adults.
- For children to learn something positive through the process of a guided behaviour approach.
- Teach children the skill of managing their emotions (e.g. anger & frustration).
- To provide children with strategies to solve problems.

Strategies

A. Staff guide children's behaviour in positive ways by:

- Treating all children with respect and dignity.
- Focusing on all children's strengths.
- Ensuring that the expectations of children's behaviour are individually, culturally and developmentally appropriate to each child.
- Using positive words when guiding children towards a desired behaviour.
- Ensuring that expectations and limits are consistent and clear to children.
- Provide an environment that is child-focused to minimise confrontation and conflict.
- Create limits for children that keep them safe and promote the wellbeing of all children.
- Ensuring that behaviour that is not appropriate is responded to immediately.
- Talking with children about how their actions affect others and themselves.
- Helping children to develop empathy and develop simple rules.
- Keeping up-to-date with current trends in positive guidance by participating in professional development and training opportunities.

a) Staff are effective role models for children by:

- Interacting with children and other adults in positive ways.
- Modelling desirable behaviours that display trust, respect and empathy.
- Responding calmly and sensitively to children's challenging behaviour.
- Listening to children so that the appropriate cause of behaviour can be determined and responded to appropriately.
- Seeking assistance from other staff when they may need help.
- No labelling of behaviours with stereotypical, negative names (i.e. bad, naughty etc.) or using negative strategies (i.e. 'naughty corners').

b) When unacceptable behaviour occurs or is about to occur, educators will use:

- Redirection
- Distraction
- Active Listening
- Bringing the child in closer
- Provide a calm place for getting through the emotion

** The child will return to the group/activity when he/she feels ready OR when the educator decides that it is appropriate to do so.

c) Staff guidelines:

- Support each other by stepping in when a staff member shows signs of frustration or not coping with a child's challenging behaviour.
- Use a calm voice when managing the situation.
- Discuss behaviour strategies and values at staff meetings and with the Director.
- At no time should a staff member use behaviour that conflicts with the ELC's Code of Conduct when guiding a child's behaviour.
- It is unacceptable for staff to use any strategies that may humiliate, frighten or threaten a child.
- It is unacceptable to use any form of verbal, physical or emotional punishment.

Confidentiality: At no time are specific children to be discussed in front of other children or adults (visitors, parents etc.) as general playroom discussion. This is to be kept for an area that is private such as the office. Information concerning a child's behaviour is not to be conveyed to parents in front of a child. The child is to be removed from the situation or a time organised for a private discussion. Discuss behaviour concerns with the family of the child and make recommendations for intervention at the Director or Teacher's discretion.

Birthdays Policy

Introduction

We celebrate children at Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre by making sure birthdays are special occasions. Celebrating their birthday is celebrating them. Birthdays offer an opportunity to embrace and acknowledge each child, his/her family and his/her life so far. The circle of friends, the classroom teachers and the family gather together for a party in class to celebrate a child, and what he has accomplished in his/her life so far.

Purpose

We see each child's birthday as a special time in the year; it is an opportunity not only to celebrate each child, but to celebrate life. Birth is the beginning, a momentous occasion. As each child is an important member of the classroom community, they will each come to have their turn to receive the good wishes and the positive experience of being celebrated by others. One day a year we say to our friend and family "we are glad you are in our life, and thank you for being you".

For the birthday child it is a moment to pause and consider what they can be thankful for, to celebrate and give thanks and to reflect upon their life so far. The circle of friends in class are involved in the important act of giving to and thinking about others. It is an opportunity to invite the child's family and connect home and ELC, past and present. And of course nothing gives a parent greater joy than to see how their child has grown up and come to have a place in the world.

To effectively plan and celebrate the child's birthday, Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre educators will:

- talk to the child's parents and set the date of the celebration, either on the child's actual birthday or a mutually suitable day.
- encourage parents to order a \$25 birthday cake from the PA.
- explain to parents that all party food provided by and brought into the ELC needs to be Kosher.
- allow parents to extend the party invitation to other relatives especially grandparents.
- plan a party with the input from the birthday child as to what songs, games or dances he/she would like to play.
- ask parents if they have invitations for personal parties to only hand them out at school if all of the students are invited.

A few days prior to the celebration, parents will be provided with ideas of how they can contribute to the party and celebrations. This may include:

- Photographs and stories of their child from birth, one for each year.
- Balloons or other party goods are welcomed as long as there is one for each child, it is Kosher, and appropriate.
- Parents are welcome to bring their own cameras and video cameras to the party.
- Extra special visitors are welcome but we do not encourage younger siblings to attend (as they may disrupt the celebrations). This needs to be confirmed with the teacher in advance.

The Class Teacher may prepare the following ahead of the party:

- Crown, medal, birthday cape, birthday table, birthday chair and/or birthday cake.
- The teacher together with the parent's help may also create a birthday chart and timeline.

For the celebration:

- Teachers will bring ideas for the party.
- Children are encouraged to participate wherever possible.
- The party is an opportunity to sing favourite songs, to dance, play educational games and to eat celebratory foods.
- The celebration will be take place in the class for the duration of 20 – 30 minutes.

Child Health Policy

Aim: Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre Educators believe that children's health is a chief priority of the service. They uphold a healthy lifestyle and model a healthy diet to the children on a daily basis.

Diet: Parents are asked to provide a healthy morning tea and a freshly filled water bottle for their child each day. Staff refill water bottles throughout the day and children are encouraged to have a drink numerous times throughout the day.

Parents are given every opportunity to learn about the children's lunches that we promote. We demonstrate to new parents at Orientation the type of lunch that we would like to see packed in the children's lunch boxes. This includes no snack foods and no pre-packaged commercial foods. We believe that children need 'fuel' from fresh food to have the energy to play well and to maintain a friendly disposition.

Exercise: All Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre students will undertake a weekly 30-minute session of physical movement with a specialist P.E. Teacher to promote good physical wellbeing and gross motor skill development. All children are involved in physical (gross motor and movement) activities within the regular ELC Program on a daily basis.

Healthy Practices:

- Children are taught hygienic practices for coughs, colds sneezes (i.e. children are encouraged to cough into the crook of their elbow and taught how to blow their nose correctly).
- Bedding is sent home each fortnight for washing. No children can sleep on another child's stretcher bed.
- The preschool cushions cannot be used as a pillow at rest time unless it is first placed under a child's bedclothes to protect the cushion cover.
- It is recommended that children who are in high-risk categories for Hepatitis B be immunised for the sake of their own health before starting at the ELC.
- The following policies are to provide parents with information about health-related procedures that will be implemented while their child is attending the centre; including *Hygiene; Medication; Accidents; Immunisation; Infectious Diseases; Non-infectious diseases requiring exclusion; Sun Protection; Non-Smoking; Illness & Emergency Treatment & Prescribed Medication.*

On admission to the ELC, parents are asked for details regarding their child's medical history and immunisation records. This information is to be kept in the child's file until they leave the ELC. It is only to be removed from the premises if a child requires immediate medical treatment at a medical centre or hospital.

* *Access to this information is restricted to Mount Sinai College ELC / Prep / College Staff, the child's parents or the child's legal guardians.*

Child Protection Policy

Policy Statement: The safety, welfare and wellbeing of the child are paramount and all Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre staff will ensure to the best of their ability that every child is protected from Risk of Harm. The role of all staff is to assist in identifying and responding to children who are at Risk of Harm and to offer support to the child within the ELC environment. It is the responsibility of all staff to be aware of the indicators of children who are at Risk of Harm as described in this policy. **All staff members are Mandatory Reporters.** It is not the role of the Director to conduct any investigation or assessment. The role of the staff is to be alert to the indicators that may raise concern for a child who is at Risk of Harm.

Mount Sinai College ELC & Prep Child Protection Procedures

1. The **Indicators of Risk of Harm** are set out by the **NSW Child Protection Council** in 'Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection Intervention':
 - Basic physical or psychological needs are not being met.
 - Parents are unwilling or unable to arrange necessary medical care.
 - Physical or sexual abuse, or ill-treatment is occurring.
 - A child is living with domestic violence.
 - Parents behaviour resulting in or risk of serious psychological harm.
2. Staff must **report** to the Director of the ELC immediately if there are any concerns about a child's wellbeing at *Risk of Harm*. Staff should not reveal their concerns to anyone other than the ELC Director. The report should include:
 - Any behavioural changes including a time frame.
 - An accurate written observation of unusual behaviour.
 - Descriptions of any marks or injuries.
 - Any previous history that may put matters into perspective about the family.
3. The Staff Member in conjunction with the ELC Director and College Principal may seek advice from the intake officer at the local Department of Community Services; a counsellor at a sexual assault service or the Child Protection Unit at The Sydney Children's Hospital (9382 1412). The child does not need to be identified at this time.
4. If the complaint warrants further investigation, Community Services **will** be notified. Notification is required by law. Notifications are to be made to the 24-hour Help Line on 13 36 27. Community Services will assess how to respond to the report.
5. The **Interagency Guidelines for Child Protection booklet** is kept in the office at all times and can be consulted for further information. All concerns will be kept strictly confidential.
6. The Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre Authorised Supervisors and Director must attend a Community Services accredited workshop on Child Protection after commencing employment.

Practices: To ensure the safety of children and to ensure their protection from abuse while in care, Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre should:

- ensure all educators are fully informed of legal rights, responsibilities and procedures in relation to Mandatory Reporting of known or suspected child abuse.
- ensure there is one age appropriate mattress for each child at Sleep / Rest Time.
- ensure supervision and visibility of children at all times in all indoor and outdoor areas, e.g. toileting facilities with viewing window; have at least two staff on premises at all times with vision of each other and the children; and have two staff present or in view when changing or washing children.
- know that it is a criminal offence for anyone to physically or sexually abuse a child; to cause permanent emotional damage, e.g. making child feel constantly frightened, stupid, bad or threatened; provide inadequate supervision, food, clothing and shelter.
- ensure all staff are trained to provide protective behaviour programs for children to learn self-protection.

- never physically punish children by hitting, shaking, pinching; do not use abusive, derogatory, humiliating language; do not inappropriately punish children by withdrawing child's food, rest, use of the toilet, or lock in a room; never emotionally abuse or threaten children; and do not inappropriately touch, fondle, kiss or have sexual contact with children.
- minimise negative interactions between children and Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre staff, discuss these types of issues with the ELC Director and develop strategies to address issues.
- ensure that criminal and child protection checks ('Working with Children Check') are carried out on all Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre staff.
- ensure all ELC staff are trained on the early detection of child abuse, be able to observe for signs of child abuse and promptly report to the ELC Director.
- ensure all ELC staff are informed that Mandatory Reporting of child abuse is required if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is at risk of harm by family, relatives, friends, caregivers or staff, due to:
 - the child's basic physical or psychological needs not being met.
 - unwillingness or inability to arrange for the child to receive necessary medical care.
 - the child has been, or is at risk of being physically or sexually abused or ill-treated.
 - incidences of domestic violence, and as a consequence, the child or young person is at risk of serious physical or psychological harm.
 - behaviour towards the child which causes suffering, or is at risk of suffering serious psychological harm.
- be aware that in the first instance it is preferred, though not compulsory, to report child abuse concerns to the ELC Director. If there is an issue or disagreement between the ELC Director and Educators, and the educators have reasonable grounds that a child is currently at risk of harm, they are legally required to make a report directly to Community Services: 132 111, or call 000 and inform police if there is a life-threatening situation.
- ensure confidentiality so the child is not at further risk of abuse, or intimidated to change their story and so a wrongly accused adult does not suffer damage to reputation and/or livelihood.
- do not interview children about suspected abuse or notify parents or guardians (Community Services is responsible for informing parents).
- know that the identity of reporters is confidential and that they are legally protected and cannot be prosecuted for reporting child abuse on reasonable grounds, in accordance with the Regulation.
- contact the child's emergency contacts, Community Services or the local Police as per the ELC Policy if parents fail to collect the child and cannot be reached.
- be aware of cultural practices that can be misinterpreted as signs of abuse, such as cupping, application of poultices, not cutting hair or nails in infants.
- train and encourage all ELC staff to be aware of their own personal levels of tolerance and stress and to take regular breaks.

