3YO Kinder
4YO Kinder

Fees & Timetable

Info pack

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.
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Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

Why Sessional Kindergarten?

We follow a sessional program here at Bentleigh West as we feel that this format is entirely focused on what is best for the child, preparing them for life beyond Kindergarten.

Sessional Kindergarten refers to starting and finishing a Kindergarten session at a set time for all children.

Within the sessions all children follow the same structure, and experience the same high quality education program at the same time, providing both consistency and predictability.

Attending three days a week supports the transition to a school week of 5 days and allows maximum learning opportunities focused at the start of the session, as a primary school program does.

Your child will benefit from a predictable routine and form friendships that remain consistent for the year. This will help support a sense of security, build resilience and in turn encourage them to focus on their learning, development and confidence.

"Bentleigh West Kindergarten is one of the main feeder kindergartens to our school Bentleigh West Primary School. The children entering the school from BWK are extremely well prepared for school emotionally, socially and academically. The strong connection between the school and kindergarten assists them in the transition and prepares them for the start of their school journey"

Sarah Asome – Assistant Principal, Bentleigh West Primary School

Our qualified teachers have been trained to recognise stages of child development and provide activities appropriate to extending your child's skills. Close observation of each child allows our staff to identify interests and strengths which can then be incorporated into the curriculum. This is done in a caring, understanding and respectful manner.

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www.bentleighwestkinder.org.au

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

We believe our program provides the right balance between child-led, child-initiated and educator supported learning.

Our dynamic team of teachers and educators are supported by an engaged and passionate parent-run Committee of Management.

Other advantages of Bentleigh West Kindergarten are:

- Feeder Kindergarten for Bentleigh West Primary School (one of the top performing schools in the country, as decided by the ACARA) which means they stay with the majority of their kinder friends as they move on to primary school. We work closely with BWPS during the 4year old Kinder year by attending different events and assisting with orientations to help ease the children into their Prep year.
- Joining a community of like-minded, supportive families that often extends beyond the walls of the kindergarten.
- Small Group sizes of no more than 22 per class
- Our Bush Kinder program was developed in response to research that shows outdoor activities in a natural environment are extremely beneficial to children's health, wellbeing and development.
- Our Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program and expansive renovated outdoor area. With a stimulating sensory garden, working water pump and dry river bed, undercover sand play area and mud pit.
- Our program includes many incursions and excursions. This may