Important Contact Information

- **Keep them Safe Support Line:** 1800 772 479 - www.keepthemsafe.nsw.gov.au
- **NSW Online Mandatory Reporters Guide** – <https://reporter.childstory.nsw.gov.au/s/>
- **Community Services NSW** - www.community.nsw.gov.au
- **HSNet** - www.hsnet.nsw.gov.au/
- **NSW Family Support Services** – www.nswfamilyservices.asn.au/
- **Department of Human Services** – www.humanservices.nsw.gov.au/
- **Domestic Violence Help Line** – 1800 656 463
- **Parentline NSW** – 1300 1300 52 – www.parentline.org.au/
- **The NSW Commission for Children and Young People** – www.kids.nsw.gov.au

Community Services Statement: 'One of the most important concerns of any community is the health, safety and well-being of its children and young people. Whilst parents and carers are responsible for the safety and welfare of children in their care, protecting children and young people from abuse and neglect is the responsibility of the whole community.'

www.community.nsw.gov.au/preventing_child_abuse_and_neglect/protecting_children.html

Child-to-Child Interaction Policy

Aim: For optimal development, all children need to recognise and develop an awareness, acceptance and understanding of others.

Strategies: Children are encouraged to interact in a positive and socially acceptable way. Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre Educators will facilitate this process through teaching children to:

- Verbalise feelings and thoughts
- Listen to others
- Show respect for others and be respected in turn
- Develop good social skills
- Accept differences in others
- Learn co-operative skills
- Share experiences
- Follow routines
- Seek help when frustrated
- Be relaxed and happy with each other
- Actively participate in the class
- Respond to positive discipline practices
- Feel comfortable with themselves
- Respect other children's space and privacy
- Assist each other
- Empower themselves to deal independently with situations

Code of Conduct Policy (Parents/Guardians, Visitors and Volunteers)

Introduction: Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre aims to provide a warm, open, welcoming and safe environment. We believe that parents/guardians, visitors and volunteers play a crucial and valuable role in the effective operation of the ELC and in enriching the children's program. We acknowledge that without their support, participation and contribution, the ELC could not operate.

This code of conduct for parents/guardians, visitors and volunteers outlines the type of practice we require all adults working, visiting and volunteering at our ELC to follow. It will assist in ensuring the safety and wellbeing of children, families and staff. It does not provide all the answers but is a broad outline of principles, expectations and ideals regarding conduct.

The Board and staff have a duty of care to the children attending the ELC. Employers have a responsibility to provide, as far as practicable, a safe workplace that is free from discrimination, bullying and/or harassment. A code of conduct provides guidelines for desirable and appropriate behaviour of members, and reflects the values and philosophy of the ELC. The code is designed to provide principles and practices to guide adult behaviour. The *Code of Conduct Policy (Parents/Guardians and Volunteers)* should provide a valuable resource for guiding decisions and behaviour of parents/guardians, visitors and volunteers involved both directly and indirectly in the ELC.

Mount Sinai College Values

Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre is a place of learning for young children and therefore the rights of the child will be considered first and foremost.

This ELC is committed to:

- The wellbeing of each child having fundamental importance.
- The provision, as far as practicable, of a safe and secure environment.
- Providing an open, welcoming environment where everyone's contribution is valued and respected.
- Encouraging parents/guardians, visitors, volunteers and community members to support and participate in our ELC's program.

Standards of Conduct: In relation to children:

- Be a positive role model at all times.
- Always speak in an encouraging and positive manner.
- Listen actively to children and offer empathy, support, guidance and direction as appropriate and where needed.
- Regard all children equally and with respect and dignity.
- Physical contact with children other than your own should be avoided unless directed by staff or if the safety of a child is compromised (this should be reported immediately to staff).
- Inform children if physical contact is required for an activity and ask them if they are happy to proceed.
- All interactions with children should be undertaken in full view of other adults.
- Never do things of a personal nature for a child that they can do themselves, for example, assisting them in going to the toilet or changing their clothes.

In relation to other adults (including staff):

- Use respectful, appropriate and courteous language in all communications.
- Respect the rights of others as individuals.
- Give encouraging and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- Accept staff decisions and follow their directions at all times. Speak with the staff member if you have a problem complying with any directions.
- Be aware of routines and guidelines for children's play at ELC, abide by them and seek advice when unsure.
- Be aware of emergency evacuation and lockdown procedures.
- Discipline of children is the responsibility of staff and therefore any matters or concerns related to managing children's behaviour should be referred to staff immediately.
- Any issues or grievances should be raised as outlined in the *Grievance Policy*.
- Smoking is prohibited on the ELC's property at all times.

In general:

- The ELC Director and staff are responsible for the children who are attending (enrolled and signed in) the ELC.
- Parents/guardians, and other persons attending with children not enrolled at the ELC, are responsible for supervision of their children at all times. This is particularly important, for example, when outdoors as the climbing equipment may be set-up for two to four year-olds and could be hazardous for younger siblings.
- Adults are responsible for all children who accompany them, for example during drop off and pick up times.
- Parents/guardians must clean up after their children and leave all areas as they were found.
- Parents are responsible for children in their care when present outside of the ELC opening hours.

Cooking Activities with Visitors Policy

Policy Statement: Mount Sinai College ELC Educators plan to provide a safe environment when cooking or baking with visitors. The ELC will provide food, and food and nutrition education that is consistent with national dietary guidelines for children, adolescents and national infant feeding guidelines, state regulations, food safety principles, and that is appropriate to their age, cultural background, religion or medical needs. We aim to provide clear guidelines and focus on maintaining a safe environment for children through high-quality educational programs.

Background: All precautions and guidelines must be followed in order to provide a safe environment for children, staff and visitors when baking or cooking. Visitors must adhere to cooking and baking practices to reduce the likelihood of accidents and injuries and ensure the environment is hygienic and safe.

Mount Sinai College ELC Practices:

- Visitors are to pre-book and organise an appropriate time with teacher for cooking and baking.
- Staff must ensure that all ingredients and the program are suitable for the children's health and safety and meet the Kosher Guidelines.
- No foods containing nuts or meat are allowed at the ELC.
- All preparation must be completed on site in the Staff Room.
- When working in the staff room area, the staff room door must be closed at all times. No children are allowed inside.

- Children are able to stand and watch the preparations as long as they are not inside the staff room area.
- Visitors will ensure that children wash their hands before eating, handling food or cooking.
- All equipment will be appropriate for children's use.
- Visitors are responsible for cleaning the cooking / baking area as well as the kitchen area.
- All appliances are to be cleaned appropriately and put away.
- Visitors will ensure that all knives, cutting boards, plates, etc. are kept in a safe location and hygienic condition.
- Visitors are required to advise a staff member when they leave the campus.

Daily Routine Policy

Introduction: We develop daily routines for each of our classrooms. The routines respond to the children as they are flexible and are assessed and adjusted to the daily rhythm of the children. We acknowledge that children's needs change and develop and expand during the year. The daily routine will take into account a number of different contributing factors:

- Age and stage of development
- Gender of the children
- Family cultural diversity
- Children's diverse abilities and additional needs
- Time for individual engagement with the program as well as small and large group experiences
- Consideration of time for intentional teaching as well as improvised and spontaneous learning experiences
- Time for structured and formal experiences, open-ended experiences and in particular time for play
- Consideration of a balance of both indoor and outdoor experiences
- Always following the developmental needs of the children's physical well-being, health & safety
- Accommodates external educators – for example Physical Education Coach, Jewish Enrichment & Music.

Goals: To provide a safe and flexible routine that offers children and their families' familiarity, and clear understanding of what comes next – that the days have a beginning, middle and an end. By following the daily routine children come to practice and master transitions from one experience to another, reducing the risks of accidents and injury, and *"contributing to their wellbeing, happiness, creativity and developing independence and determining the quality of children's learning and experiences."* (Quality Area 3: NQS). The routines consider the daily health and safety of the children, as mealtimes, quiet / restful times, physical and emotional wellbeing are all taken into account.

Each teaching team will develop their own daily routine that follows the rhythm of the children and the prepared environment. Each routine will be published so that parents and children are able to access and follow with ease.

The daily routines will include the following components:

- Welcome children and families
- Morning meeting
- Morning tea
- Morning exercise program
- Intentional teaching components – example: Jewish Studies, Hebrew, Music, Movement and Dance, Storytime, Language, Exploration, Project Work, Sport and Ball skills, etc.
- Transition times including toileting and washing hands, pack away and tidy-up time
- Extra-curricular group times
- Outdoor play
- Lunch time
- Quiet and restful time, including sleep time
- Quiet time activities
- Farewell children and families
- Owlet Program (4-6pm)

Throughout the day the children are split into small group experiences, individual learning opportunities, full classroom experiences as well as full ELC and spontaneous learning experiences. The teaching teams will

also plan excursions and incursions for the children at the ELC. The daily routines will be factored into these days.

Delivery & Collection of Children Policy

Introduction

Settling a child into an ELC environment takes time and consistency from both staff and families. Helping children have predictable routines at arrival and departure times along with familiar staff, assists children to build confidence in their social skills and in their interactions with staff, peers and their surroundings.

Arrival and departure times present an opportunity to welcome children and families into the service and to build positive relationships based on reciprocity, trust and a sense of belonging. Strict guidelines are necessary to ensure that families or authorised persons are aware of the process for signing in and out their child, so that an accurate record of attendance of each child is available. These records are required by DEC.

Aims

- To ensure that all staff are aware of the children who are in attendance at the ELC at any time.
- To ensure a continuity of care for each child.
- To ensure that all staff can account for all children in the case of an emergency and evacuation.
- To enable parents to discuss their child with a staff member at arrival and departure times.

Definitions

Authorised Person – a person nominated by the family/carer/guardian, in writing, to collect the child. An authorised person needs to be over the age of 18 years.

Unauthorised Person – a person who has not been nominated by the parent/carer/guardian as an authorised person to collect the child from the service. A person who has been forbidden by a court order from having contact with a child attending the service.

Implementation

- **To ensure maximum security and safety of all children, gates and doors must always be shut properly. Children are not allowed to open and close the gates or doors.**
- Each group has their own Student Attendance Register iPad.
- The Class Teacher or Assistant Educator will check the sign in iPad at around 9.30am and check that the number of children at school corresponds with the number of children signed in.
- The Director and staff will check all children have been signed in and out of the ELC at the end of each day and log off the iPads.
- Any day-to-day changes regarding pick-up arrangements must be noted in the sign-in book beside the child's name, by the parent or authorised person, or alternatively written in the communication book or told to a staff member.
- Parents can authorise a staff member to vary the arrangements by telephone or email.
- No person will be allowed into the ELC without first being greeted by the Security Guard.

Arrival (Mount Sinai College Campus)

1. The Early Learning Centre opens at **7.30 am** and parents need to access the campus through the Hannan Street driveway gate.
2. Please sign your child in promptly.
3. Children are not permitted to play in the playground unsupervised during this time. Children must be handed into the care of a staff member.
4. Please assist your child to place their bag in their locker.
5. Morning Tea Bags and Lunch Boxes need to go in the appropriate group's baskets. These are placed in the fridge by 9.30 am each morning.
6. Please encourage children to come up to staff members and greet them personally.
7. Staff will also be available to greet families and find out about the child's needs for the day.
8. Parents can then inform staff of any particular needs or helpful information regarding their child and may also write this in the communication book.
9. We encourage parents to stay and do one activity with their child. This is a special time for parents to interact with their child in the ELC setting and assists in a smoother transition.
10. In building a sense of trust and security, it is important that the parent/ carer says "goodbye" to the child on leaving the premises.

11. We like all parents to please have left the campus by **9.15 am**.
12. Children will be helped and reassured by staff members when saying goodbye to parents, and encouraged to settle into an appropriate activity.
13. Please do not leave children unsupervised in the garden area.
14. *All younger siblings need to be well supervised in the morning and not left to roam around unsupervised.*
15. We encourage parents/authorised persons to refrain from speaking on their mobile phones whilst at the ELC doing drop off or pick up.

Departure Procedure

1. Parents may pick up their children from **3 pm** and all children need to be collected before **6 pm** (Monday – Thursday).
2. The ELC closes early on a Friday at **4 pm** sharp.
3. Afternoons need to be a quick pick-up and not a time to socialise or play a game with your child.
4. As children leave each day, staff will be available to greet families and communicate about their child's day. Any important messages will be passed onto families, including changes in the child's routine, accident reports or medication needs.
5. Staff members are to check authorisation of a non-parent by means of enrolment form, a message, email, or after seeking verbal permission from a parent.
6. Authorised persons not known to staff will be asked to show photo identification such as a Driver's Licence.
7. Please contact the ELC if a pickup after 6 pm is likely to arise.
8. If a person is authorised, the child may be released. If a person is not authorised, the staff member should take whatever reasonable measures they can to keep the child at the ELC and notify the custodial parent of the situation. However, at no time should staff members endanger themselves or other children at the ELC (see *Access to Children Policy*).
9. A parent or authorised person collects the child's bag from their locker together with the child.
10. An educator signs the child out in the Student Attendance iPad.
11. A parent or authorised person is responsible for the child as soon as the child leaves the front door of the ELC.
12. If a person arrives at the ELC to collect a child and there is no information on the enrolment form, or sign in sheet authorising the person, the child must not be handed over. In this instance the parents should be contacted immediately and advised of the person's name that is attempting to collect the child. Identification should be sought from the person if the parent has given permission.
13. **Siblings** who come down to the ELC need to be **accompanied by an adult at all times**. Siblings may not climb and play on the equipment and may not play with the toys inside. Parents need to supervise siblings in this regard and need to move out with all their children quickly.
14. Please clear your child's communication pocket on a daily basis as you leave the ELC.
15. Please read the Daily Reflection so you have an idea of the highlights of the day or alternatively read it at home together with your child.
16. Parents are asked to please inform us either in writing or verbally, if they are going away on holiday/business and provide details on who will be looking after their child, collecting or dropping off at the ELC etc. including contact telephone numbers. We encourage families to bring the carers to school to meet us and familiarise themselves with the environment.
17. Parents at the ELC are asked to sign a 'Late Fee Agreement' at the beginning of the school year. This agreement outlines the fine which will occur if a child is collected after the legal closing time.

Drug & Alcohol Free Workplace Policy

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, Mount Sinai College has an obligation to ensure the health and safety of all employees and visitors to our ELC. All workplaces have a duty of care under WH&S legislation to provide a safe, healthy, drug-free and alcohol-free environment.

Practices

Employees and/or visitors impaired by drugs or alcohol in the workplace are not permitted to be on Mount Sinai ELC premises and may be removed if necessary. Drug and alcohol use in the workplace creates a range of problems. Employees should consume no drugs or alcohol before or during their working shift. Early Learning Centres are not able to serve alcohol during licensed operating hours. For special circumstances where there is a sanctioned event, the serving of alcohol may be permitted. In such circumstances, employees are required to demonstrate responsible serving of alcohol and to be aware of limitations of driving after consumption of alcohol. Under no circumstances is it permitted to continue to serve alcohol to an intoxicated person.

Food Allergies & Anaphylaxis Policy

Strategies

1. On entry at Mount Sinai College ELC, families are asked to provide information on the child's health, medication, any food or other allergies and anaphylaxis.
2. In addition to this, the family doctor's name and emergency contact details are also shared.
3. If necessary, a **Care Plan** will be developed by the parents, which will be approved of and agreed to by the family doctor prior to the child starting at the ELC.
4. The **Allergy Emergency Medical Plan** will be placed in key areas throughout the campus so as to ensure the all staff and volunteers at the centre are aware of the child, and what the management plan is in case of an emergency. This includes:
 - the identification of symptoms,
 - the location of the medication, and
 - the administration of the medication procedures.
5. A copy of the plan is also provided to the parent/s of the child (National Regulations #90).
6. In the case of Anaphylaxis staff training will be provided for all staff members at the centre, including the administration of an Epi-pen or Anapen.
7. In the event of severe allergy reaction or any signs or symptoms of anaphylaxis, the staff member/s will immediately:
 - Refer to the **Care Plan / Allergy Emergency Medical Plan**.
 - Administer First Aid, accordingly, including the use of an Epi-pen/Anapen if required.
 - Call 000 and call the parent/s of the child.
 - A staff member is to remain with the child at all times, and preferably to keep the child isolated from the other children.
 - An incident/illness report to be completed and signed by the supervising teacher and parent/s and filed and kept in the centre records.

NOTE: "Despite Regulation # 94 medication may be administered to a child without an authorisation in case of an anaphylaxis or asthma emergency." (Education and Care Services National Regulation) Should this occur then the educators must contact the child's family immediately.

Signs and Symptoms of severe allergies and possible indicators of anaphylaxis:

- Swelling and redness of the skin
- Itchy, raised rash (hives)
- Swelling of the throat, wheezing and/or coughing
- Rapid, irregular pulse
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness or unconsciousness

Practices to minimise the risk of exposure of children to food that might trigger severe allergy or anaphylaxis:

- Provide wipes and information for families on entering the ELC each morning so as to ensure that nut and other food traces will not infect the ELC environment.
- Ensure children do not share food.
- Ensure that all foods prepared and served from the kitchen in the centre have no traces of food that cause the allergic reactions.
- Restrict the use of foods likely to cause allergic reactions during craft and play activities.
- Provide information to educators, volunteers, relief staff and families around the possible triggers and causes of allergic and anaphylactic reactions, so as to minimise the risks - and to ensure that the centre is for example a 'nut-free' zone, or 'sesame-free centre'.

Food, Nutrition & Education Policy

Policy Statement: The ELC will provide food, and food and nutrition education that is consistent with national dietary guidelines for children, adolescents and national infant feeding guidelines, state regulations, food safety principles, and that is appropriate to their age, cultural background, religion or medical needs.

Background: Children in their first five years of life are developing rapidly and require a nutritious and safe diet for their intellectual, behavioural and physical development. Education and fun learning activities in relation to healthy eating is also important for children's development. Childhood is a time to form lifelong habits of good nutrition and healthy eating. The amount of food required each day varies with age, size and activity level of the child and a good diet is important for normal growth and development of the child. Nutrition is essential for good health and growth of children. A primary concern with the nutrition of the young child is to develop appropriate habits for food preferences. Good eating habits are established if a child is exposed to a variety of foods.

Mount Sinai College ELC aims:

- To provide families with nutritional information and food guidelines based on current Commonwealth recommendations on children's food requirements.
- To support Jewish beliefs by not allowing any meat at the ELC.
- To supply Kosher Birthday Cakes for parents to purchase for their child's celebration.
- To require that food brought into the ELC by families be in a sealed package (marked with a Kosher stamp).
- To ensure healthy eating habits are promoted and that mealtimes are pleasant occasions.
- To encourage staff in ongoing professional development and training in healthy eating habits.
- To encourage self-help and independence at mealtimes.
- To provide flexible eating periods.

Mount Sinai College ELC Food & Nutrition Practices

- Parents are asked to ensure that their children have a healthy breakfast every day.
- All children are required to bring a refillable **water** bottle, a healthy snack for morning tea and a healthy lunch. A healthy lunch may consist of a sandwich, sushi or wrap and one other healthy food, for example cheese sticks, vegetables, fruit pieces, raisins or yoghurt.
- Meat, chicken or shellfish products are not permitted as the College is Kosher and milchik - only milk products are allowed. Staff will ensure that meals are consistent with the religious or cultural beliefs of the ELC.
- There is a '**No Nuts**' policy at the ELC and College campus.
- 'Junk Food' including chocolates, cakes, chips, lollies or biscuits are not permitted except on festivals when children are allowed to bring a treat to accompany their regular lunch.
- Children with special dietary needs will be provided for appropriately and Parents will be advised of foods that will be restricted because they pose a physical threat to a child (e.g. anaphylaxis). Parents will be informed if their child is not eating well.
- Each child is required to bring Morning Tea in a labeled container or environmentally friendly food wallet.
- ELC Staff place lunch boxes in the fridge by 9:30am - 10am.
- Staff will not heat children's meals brought from home unless there is a medical reason stipulated by a doctor.
- Parents are not permitted to use the kitchen unless they are participating in a pre-arranged baking activity.

- Poppers and juice bottles are not permitted. Staff will ensure that every child has a drink available throughout the day. Bottles are refilled with water when they are empty. Tap water will be used (after consultation with Dental Experts). Children will be encouraged to drink plenty of water throughout the day from their drink bottles.
- Eating utensils and furniture used for eating will be of an appropriate size and shape that will encourage the development of eating skills and independence in eating by the children.
- Meal times will be a relaxed and happy time where children are encouraged to talk and socialise, and display socially acceptable behaviour.
- Children will be supervised at all times when they are eating and drinking.
- Staff are encouraged to sit and eat with the children at meal times encouraging healthy eating patterns and positive attitudes to food and eating.
- All children will 'Swish & Swallow' after their lunchtime meal to clean their teeth and mouths.

Allergies

MSC ELC will take reasonable steps to protect children with allergies who may experience anaphylactic reactions to certain foods. Our ELC is nut-free. Peanut butter and nut products, including processed biscuits, which contain traces of nuts, are not to be brought into the centre by families, staff or visitors because of the potential allergic response that some children may suffer. All parties, celebrations, and fundraising events will need to be monitored to ensure appropriate and safe food is supplied. All birthday cakes can be ordered from the school canteen and must comply with the Kashrut guidelines. Staff will implement action plans developed with families, for children with known allergies. Staff will be trained to identify allergic reactions in children, and take appropriate action.

Education: The ELC programmes will include opportunities for children and families to learn about good nutrition and eating habits, by providing relevant information that is appropriate to the developmental needs of the child and consistent with the Dietary Guide for Children. Staff will have opportunities to attend training courses that outline safe eating practices for children. Staff will use meal times as an opportunity for discussing food, nutrition, and good eating habits. Educators will discuss food choices or special diets with parents and children where appropriate, providing information in a way that is positive and that does not make reference to any personal views staff may have about certain foods or diet. Staff will ensure that all knives, cutting boards, plates, etc. are kept in a safe location and hygienic condition.

Educators will ensure that children wash their hands before eating, handling food or cooking. The Educators will encourage children to eat their lunch in a warm and nurturing manner, thus demonstrating that they have an understanding of the eating behaviours of children. Staff will endeavour to teach children about nutrition through carefully planned and appropriate activities (for example – cooking, baking activities and soup days). During these activities staff will promote the benefits of healthy eating as well as discuss mathematical concepts such as quantity and measurement.

Guidelines on Safety Procedures for Visitors

Practices:

- All visitors must present themselves before entry into the ELC to the Security Guard.
- If the Security Guard is not familiar with a person, or is unsure of a visitor's intention, he has the right ask him / her to remain outside the school gates whilst speaking to Reception or to the Director.
- The standard procedure is for all visitors to enter by the main entrance.
- All visitors arriving and departing during school hours are to use the electronic sign in **Visitors' Register** to record their name, their signature, the date and time and the purpose of the visit.
- Reception at MSC will ensure that all visitors sign the **Visitors' Register**.
- Persons making deliveries to the MSC are not required to sign in but must be supervised by the Security Guard or a staff member at all times.
- Visitors to the ELC must be familiar with the Evacuation, Emergency and Lockdown Procedures.
- All visitors must wash their hands before interacting with the children. They must also be aware of the *College's Nut-free Policy*.

Types of Visitors: Typical visitors to schools include:

- Prospective parents
- Relatives of current students
- Mount Sinai College Educators, Executive Staff and Board of Management Members
- Children's Services Agents / Early Childhood Education Consultants / Advisors
- Paediatric Therapists or Specialists
- Representatives of Community, Business and Service Groups
- Professional Development Workshop Facilitators
- Performers and Children's Entertainers
- Sessional instructors including: Music Teacher, Jewish Studies Teacher and Playball Coach
- Local members of the State and Commonwealth Parliaments
- Those who are conducting business such as: booksellers; official school photographer and tradespeople.

Head Lice Policy

Introduction: Head Lice continue to cause concern and frustration for parents, educators and children. This policy is intended to outline roles, responsibilities and expectations of the Preschool community to assist with treating and controlling head lice in a consistent and coordinated manner. Whilst parents have the primary responsibility for the detection and treatment of head lice, Mount Sinai College ELC will work in a cooperative and collaborative manner to assist all families to manage head lice effectively.

Head Lice Facts

Head lice has nothing to do with cleanliness; in fact, lice prefer a clean, healthy head of hair to a dirty one. Anyone, adult or child, can get head lice. As this condition is highly contagious a single case can soon escalate to epidemic proportions. Head lice are passed from person to person by direct contact or on shared objects (combs, towels, headphones, etc.). Head lice cannot survive without a human host, or on family pets.

Signs & Symptoms that would indicate the presence of Head Lice

- **General:** Child scratching his / her head excessively
- **On pillows:** fine black powder or pale coloured material
- **In the hair:** signs of lice eggs (nits) or coffee-coloured specks close to hair roots
- **Lice:** small white or greyish parasites the approximate size of a pin head
- Often an **outbreak** occurs in a primary school and younger children are then at risk

If a member of the family has contracted head lice, parents should follow the following steps:

1. Check every member of the family
2. Use an effective Head Lice Treatment
3. Remove all nits / lice with a fine-toothed comb
4. Wash clothes, bed linens and towels
5. Soak combs, brushes and hair accessories in hot water
6. Vacuum everywhere
7. Keep your child at home until treatment has been administered
8. Inform the ELC Director and your child's Teacher immediately

Mount Sinai College ELC's policy regarding this issue is clear and follows the Health Departmental guidelines – that is, no child is to re-enter the ELC until the hair and scalp are completely free of eggs and head lice.

It is the expectation of parents/carers and families attending the ELC that:

- Children's hair will be checked for head lice on a weekly basis, at home, using the recommended conditioner/combing detection method;
- Your child does not attend childcare with untreated head lice;
- All household members are regularly checked for head lice and treated if necessary;
- Parents/Carers will notify the ELC if their child is found to have live lice and advise when appropriate treatment was commenced;
- Children with long hair will attend the ELC with hair tied back;
- Parents/Carers will use only safe and recommended practices to treat head lice;
- The parents of your child's friends will be notified so they have an early opportunity to detect and treat their children if necessary;
- They act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the ELC and broader community especially around issues of head lice.

To support parents/carers and the broader Mount Sinai community to achieve a consistent, collaborative approach to head lice management, the ELC Educators will undertake to:

- Ensure that children's hats are kept in their individual lockers and not in a communal container.
- Ensure that the children's beds are stacked in a way that ensures that one child's sheets, pillow and blanket does not touch another child's.
- Distribute up-to-date and accurate information on the detection, treatment and control of head lice to parents and staff at the beginning of the year or more frequently if required;
- Include information about head lice management in orientation and transition programs for new families/staff attending the ELC;
- Include information and updates in weekly newsletters;
- Include annual head lice updates for staff in-service programs;
- Provide practical advice and maintain a sympathetic attitude and avoid stigmatising / blaming families who are experiencing difficulty with control measures;
- Access community educational resources and support, such as primary childcare nurses and community health centres;
- Abide by the recommendations of the School and Children's Service Centre Exclusion Policy of the Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 2001 in that the responsibility to exclude a child from the childcare rests with the person in charge of the ELC, and
 - Accept the advice of parents that appropriate treatment has commenced;
 - Encourage children to learn about head lice so as to help remove any stigma or 'bullying' associated with the issue;
 - Request that all families attending this childcare sign an 'agreement' to accept the conditions of the ELC's Head Lice policy;
 - Be aware of real difficulties some parents may encounter and seek extra support if required;
 - Act responsibly and respectfully when dealing with members of the ELC and broader community especially around issues of Head Lice; and
 - Continue to seek opportunities to increase our collective understanding of and response to managing head lice.

Illness & Emergency Treatment Policy

Rationale: Maintaining a healthy, safe environment for children is paramount for high quality care. Mount Sinai College ELC will facilitate the effective prevention and management of acute illness, injury or infectious disease to children and staff by communicating appropriately with doctors, hospitals, ambulance and Public Health Units.

Aim: To ensure that appropriate action is taken and that staff and parents are aware of the procedures that will be followed in an emergency.

Strategy:

- **On enrolment of every child**, the family is asked for details of the phone number and address of the person, doctor or dentist to be contacted in any form of acute illness, injury, acute infectious disease, or any other emergency.
- **In the case of an acute illness**, contact the person, doctor or dentist nominated by the family and ask for advice on what action to take.
- In the case of an **emergency** resulting in the need for immediate medical attention:
 - a) An **ambulance** is called (Dial 000)
 - b) Contact parents
 - c) A written account of incident is to be completed
- **In the case of being unable to contact the** person, doctor or dentist nominated in an emergency, other resources to call upon are:
 - another local doctor or dentist
 - local hospital or emergency department
 - Poisons Information line **131126**
 - Ambulance service **000**
 - Police **000**

Note: In a life-threatening situation a doctor not only does not have to get consent, but may have a positive duty to carry out treatment to save a patient's life. If parents and emergency contacts cannot be reached, approval is requested on the enrolment form, for the Director to act on medical advice.

Immunisation Policy

Rationale: Immunisation is a means of protecting people against diseases that can have serious complications. Immunisation, defined exclusion periods and good hygiene practices reduces the potential risk of exposure within the early childhood environment.

Our ELC encourages children and staff immunisation and promotes the immunisation schedule as outlined in the Health Department guidelines. However, the ELC respects individual preference with regard to immunisation.

Strategies:

- Immunisation records will be requested from all families upon enrolment.
- Families are required to provide the ELC with an updated copy of immunisation information each time their child receives updated immunisation.
- Families choosing not to immunise their child will be informed that their child will be excluded from care if there is a case of a communicable disease within the centre. Regular child care fees will be payable during this time.
- If a parent elects not to immunise their child, a letter from the family GP is required stating that in the GP's opinion the child is in excellent health.
- If a family chooses not to immunise their child at the ELC they will not be able to receive the *Child Care Benefit*.
- Any child who is not up to date with their immunisation will be considered unimmunised.
- The ELC will remind parents of the school-age immunisation prior to leaving Preparatory.
- The rationale for the Health Department guidelines will be discussed with parents on enrolment of their child and a Health Department brochure given to them if necessary.
- Staff will also be up to date with their immunisation. This information will remain confidential in staff files.

Diseases prevented by immunisations are:

- Poliomyelitis
- Tetanus
- Rubella
- Haemophilia influenza type B (HIB)
- Diphtheria
- Whooping Cough
- Measles, Mumps
- Meningococcal C
- Chicken Pox

The Director must notify the **Public Health Unit** as soon as they are aware that a child in their care has contracted a vaccine-preventable disease.

Infectious Diseases Policy

Definition: For the purpose of this policy an infectious disease refers to any communicable disease that is notifiable by law (see "Notification of Infectious Diseases Public Health Act 1991") and /or poses a risk of transmission to other children. The "Public Health Unit" refers to the Randwick office of SESIAHS Public Health – Tel: 9382 8333.

Aims: To promote a healthy and safe environment for all staff, children and parents and to reduce the risk of transmission and cross-infection of any illness or infectious disease within MSC ELC.

Current Health Department Guidelines state that if there is an infectious disease case in the ELC, all **non-immunised children must leave for 21 days**.

The Director will notify the Public Health Unit telephonically (9382 8333) of any infectious disease requiring notification under the Public Health Act 1991(NSW) within 24 hours. In addition, the Director will inform the Public Health Unit of any other relevant outbreaks of disease at the ELC.

Policy Statement: It is the policy of the ELC to inform parents of any infectious disease case of outbreak, allowing parents to make their own decision regarding their child's health. It is recommended that **non-immunised children** return to the centre 21 days after the outbreak of an infectious disease. Absence from the ELC will protect the health of the children who are not immunised and their families. In addition, it will ensure children and staff at the ELC remain healthy.

Strategies:

- Upon enrolment at Mount Sinai College, each child's immunisation status will be recorded and a photocopy of the record will be kept on file and up-dated accordingly.
- All parents will be informed immediately of any infectious condition in the centre by clearly visible notices. Notices will include symptoms of the condition and exclusion time from the centre for any infected person and non-immunised children.
- If a child develops symptoms of an infectious disease while at the ELC, precautions will be taken to prevent it spreading. Parents will be notified to collect their child as soon as possible, as the close proximity of children in the centre makes chances of cross-infection high.
- If it is unclear whether a sick child or staff member has an infectious disease requiring exclusion, the Director may request that a medical certificate be provided before the child/staff member can resume attendance.
- No child or staff member will be permitted to attend school if they have a fever: oral (mouth) or forehead temperature >38°C. They may not return to school until 24 hours after the fever has been resolved or after the minimum period of exclusion if a specific infectious disease is diagnosed.
- The age and learning nature of children means that infectious diseases are easily transmitted in a children's Child Care Centre. The simplest form of infection control is **hand washing**. Detailed descriptions of hand washing procedures are on display in the children's bathrooms.

Parents Informing the ELC Educators of Infectious Conditions: Parents are required to inform the Director immediately if an infectious condition requiring exclusion has been diagnosed in their family. This will minimise the risk of spreading illness. Following is a list of diseases which require exclusion. These exclusions apply to staff and children.

Condition	Exclusion Period
Acute Conjunctivitis	until eye is no longer red and is free of discharge.
Chicken Pox	exclude for at least 5 days after the spots first appear and until all blisters have formed scabs.
Coughs, Colds and Influenza	until child looks and feels well. If prescribed antibiotics, 24 hours after the first dose. During flu epidemic, we will be advised by the Public Health Unit.
Diarrhoea (including, Cryptosporidium, Rotavirus, Salmonella and Shingella)	until 24 hours have passed since first normal stool.
Giardia	all persons considered having Giardia, whether as an isolated case or during an epidemic should be excluded until treatment has been given and diarrhoea has ceased.
Haemophilus Influenzae B (HIB)	exclude until well.
Hand Foot and Mouth Disease	until blisters have dried.
Hepatitis A	until 7 days after jaundice has appeared.
Impetigo	until 24 hours after treatment has commenced and sores covered with a proper dressing.
Measles	until 4 days after the onset of the rash. Unimmunised contacts are to be immunised within 72 hours of contact with a case or they be excluded for the duration of the outbreak.
Meningitis	until 9 days after the swelling appeared. Unimmunised children over 12 months are excluded for 21 days from last reported case.
Rubella (German Measles)	until 4 days after the rash appears. Pregnant women should seek medical advice.
Streptococcal Infection and Scarlet Fever	until 24 hours after treatment has commenced.
Tuberculosis	re-admit on advice from Public Health Officer.
Vomiting	12 hours after last vomit.
Whooping Cough	until 5 days from commencement of treatment. Unimmunised contacts excluded 14 days.

Parasites and Pests which are easily spread and require exclusion	
Ringworm	until 1 day after treatment has commenced.
Scabies	until 1 day after treatment has commenced.
Worms	until worming treatment has been given.

Lateness Policy

Aim: To establish clear guidelines for staff and parents in relation to the ELC's duty of care to children and staff of the ELC with regard to children being picked up after the closing time.

Implementation

- On initial enrolment and at Orientation parents will be advised of the ELC's lateness policy.
- We ask that where possible parents or carers call the ELC if they are going to be late.
- Parents who are continually late collecting their children will be asked to meet with the Director to discuss the reasons for this.
- Parents at the ELC are required to sign a 'Late Fee Agreement' at the beginning of the school year. This agreement outlines the fine that will occur if a child is collected after the legal closing time.
- Consideration needs to be given to personal or family inconvenience encountered by staff as a result of not being able to leave work on time.
- Staff will complete the late book on all occasions as a record.
- If a child is still at the ELC at closing time then staff will attempt to contact parents and emergency contacts to alert them to the fact that the child is still on the premises and organise for them to be picked up. If the child's parents cannot be contacted, staff will call the child's emergency contacts.
- Staff will document all attempts to contact parents and emergency contacts.
- After 30 minutes of the ELC closing, if staff or the Director have not heard from the child's parents and have been unsuccessful in contacting the parents or the emergency contacts, then they will notify the College Principal as well as security that the child is still on the premises.
- Repeated attempts will be made by staff or the Director to contact the parents.
- The Director and/or two staff members will look after the child until someone comes to collect the child.

Jewish Philosophy Policy

Rationale: Children at Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre celebrate and recognise their Jewish identity and develop a strong understanding of their Jewish heritage, traditions, customs and culture.

Aim: We aim to enhance the children's identity through an integrated Jewish studies program, the celebration of Jewish holidays (Chagim), daily Brachot, and the practice of Hebrew songs, games and weekly Kabbalat Shabbat. The curriculum's objectives are to nurture pride in the Jewish faith and to provide a solid foundation from which our children can forever draw inspiration.

Implementation

The children are excited about being Jewish, and the school encourages the values of the Torah: honouring our parents, sharing with friends, treating each other with respect, and giving to or helping those less fortunate than ourselves. Our children learn the customs, traditions and moral values of Judaism. These lessons are woven naturally through all of our disciplines so that they become both a meaningful and treasured part of each child's personal milieu. Our teaching of "yiddishkeit" permeates the whole program, and is reinforced by daily teachings. Children learn to work together, help each other and solve problems together in the spirit of being a "mensch."

Our children eagerly anticipate holidays such as Purim, Pesach, Shavuot, Yom Ha-atzmaut, Rosh Hashanah and Chanukah. They understand how to meaningfully and joyfully participate in each holiday. The celebration of Jewish festivals enables the children to learn about their historical background and customs. We regularly celebrate holidays with parents. Our educators model and nurture Jewish values such as charity, friendship, tolerance, discipline, and respect for the environment and the rights of others. Our educators strive to instil in our children a love for the land of Israel, Torah and pride in their Jewish identities.

We provide the children of the ELC with knowledge of Judaism by embracing:

- **Torah**, in both its written form and through rabbinic development, being the source of Jewish history, mitzvot, tradition and values.
- **Mitzvot**, commandments learned from the Torah, as the building blocks of Judaism that govern each person's daily, weekly and annual patterns in life, forming the basis of each person's values and ethics.
- **Tradition**, comprising the minhagim (customs) and historical halachic process within Judaism in accordance with the norms of the community and the spiritual needs of individuals.
- **Values**, ethics and practices based in Jewish tradition, especially Tikkun Ha'Olam, repairing the world through the sovereignty of God.
- **Pluralism**, the recognition that meaning is developed by free-thinking individuals in an atmosphere of open enquiry.
- **Egalitarianism**, providing for equal rights, opportunities and responsibilities for males and females.
- **Co-existence**, the acceptance that separate but interdependent groups make up the Jewish Community, and mutual respect among these groups is encouraged.
- **Israel**, a commitment towards the establishment and development of the modern state of Israel, identification with the State of Israel, mutual understanding between Israel and Diaspora communities.
- **Hebrew**, the universal Jewish language, which connects us to our Jewish heritage. We teach the Chalav U'dvash Hebrew language program, as well as integrating Hebrew into the daily life of the Preschool, through songs, games, stories, and vocabulary enrichment.
- **Kabbalat Shabbat**: Every Friday the children celebrate the arrival of Shabbat. The children enjoy grape juice and challah as part of the Shabbat ritual. Children learn about the customs and practices related to Shabbat. It is a joyous celebration that enables us to appreciate the value of family and traditions. Celebrating Shabbat in this way helps to enhance the development of the children's Jewish identity. In Term 3, parents are invited to join us for a class Shabbat where all children are seated at the Shabbat table.
- **Kashrut**: The school campus and all school events are Kosher. Only Kosher foods are allowed to be given to the children according to the Jewish dietary laws. All foods brought onto the campus and used as part of the program are to be Kosher. Meat or meat products are not allowed except for school barbecues.

Kashrut Policy

Rationale:

This policy is intended to provide the broadest outlines of the Kashrut policy at Mount Sinai College. The implementation of this policy will be governed by an accompanying set of guidelines, providing clear direction for the day-to-day implementation of Kashrut at Mount Sinai. These guidelines cover specific directions in order to implement this policy in regard to areas such as School Canteen, food provided by the School to students, food brought by students to class, school camps and excursions.

These guidelines are a 'living document', continually evolving to ensure that the day-to-day running of the College and ELC remains consistent with the broad policy outlined in this document. It is envisaged that these guidelines will continue to be developed by the Head of Jewish Studies. Significant changes to these guidelines would be brought for discussion at a Board level.

Aims

- The intention of this policy is to be inclusive of the dietary needs of all students.
- The College & ELC campuses and related events are Kosher. Meat or meat products are not allowed except for College-sponsored barbecues. Products supplied by the College, through the School Canteen, outside caterers, etc. will be limited to those listed in the NSW Kashrut Authority handbook.

Background

Given that we are an Early Learning Centre connected to a Modern Orthodox Jewish Day School, only KOSHER food items are permitted to be brought to school to share at parties or for any other purposes such as cooking / baking activities. Mount Sinai College ELC Educators need to ensure that this ethos and discipline is maintained.

In order to ascertain which items or ingredients are Kosher, these guidelines should be followed by staff whenever food items are shared:

- Prior to purchasing any cooking ingredients or food items, refer to the "Kosher Directory" on the Kashrut Authority Website: <http://www.ka.org.au>
- Please refer to the Directory EVERY TIME you plan an event as items periodically **change** and if they are not **currently listed**, they are not considered Kosher.
- If you are requesting that children bring in food items, explicitly refer **them** to the directory each time an event is planned. Don't take it for granted that they will remember. Alternatively, you may wish to allocate specific items from the directory to purchase.
- Ensure that items are brought in to school a couple of days prior to the event so that you can double check if they are Kosher.

Implementation: Kashrut Guidelines – These are the guidelines currently in use regarding Kashrut at Mount Sinai College. As mentioned above, the development of these guidelines is an ongoing process, ensuring that the practices of the School in regard to Kashrut flow logically from the broad policy set above. All on-site catering, including the School Canteen will be governed by this Kashrut Policy.

Kosher Food

- Students and staff are requested not to bring any meat or products containing meat, such as gelatin, to school.
- Only fish products which originate from fish with fins and scales are permitted.
- Meat products are not to be consumed at School, except for school-sponsored barbecue days.
- When meat is served at school, it must be served separately from any dairy products.
- When meat is provided, a 3-hour waiting period must be observed before eating dairy.
- Products containing meat extracts, such as gelatin, are unacceptable.
- Free-range eggs are to be used to conform to the mitzvah of 'tzar baalay hayim' - minimisation of harm to animals.

Kosher Kitchen and Utensils: Any non-kosher kitchen used by Mount Sinai College must be kashered prior to use. Kosher utensils must be used at all times. Caterers are to fully comply with these rules.

The School Canteen: Canteen facilities must remain *chalavi* / *milchik* (dairy) at all times. The Mount Sinai College Head of Jewish Studies will coordinate supervision of standards.

School-sponsored Barbecues

On days when barbecues occur:

- Canteen facilities must not be used for the storage of meat or preparation for the barbecue.
- Meat must be provided by a recognised Kosher butcher.
- Notice of barbecues must be given in the College Newsletter and Class Daily Reflections. Students participating in the barbecue will be reminded not to bring dairy products to school on that day.
- When barbecues are provided for all students (ELC – Year 6), no dairy products will be available for sale through the canteen. When a barbecue is provided for one group of students within the school, the barbecue should be held in a location away from the canteen.
- A vegetarian option must be made available for those students who do not eat meat.
- Meat and milk utensils are to be kept separate at all times.

School excursions

- Standards of Kashrut on school excursions are the same as Kashrut standards within the school campus. Food provided for students by the school must be Kosher according to the standards of the NSW Kashrut Authority. Food brought by students for personal consumption must not contain any meat or meat products.
- It is preferable for students to provide their own food on school excursions. Where this is not possible, Kosher caterers may be used to prepare boxed lunches etc.
- Students on school excursions are not allowed to purchase food during the excursion.

Medication Policy

Medication and Health Statement: MSC ELC will facilitate effective care and health management of children who are taking medications for health problems, prevention and management of acute episodes of illness, or medical emergencies by the safe administration of medication. The ELC will follow procedures and guidelines set out by the *NSW Department of Health* to keep the environment safe. The health and wellbeing of children is occasionally dependent on the use of medications. These medications need to be administered as prescribed by medical practitioners to ensure continuing health for the child and the child's safety and wellbeing.

Strategies:

- On enrolment, families will be informed of the ELC's policy and the need to ensure that safe practices are adhered to for the wellbeing of the child and staff.
- Families will be asked to notify staff if children are on any medications at home. This includes short and long term medications.
- Families will be asked to provide a medical management plan for their child if they have a specific health care need or medical condition.
- Written consent from families is requested on the enrolment form to administer the emergency *Asthma kit* if required and *Paracetamol* if a child's temperature reaches **38°C** or higher. Families will be reminded that every attempt to contact them for verbal permission will be made by the Centre prior to administering Paracetamol or asthma medications.
- Medication may be administered without authorisation **ONLY** in the case of **emergency** care for *Asthma* or *Anaphylaxis*.
- Families will be required to keep prescribed medications in original containers with pharmacy labels. Medications will only be administered as directed by the medical practitioner and only to the child whom the medication has been prescribed for. Expired medications will not be administered.
- Children will be excluded from care while **symptoms of the illness remain** and for the **24 hours from commencing antibiotics** to ensure they have no side effects to the medication.
- Medications below **may be administered** by a staff member with a valid First Aid Certificate.
 - Prescribed medicines such as Antibiotics / Ear Drops / Nose Drops or Sprays
 - Creams for external body surface conditions such as eczema
 - Nebulisers and inhalants (Asthma)
 - Paracetamol in the case of fever

Medications kept at the centre: Any medication, cream or lotion kept on the premises will be checked every 3 months for expiry dates. If a child's individual medication is due to expire or running low, the family will be notified by the staff. **No medication will be administered past the product expiry date.**

Procedures:

- Medication must be given to a staff member who will provide the family with a *Medication Form*.
- The family member will complete the *Medication Form* and the staff member will sign to acknowledge receipt of the medication. **No** medications will be administered without the written consent from the family.
- The parent, when he/she picks up the child, must check the medicine forms to see who administered the medicine and the time given. The parent must then sign the form to acknowledge that he/she has seen this information.
- All medication will be **locked** in a medication container or placed in the fridge. **No medicine is to be left in a child's bag or locker.**
- Herbal medications or remedies must be accompanied by a letter from the doctor or herbalist detailing the child's name, dosage and expiry date for the medication.
- Medication will only be administered by a staff member with a valid First Aid qualification. All dosages must be checked by the Director or 2nd staff member before being administered.
- The child will only be given medicine that is prescribed for him/her, not for another person.
- Authority to administer will not be accepted over the phone, only by signed consent.
- Only **one dose** of Paracetamol will be administered if necessary.
- Families will be required to pick up child **within one hour** if temperature reaches 38°C or higher.

Completion of Medication Forms

- A **Daily Medication Form** is to be completed before any medicine is administered.
- A **Long Term Medication Form** is to be filled out for a course of Antibiotics or for any medication to be administered over a long period of time e.g. Ventolin. A doctor's letter or prescription label must be on file at the ELC, along with a covering letter from the parent, signed and dated. This must be updated every term.
- Any spill, reaction or refusal to take medication will be recorded.

Daily and Long Term Medication Forms will include the following information:

- name of the child
- date of completion of form
- medication (type and name)
- expiry date of the medication
- dosage
- time(s) to be given
- reason for giving medicine
- name of child's doctor and phone number
- time and date the medication was last administered
- details of any other medications given to the child in the last 24 hours
- manner in which medication is administered (syringe, dosage cup, topical cream)

A copy of the medical conditions document is to be provided to the parent of a child if the ELC is aware that the child has a specific health care need, allergy or other relevant medical condition. Parents are to inform the educators of any medication, including Paracetamol, administered to the child outside the hours of attendance at the ELC.

Soiled Clothes Policy

Background: Infectious diseases can be transmitted via contact with soiled clothing. Safe cleaning, disposal and storage of soiled clothing can prevent the transmission of infectious diseases. Mount Sinai will minimise the children's and ELC's staff risks of contact with soiled clothes and transmission of infectious diseases.

Policy Statement: Most children attending our ELC are toilet trained. Parents are encouraged to toilet train their children before they start school. There may be some children with special needs who are not toilet trained. There may also be some children who have accidents while at school and wet or soil their clothes. These children will be accommodated with sensitivity.

Mount Sinai College Staff will use the following guide for cleaning a child after a **toileting accident**:

- put on gloves (single use non-latex),
- use disposable wipes to clean the soiled skin,
- place these wipes in a plastic bag with the soiled nappy or underwear,
- remove gloves and wash hands afterwards.
- seal the plastic bag for the family to take home and keep it inaccessible to children or animals.

If a child wets or soils their clothes during the day, the soiled clothes will be placed in a sealed plastic bag. It will be kept in a place inaccessible to the children and given to the child's parent at the end of the day. All parents are asked to place a full set of clothes in their child's bag. For children who have not fully learnt toileting or who have diarrhoea or have urinary or faecal incontinence, the family would be asked to supply a number of clean changes of clothing.

Nurturing Self-Esteem Policy

Rationale: Self-esteem is the feeling of self-respect that includes five characteristics:

- * A sense of security
- * A sense of identity or a self-concept
- * A sense of belonging
- * A sense of purpose
- * A sense of personal competence

Background: Nurturing self-esteem is an issue that is central to our Mount Sinai College philosophy and practice. Developing the characteristics of self-esteem early in life is important because a child's self-esteem determines how he or she acts and learns. Self-concept is the knowledge, awareness, belief, feeling and attitude that a child has about him/herself, the collected views of him/herself, what the child thinks, knows or believes about him/herself.

A profile of a child with high self-esteem

The following are the sort of characteristics you might expect to see in a child with high self-esteem:

- Expects to succeed – tries new things, says "I can do that", engages in problem-solving and asks for help when needed in order to learn.
- Expects to be valued – looks directly at people, initiates interactions, communicates needs in an acceptable manner, is not constantly seeking reassurance such as 'Are you my friend?'
- Has good language skills in conflict situations – says what he/she wants, negotiates, is neither timid nor bullying.
- Makes decisions – exercises choices rather than waiting to be told.
- Enjoys interactions with others – smiles.

High self-esteem is not an innately acquired personality trait. It is a vision of oneself that is developed over time as a result of the accumulation of life experiences. It comes about through interaction with both significant people in a child's life and with the physical environment. There are many ways in which caregivers and teachers can help to develop children's self-esteem.

Ways educators and parents can encourage the children to express self-praise:

<i>Something I do well is...</i>	<i>I'm getting better at...</i>	<i>I can...</i>
<i>I am proud that I...</i>	<i>I can help other people to...</i>	<i>I taught someone to...</i>
<i>I'm learning to...</i>	<i>I'm always changing and learning.</i>	<i>I am worthwhile...</i>
<i>I am capable...</i>	<i>I am grateful for...</i>	<i>That was difficult.</i>
<i>That took courage.</i>	<i>I'm not afraid to...</i>	<i>I am pleased.</i>
<i>I was persistent, I tried.</i>	<i>I am gaining self-control.</i>	<i>Something I can do now is...</i>

Parent Involvement & Communication Policy

Rationale: Forming a partnership between the ELC and each child's family is central to providing effective and quality education and care. These partnerships are characterised by open and extensive communication and involvement, which is respectful of and sensitive to cultural and/or other differences.

The ELC is committed to the establishment and maintenance of strong and positive working relationships with families. Strong working relationships require clear, consistent and appropriate communication. This policy will clarify ELC's commitment to clear communication and involvement with families, and set out appropriate procedures and strategies to facilitate both of these areas.

Mount Sinai College acknowledges the diversity of family cultures, structures and practices. All communication between staff and families will reflect an attitude of respect and tolerance, and will meet the needs of the individual families. We will establish an environment that is conducive to open communication between staff and families, whilst maintaining requirements under the Confidentiality and Privacy Policy. For our ELC to operate effectively it is paramount that channels of communication are open.

Procedures

A. Enrolment / Orientation

- At enrolment families are encouraged to communicate their child's and family's needs.
- An orientation program is organised at the beginning of the year to help families feel comfortable in the new environment and to allay any fears and answer parents' questions and concerns.
- This *Policies and Procedures Handbook* is provided to parents at Orientation and discussed with families.
- Families are made aware of the current methods of communication used by the Preschool, through discussion at the Orientation and Parent Information Evening.

B. Family Feedback

- Mount Sinai College ELC will seek regular feedback and communication with families on every aspect of the service including programming, children's development and interests, policies and procedures.
- Parent surveys are conducted every year.
- Parents are regularly invited to give feedback on our ELC policies.
- Complaints are valued and addressed immediately. More information about how to make a complaint can be obtained from the ELC's Complaints/Grievance policy.
- Feedback, suggestions and constructive criticism allow the ELC to meet the current needs of its families.
- Positive and constructive feedback from parents to staff about their child's needs and interests is most appreciated.
- Links with families about their child are seen as a vital and necessary part of each child's development.

C. Methods of Communication

A variety of methods may be used to communicate between the educators and families. Methods of communication may be formal or informal allowing families to choose their level of involvement in the communication process as well as meeting individual family needs. Families are invited to be involved in all aspects of the ELC's program.

Mount Sinai College ELC Educators communicate with the parent community using the following methods:

- **Verbal** – Staff encourage and initiate daily informal conversations with parents during drop off or pick up times or in an organised more formal meeting.
- **Email** – Emails from parents are regularly sent to both the Director and Educators and responded to promptly and professionally.
- **Daily Reflections** – are uploaded to each parent via Seesaw by the class educator on a daily basis. These detail the program as well as photos of the children's involvement with the program.
- **Calendars** – Term dates are emailed to parents at the beginning of each term and a Yearly Overview is distributed at the start of each year.
- **Letters / Information Flyers** – Are sent home as required in Children's Communication Pockets.
- **Phone** – If a child is ill or we have any other problem we need to discuss with parents then an ELC Educator may phone them.
- **Initial New Parent Interview and Information Forms** – Parents are asked for input as to what they feel their child is interested in and or what they feel is important for their child.
- **Newsletters** – Every week the Director writes in the Mount Sinai College e-newsletter, outlining upcoming events, giving feedback on past events, announcing special happenings and Community information, etc. Information is also sent home to parents on how to access a range of child health services within the community (i.e. Parenting Tips, literature on Child Development, etc.).
- **Class Programs** – A weekly overview outlining the activities that are planned for the upcoming week is displayed in each room. These activities are designed in response to teacher observation, the children's interests and needs as well as intentional teaching opportunities. All the educators contribute to the program.
- **Portfolios** – Each child has a student portfolio on Seesaw and parents are able to access their child's portfolio at any time during the year. The Portfolios contain details of observations, examples of children's work, interests, learning and photos. The portfolios also invite families to write comments and give feedback about their child's learning.
- **Documentation** of children's interests and learning are displayed on the walls and in books.
- **Parent / Teacher Meetings** are held twice a year in February and July. Parents can schedule a

- meeting with either their child's teacher or with the Director at any time throughout the year.
- **Social events** are organised by the Parent's Association several times during the year (for example: dinners, breakfasts, cocktail evenings, movie nights, etc.).
- **Noticeboards** display items including messages, photos, reminders and interesting articles.
- **Cultural celebrations.** Numerous Jewish festivals and Shabbat are celebrated. Parents are invited to visit for Family Shabbat in Term 3.
- **Parent Association Meetings** are held once or twice a term to plan upcoming events and fundraisers.
- **Class Parents** – Two parents per class are invited to co-ordinate and organise fundraising events and social events.
- **Sharing of talents and skills** – Parents are invited to share individual talents, skills or passions with the children e.g. family pets, professions, cultural celebrations (Chinese New Year).
- **Special Events** – Parents are invited to spend time at the ELC on special days such as Mother's Day, Father's Day and Special Friend's / Grandparents Day.
- **Family Book** is passed around to all new families to include photographs and meaningful information about each child and their family members. This book includes the child's favourite activities and likes and dislikes.
- **Shabbat Box** – Once a year, the children decorate their own Shabbat Box and take home the following items that they have made: candlesticks, (plaster) challah, decorated wine cups and Siddur (Prayer) Book.
- **Celebrations** - Parents are invited to attend various concerts and celebrations throughout the year, e.g. Birthdays, Purim, Shavuot, End of Year Graduation and concerts.
- **Excursions** – Parents are invited to accompany the children on local excursions and walks.

Meeting Individual Families' Communication Needs

Where possible, families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will have access to a staff member who can assist with the language they are familiar with. If an appropriate staff member is not available, Mount Sinai will use the Community Services telephone Translating and interpreting service to facilitate communication. The ELC will endeavour to provide written communication in community languages where possible.

Through participation, **parents** will benefit by:

- seeing other children of the same age and so gaining a more realistic picture of their own child's strengths and weaknesses.
- appreciating the importance of their child's education and how they can maximise the benefits both at home and with the ELC.
- gaining increased satisfaction with their child's achievements and progress.

Children will benefit by:

- receiving more adult attention.
- observing parents and educators working collaboratively.
- experiencing increased feelings of self-esteem as parents make time to watch them "at work."

Partnerships with Families Policy

Rationale: Mount Sinai College is committed to the establishment and maintenance of strong and positive partnerships with families. We recognise the connections between children, families and communities and the importance of reciprocal relationships and partnerships for learning.

Implementation: We acknowledge and value the importance of authentic and respectful partnerships with families in providing quality services. We recognise and value the rich diversity of family structures, cultures, identities and beliefs that represent contemporary Australian communities.

Our ELC is committed to and advocates an approach with families that values and celebrates strengths, builds resilience and contributes to the overall wellbeing of everyone in the ELC. Partnerships are based on the foundations of understanding each other's expectations and attitudes, and build on the strength of each other's knowledge.

We advocate for the importance of reciprocal and respectful partnerships in strengthening families and building communities. Strong partnerships with families are critical in the planning, provision and delivery of high quality, inclusive early childhood programs. When educators form respectful and strong partnerships with families, the information sharing and increased understanding that results, enables staff to ensure that children have learning opportunities that are meaningful to them and that reflect and acknowledge their lives at home.

The purpose of partnerships is to support families in making choices and decisions about their family, with full knowledge of the consequences of their decisions and choices. A strong partnership reinforces the importance and role of family in a child's life and contributes to a family's feelings of competence and confidence. We acknowledge and value the family as having expert knowledge of their child.

For a trusting relationship to develop between educators and parents, the educators need to:

- Convey to children that we understand and respect that their parents are very important to them.
- Inform and talk to parents about their child.
- Maintain and respect confidentiality of the child and family.
- Provide a welcoming environment so parents feel able to approach the staff and spend time in the Centre.
- Encourage parents to share their skills and knowledge with their child's group e.g. cooking, singing songs or storytelling in other languages.
- Encourage parents input into the program.
- Provide support and assurance to parents in times of need.
- Invite parents to be a member of the PA and socialise with the other Class Parents.

In genuine partnerships, families and early childhood educators:

- Communicate openly, honestly and respectfully with each other.
- Maintain clear, informed, and appropriate professional boundaries.
- Acknowledge and value the diversity of family cultures, beliefs and practices.
- Provide opportunities for, and invite families to participate, contribute and collaborate in their child's experiences and learning.
- Acknowledge that the reciprocity of a partnership is determined and guided by each family.
- Value each other's knowledge of each child.
- Value each other's contributions to and roles in each child's life.
- Trust each other.
- Share insights and perspectives about each child.
- Engage in shared decision-making.

Partnerships also involve educators, families and support professionals working together to explore the learning potential in every day events, routines and play so that children with additional needs are provided with daily opportunities to learn from active participation and engagement in these experiences in the home and in early childhood or specialist settings.

Personal Belonging Policy

Introduction: Children who attend Mount Sinai College ELC need to feel an ongoing connection to home all through their days in order to feel safe and secure. This connection is realised in many ways including what they bring to school by way of their personal belongings, their morning tea and lunchtime meals, and any transitional objects that provide them with comfort during rest times or times of sadness. This approach will assist children in developing a strong sense of self, well-rounded self-esteem and confidence. By offering children opportunities to take responsibility for themselves and their belongings, children will come to value themselves and their belongings.

Strategies

- Prior to children beginning with us, the children are asked to bring in a family photograph in a frame that will remain in the classroom for the duration of the year. This links each child to his/her family, which he/she can refer to and take comfort in all through his/her 'school' days. These photographs are displayed in an easily accessible place for all children to see and connect with.
- We remind parents prior to children's entry that **all** personal belongings need to be marked and/or clearly labelled.
- Children come to the ELC everyday with their own personal belongings in a small **back pack**. This may include a lunch box; morning tea bag; water bottle; sun hat; spare clothes (including jumper/s & raincoats); Kippah (boys); change of underwear; sleep time comforter; and after school activity clothes/kit – (ballet, soccer, swimming, karate etc.).
- Medication, Epi-pens/Anapens and asthma ventilators are put away safely (out of reach of all children) and made available when necessary. Children will come to know that this belongs to them, individually.
- Sleep Time linen is labelled clearly.
- In the event of 'show and tell' or special news days, children are invited to bring in one item from home that is kept safely in their bags until such time that they are invited to share them with their classmates.
- Children who bring books and other items of interest from home are asked to label the belongings wherever possible, and are kept safe in the classroom for all to access. These may include special items that support a learning project, books of interest or other relevant resources that are loaned to the ELC for a short time.
- During the weeks of our Family Kabbalat Shabbat children are invited to bring either candle sticks (girls) or a Kiddush cup (boys) to ensure home and ELC continuity and connectedness.
- *We discourage children from bringing precious or other toys to the ELC, so as to avoid these getting lost or causing distress and conflict amongst other children.*

Program Policy

Introduction: Our Early Learning Centre provides children with caring and nurturing learning programs and, where appropriate, specialist support and intervention. *"Reflection and careful planning increase the value of children's time in education and care by ensuring the educational program and practice respond to children's interests and scaffolds their learning. Planning is also important in ensuring accountability to families and children, management, funding and regulation bodies."* (NQS - Pg. 7) The program is enhanced by the development of strong community links that offer additional support, knowledge and experiences for the children, their families and the educators.

Goals: The Mount Sinai College ELC Educational Program will:

- Be based on the Early Years Learning Framework.
- Provide a detailed Jewish Studies and Hebrew component.
- Be based on the developmental needs, interests and experiences of each child.
- Implement a play-based curriculum.
- Provide a daily Indoor and Outdoor program.
- Take into account the individual needs of each child and their family with opportunities for each child to realise their "potential to develop a foundation for future success in learning".

Strategies: The children's learning is at the core of the program. Our Educator's work is underpinned by the three inter-related elements of the Early Years Learning Framework – Principles, Practice and Learning Outcomes, which "are fundamental to early childhood pedagogy and curriculum decision-making". (*Belonging, Being and Becoming, The Early Years Learning Framework, Pg. 9*)

The **program offered** will be **developed through**:

- A combination of observations – of individual focus children, of small group experiences as well as the larger class cohort together.
- Intentional teaching experiences – prepared and developed by the teaching team/s (based on both Jewish Studies and Hebrew lesson plans, PE Lessons with Coach Joel, inclusions and excursions).
- The Learning Environment offers the children rich experiences and diverse opportunities and considers that *“the environment is inclusive, promotes competence, independence, exploration & learning to play.”* (NQS p. 16)

The **educators** will **program and plan each week**. This will include:

- A **weekly planned program** offers an overview of the week and reflects both intentional teaching practice, links to focus children observations, as well as pedagogical intentions, assessment and reflections.
- A **detailed daily program** considers and supports the daily routine, linking the planning of the weekly program, the observations of focus children and the relationships within the group.
- A **weekly outdoor program** is collaboratively developed by the whole ELC team. A combination of all the children’s developmental needs and areas of interest are considered and accounted for. This outdoor program offers the children challenges and opportunities to practice, take risks, develop a wide range of skills and connect with nature. *“The physical environment is safe, suitable and provides a rich and diverse range of experiences which promote children’s learning and development”.* (NQS. Pg. 16)
- A **Daily Reflection (Diary)** is prepared by each classroom teaching team at the end of every day which reflects the weekly, daily and outdoor program experienced by the children, and links this to the 5 Learning Outcomes, the Principles and the Practice outlined in the *Early Years Learning Framework: Belonging, Being and Becoming*.
- **Individual Child Portfolios** are created throughout the year. These portfolios capture global and detailed aspects of the child’s journey from the start of the year to the final days that s/he experiences in the classroom. The portfolio showcases a combination of observations and work samples and documents each child’s personal growth as well as the building of relationships with others. This portfolio makes the child’s learning visible to themselves and her/his family.
- **Observations** of each child, as an individual, and as part of a group, will reflect the child’s learning, engagement with the program and daily experiences, and will provide opportunities for the educators and parents to have a deeper knowledge and understanding of each child, her/his challenges and accomplishments:
 - **Jottings** are brief notes that can include words used in interactions, the context for a photograph or sample, or an explanation of the processes a child or group of children engage in to create a product. These might include details about how children manipulate tools or the types of physical activities they engage in.
 - **Checklists and rating scales** can provide a summary of children’s learning in a particular area such as physical development, but do not provide sufficient information to be useful for sharing information with families or for planning to extend learning.
 - **Learning stories** (Carr, 2001) focus on children’s strengths, interests, actions and dispositions and are useful for documenting children’s involvement in learning, including communication, interactions and collaboration. Learning stories can be effective for capturing children’s dramatic play episodes as well as the different roles and contributions of each of the children. They can also document how children approach challenging tasks, demonstrate persistence and resolve situations of conflict.
 - **Photographs** of children’s play and interactions can capture children’s investigations and are particularly useful for documenting very young children’s exploration. They can also demonstrate children’s curiosity and their interest in and appreciation of the natural environment and children’s attempts at a new task or skill. Children can take photographs of their own experiences -- for example, their participation in movement, drama, dance and physical activities, including their physical mobility and dexterity with small tools.
 - **Running records** are detailed narratives of children’s learning. They often focus on one child’s learning and are written as learning is occurring. They are useful to capture details of social interactions and conversations between children. They can also be used to record a child’s reading or retelling of a familiar book.
 - **Samples of drawing and painting** created with paper and/or on screen and descriptive accounts of the processes children engaged in to create these works demonstrate ways in which children experiment with resources and explore colour, line and patterns. For older children drawings and

painting will also indicate how they use visual arts to express ideas and make meaning. A series of samples can also illustrate children's persistence and achievement of mastery over time. Displays of children's work can also enhance children's sense of pride in their finished products.

- *Transcripts of conversations* between an adult and a child or group of children and among children capture children's language and conversation skills along with their ideas, questions and reflections. These transcripts can also depict children's contributions to play and their responses to diversity, awareness of and respect for others' perspectives and understandings of fairness and social justice. Children's conversations can also provide evidence of children's capacity to cooperate and negotiate and to share in group decisions.
- *Video recordings* of children's explorations, physical play, movement, dance, dramatic play and performances can capture many aspects of children's learning, such as their use of their bodies, spatial awareness, exploration of different roles and identities and use of creative arts to express meaning. Videos can also record children's levels of confidence and willingness to share aspects of their culture and home life with others.
- *Webs* of children's thoughts about a particular topic can capture children's ideas and questions as well as their capacity to make connections and generalise. When webs are completed at different stages during children's investigations and projects they can provide insights into the growing complexity of children's understandings and the language they use to talk about these ideas. The addition of photographs and children's drawings can assist in capturing the ideas of younger children as well as those children with emerging language skills. (*Educators Guide: Belonging, Being, Becoming, CD section 11: Assessing Learning*)

Included in the daily and weekly programs are all areas of learning, that include literacy and numeracy experiences, nature and science, creative arts that include movement and music, drama, and craft, as well as construction, sensory and dramatic play experiences. The daily routines provide structure and familiarity to the days; however flexibility and spontaneous learning is recognised, accommodated and celebrated.

The program is planned, documented and evaluated; and it is made visible in the classroom. Every day these different program component areas are assessed and reflected upon by each of the educators involved in developing the program, and then linked to the learning opportunities and children's needs that will be detailed in the program areas (as above) for the following day. *"Reflective practice can help educators to think more deeply about their work and motivate them to explore new ideas and approaches"* (*Educators Guide: B.B.B. – Page 4*).

Rest & Sleep Time Policy

All children have individual sleep and rest requirements. Children need a comfortable, relaxing environment to allow their body to rest. We ensure our environment is safe and monitored to ensure all our children feel safe and secure. Our ELC provides each child with their own stretcher bed, complying with Australian Standards. Families provide children with their own stretcher sleeping-bag sheets, blanket and pillow.

Strategies (Joeys Class)

- Consult with families about children's sleep and rest needs. Educators will be sensitive to each child's needs so that sleep and rest times are a positive experience.
- Ensure that beds are clean and in good repair. Beds will be wiped over with warm water and neutral detergent or vinegar between each use.
- Ensure that bed linen is clean and in good repair. Bed linen is for use by an individual child and will be washed before use by another child.
- Identify and remove potential hazards from sleep environments.
- Arrange children's beds and cots to allow easy access for children and staff.
- Create a relaxing atmosphere for resting children by playing relaxation music, reading stories, cultural reflection, dimming lights and ensuring children are comfortably clothed. The environment should be tranquil and calm for both educators and children. Educators will sit near resting children and support them by encouraging them to relax and listen to music or stories.
- Remember that children do not need to be "patted" to sleep. By providing a quiet, tranquil environment, children will choose to sleep if their body needs it.

- Promote children’s agency and decision making by providing routines and environments, both indoors and outdoors, that facilitate sleep and rest opportunities.
- Maintain educator ratios throughout the rest period.
- Ensure the physical environment caters for non-resting children, such as providing separate resting spaces and incorporating quiet activities into the program.
- Maintain active supervision at all times, checking children at least every ten minutes to see the rise and fall of each child’s chest and the colour of their skin and lips.
- Assess each child’s circumstances and current health to determine whether higher supervision levels and checks may be required.
- Communicate with families about their child’s sleeping or rest times and the service policy regarding sleep and rest times.
- Respect family preferences regarding sleep and rest and consider these daily while ensuring children feel safe and secure in the environment. Conversations with families may be necessary to remind families that children will neither be forced to sleep nor prevented from sleeping. Sleep and rest patterns will be recorded daily for families.
- Ensure children will sleep and rest with their face uncovered.
- Encourage children to dress appropriately for the room temperature when resting or sleeping. Lighter clothing is preferable, with children encouraged to remove shoes, jumpers, jackets and bulky clothing. The room temperature will be considered to ensure maximum comfort for the children.

Families will:

- Regularly update the service on their child’s sleeping routines and patterns.
- Provide informal updates on the previous night’s sleep to assist with sleeping during the day.
- Provide specified bedding if required by the service.
- Dress their child appropriately for the weather conditions and provide additional clothing.

Hygiene

- Beds will be spaced in order to reduce the risk of cross infection between the children. They will be stacked head to toe one on top of the other.
- Sheets must be folded up over the stretchers, rather than hanging down, touching one another.
- Once a term, each bed will be cleaned with disinfectant and put in the sun for at least 20 minutes to aerate and kill all germs.
- Sheets will go home once a fortnight to be washed and returned to school.
- In the event of a child wetting his bed, the bedding will be removed, the bed will be disinfected and the sheets sent home for washing.
- In the case of lice, all sheets will be sent home to be washed.
- In the case of vomiting, the sheets will be sent home for washing.
- All beds will be stored in a safe place and be covered so as to ensure that they are kept clean and free from dust.
- The room of where the beds are stored should not exceed 22°C.

Strategies (Prep Class):

- The Preparatory children do not go on beds at rest time.
- We offer a quiet and restful time on the classroom mat, where a story is read, or children listen to quiet music, or participate in a few breathing and meditation exercises.

Role of the Class Parent Policy

Introduction: *"In genuine partnerships families and educators value each other's knowledge and roles, communicate freely and respectfully and engage in shared decision making"* (EYLF - Pg. 12) Children who attend Mount Sinai College ELC begin to see the service as an extension of their homes. In order for them to maximise the full benefit of the service, their families need to feel as though they too belong and have an integral part in the day-to-day life of the ELC. The nomination and appointment of a class parent in each classroom is not only a vital support to the educators, but also provides a strong message of partnership, mutual trust and respect and inclusion to all families who attend the ELC. The class parent becomes the key link between the educators and the families. The class parent becomes the conduit through which new communications are developed and maintained.

Purpose: Sincere building of reciprocal relationships between families and educators.

Goals:

- To build relationships.
- To support the educators in their day-to-day roles.
- Families to become involved in the service in an appropriate and meaningful way.
- Families are able to share their knowledge, their areas of expertise, skills and other aspects of their family life and culture.

Strategies

- At the start of the new school year parents are nominated to become a Class Parent at the **Parent Information Evening**.
- A copy of the document 'The Role of the Class Parent' is distributed amongst the families, and parents are requested to volunteer for this important and rewarding role.
- In addition to this, parents are also encouraged to put up their hands to become involved in the many different aspects of the Preschool that are co-ordinated by the Class Parent.
- The Class Parent becomes the key contact person for the Mount Sinai P.A., who will rely on the class parent to disseminate information, to rally volunteer support, to be involved in the day-to-day and annual preschool events.
- The Class Parent also has the opportunity to approach the educators with any ideas and or suggestions that may improve or enhance the service. The Class Parent also assists to create a community of parents within their individual classrooms.

Shabbat Policy

Introduction: Children who attend our ELC need to feel an ongoing connection to home all through their days in order to feel safe and secure. Shabbat is about the value of the present moment, a time where we put the cares of past and future aside. Our ELC honours both religious tradition and celebrates the realities of the present. Shabbat is a joyous time for us; a holy day at the end of every week, where we come together to sing, to partake in traditions and rituals, and where we prepare for our day of rest.

Philosophy: We like to offer opportunities to link home and 'school'. Shabbat is a spiritual and meaningful time of the week. Every child and educator looks forward to this time together, as a time to be together, to feel a sense of belonging and a connection not only to oneself, but to each other, to our roots and traditions and to our community.

Purpose: The weekly celebration of Shabbat is pivotal to our weekly program. Parents may select Mount Sinai College because we celebrate Shabbat each Friday, it is what makes families feel a sense of belonging, of connecting home and 'school', and of developing a connection and love of Jewish life and learning. Children are involved and participate in a Shabbat ceremony that links them to their traditions and culture, their community and their families. Shabbat becomes the cornerstone of what we believe is synonymous to our service. It offers the values and practices, the lessons and the beliefs that we hope to instil in all our children and their families.

Strategies

- Every Friday, Shabbat is celebrated in Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre.
- The room is set up to host a Shabbat ceremony where children are invited to sit in a circle.
- At the head of the circle is a Shabbat Table that has been laid with the following:
 - A white Shabbat table cloth
 - A pair of candle sticks
 - A small vase of flowers
 - A bottle of grape juice and a Kiddush Cup (wine cup)
 - A bread board with two challah (two plaited loaves of bread)
 - A washing basin and jug
- Each week two children are invited up to sit at the table as the Shabbat mother and father, and two more, who are known as the Shabbat daughter and son. A small family Shabbat table is created.
- The two girls at the table are asked to wear head-scarves.
- The two boys at the table are asked to wear a special Shabbat Kippot.
- There is a routine of familiar songs in both English and Hebrew that the children sing to welcome in the Shabbat.
- During the routine the children are invited to participate in welcoming the Shabbat through the lighting and the blessing of the candles, the drinking of the grape juice, the blessing of hand-washing and breaking the bread.
- All the children will receive a small glass of grape juice to drink after the juice (wine) has been blessed.
- All children will receive a small piece of the bread (challah) to eat, once it has been blessed. (In the case of child with gluten intolerance alternate bread is provided).
- If the Head of Jewish Studies is part of the routine, she will also offer to share a story or learning for the day (the parsha of the day), which offers the children a moral story of the week.
- All educators are expected to wear appropriate Shabbat clothes on the day (skirts or dresses).
- There are some weeks when the whole centre will celebrate Shabbat together. This may even be outdoors, as a special treat.

Smoke Free Environment Policy

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000, Mount Sinai College Early Learning Centre has an obligation to ensure the health and safety of all employees and visitors to our Preschool. All workplaces have a duty of care under OHS legislation to provide a safe, healthy, drug-free, alcohol-free and smoke-free environment. Children, staff and families will not be exposed to the harmful effects of second hand smoke while on the ELC premises. This centre has adopted a smoke free environment policy to protect all persons from accessing the ELC from the effects of environmental tobacco smoke. We not permit the smoking of any substance in any area of the ELC used for child care or employment requirements.

Sun Protection Policy

Rationale: Australia has the highest rate of skin cancer in the world. Research has indicated that young children and babies have sensitive skin that places them at particular risk of sunburn and skin damage. Exposure during the first 15 years of life can greatly increase the risk of developing skin cancer in later life. Early Childhood Services play a major role in minimising a child's UV exposure as children attend during times when UV radiation levels are highest. This sun protection policy has been developed to protect all children and staff from the harmful effects of ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun.

Our sun protection strategies are:

- 1. Sunscreen:** All staff and children will apply SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen before going outdoors. Families are encouraged to apply SPF30+ sunscreen at home before prior to arriving at the ELC. Staff will reapply sunscreen on the children during the day as necessary.
- 2. Water:** Children will be encouraged to drink water throughout the day to prevent dehydration and heat stroke. Water bottles will be refilled during the day as necessary.
- 3. Hats:** Staff and children are required to wear sun safe hats such as:
 - Legionnaire hat.
 - Bucket hat with a deep crown and brim size of at least 5cm (adults 6cm)
 - Broad brimmed hat with a brim size of at least 6cm (adults 7.5cm)

Please note: Baseball caps or visors do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended. Children without a sun safe hat will be asked to play in an area protected from the sun (e.g. under shade, verandah or indoors) or can be provided with a spare hat.

- 4. Clothing:** When outdoors, staff and children will wear sun safe clothing such as:
 - Shirts and dresses with sleeves and collars or covered neckline.
 - Longer style skirts, shorts and trousers.

Children who are not wearing sun safe clothing can be provided with spare clothing. Midriff, crop or singlet tops do not provide enough sun protection and therefore are not recommended.

- 5. Shade:** All outdoor activities will be planned to occur in shaded areas. Play activities will be set up in the shade and moved throughout the day to take advantage of shade patterns. The ELC will provide and maintain shade including a combination of portable, natural and built shade.
- 6. Outdoor Activities:**
 - Sun protection times are a forecast for the time-of-day UV levels will reach 3 or above. At these levels, sun protection is recommended for all skin types and the policy areas should be implemented. In NSW, UV levels are high enough (UV 3 or above) to damage unprotected skin most months of the year.
 - UV levels and daily sun protection times are used to plan daily activities and ensure a correct understanding of local sun protection requirements
 - UV radiation exposure is considered as part of a service's risk management and assessment for all outdoor events and activities on and off-site.
 - When children are on excursions all sun protection practices are planned, organised, understood and available

Role Modelling

Staff will act as role models and demonstrate sun safe behaviour by:

- Wearing a sun safe hat (see Hats).
- Wearing sun safe clothing (see Clothing).
- Applying SPF30+ broad-spectrum water-resistant sunscreen 20 minutes before going outdoors.
- Using and promoting shade.
- Wearing sunglasses that meet the Australian Standard 1067 (optional).

Families and visitors are encouraged to role model positive sun-safe behaviour.

Education and Information: Sun protection will be incorporated regularly into learning programs. Sun protection information will be promoted to staff, families and visitors. Further information is available from Cancer Council website www.cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart.

Children understand why sun safety is important and learn how to take effective sun protection, including taking leadership roles in managing sun protection e.g., accessing daily UV levels and sun protection times, hat reminders and management of sunscreen

Review: Management and staff will monitor and review the effectiveness of the Sun Protection Policy regularly. The centre's sun protection policy must be submitted every two years to the Cancer Council for review to ensure continued best practice. Refer to the Cancer Council's guidelines www.cancercouncil.com.au/sunsmart for further information.

SunSmart Agreement

This centre agrees to enforce the above sun protection policy in line with the SunSmart Early Childhood Program recommendations and to inform Cancer Council NSW of any changes to the Preschool's policy and practices. The MSC ELC will take part in a review every 2 years.



Name: Jill Allison

Position: Mount Sinai College ELC Director

Date: 21st July 2025

Transition to School Policy

“Ready Families + Ready Early Childhood Services + Ready Communities + Ready Schools = Ready Children” (Kagan & Rigby, 2003; Rhode Island KIDS COUNT. 2005)

From the moment children enter our ELC, we commence our work with preparing them not only for school, but for life. Each child is considered in terms of their own individual needs and areas of development, as well as in relation to their family and cultural backgrounds. We inform parents about our belief that we work to meet the needs of the whole child, and that Transition to Primary school involves three different areas of focus: school readiness, school preparation and the transition to school. Our *Transition to Primary School and other Organisations approach* is founded on the premise that happy children become competent and successful learners. Children require support in making transitions from one setting to another and offer different opportunities and challenges.

Philosophy: We believe that children need to be given opportunities to become strong and independent beings, demonstrating responsibility and autonomy. We assist families to have a greater sense of what their child is capable of managing. We celebrate children for their individual achievements.

Purpose: To support children in their preparation and transition from ELC to Primary School, as well as inform the primary school and/or other organisations so that they can be prepared to receive each child.

Strategies:

- In the year prior to children going onto Primary School, a number of steps are taken to ensure a smooth transition is experienced by the children and their families from the Prep setting to the next phase of their school career.
- Not every child may be quite ready to commence Primary School, so they will be offered some additional support and mentoring, and in some cases a third bonus year of Prep. Each child will be considered in collaboration with the ELC, his/her family, and in some cases the Primary School / other Organisations.
- There are some parallel processes that take place depending on where the children will plan to transit in their first year of Primary School. In the cases of children with special needs there is an individualised program that commences the year prior to school entry, in consultation and collaboration with families. This program guides and informs parents of the options available to them, and the steps required in terms of transition from our early childhood setting to the primary school or organisation of choice.
- In the April of the year prior to entry to Primary School, parents are invited to an information evening which outlines the three areas of Transition to Primary School. This information session is co-hosted by Mount Sinai College and Mount Sinai College ELC. Parents have the opportunity to ask questions regarding the process and what they can come to expect over the following months. Handouts and published information is shared with families at this meeting.
- In Term 2, children are carefully considered and in some cases recommendations are made for speech and language intervention, occupational therapy or play therapy screenings, so as to be able to offer children the right support to ensure school readiness on entry to Primary School the following year.
- The Director arranges for an onsite vision test for all children entering Primary School with NSW Health ‘STEPS’ (Statewide Eyesight Preschooler Screening).
- At the start of Term 3, parents are invited in for a mid-year parent-teacher dialogue where parents are given the opportunity to share their thoughts about their child’s progress and development to date, and the class teachers share their detailed observations of each child. At this meeting school readiness is explored in detail, and individual goals are developed. A school readiness checklist is provided to families at this time.
- In Term 4, children may be invited to attend an orientation visit to their Primary School. Mount Sinai College invites all future Kindergarten children for a visit to the school library.

- During the second semester of the school year, the children are placed into small groups where they will rotate amongst the various teaching teams and will offer different school preparation experiences. These small groups are opportunities to mix children up, offering them opportunities to make new friends and to further develop their interpersonal skills.
- Classroom teaching teams plan and program many learning opportunities at this time, covering a wide range of school readiness skills throughout each week. Children have much time to practice and develop their skills – these include a wide range of language, fine motor, numeracy, literacy, self-reliance and independence skills.
- In Term 4, the Mount Sinai College ELC supports orientation visits to Primary Schools and other Organisations – depending on the Primary School of choice. The ELC supports this practice and includes these visits into the weekly programs.
- The ELC Educators are available and offer to inform the Primary Schools about each child. This information may be used, with parent’s permission, in developing IEPs for those children who may require additional support in the Primary School setting.
- Parents are invited to an End-of-Year Celebration where children and their families are formally farewelled offering a moment to reflect on the year passed and consider the new experiences and challenges that lie ahead.
- Children receive a Graduation Certificate from Mount Sinai College, as a gesture of good will and best wishes for their Primary School career.

Contact Information

Jill Allison – *Early Childhood Teacher, Higher Dip. Ed. (Pre-Primary & Junior Primary)*

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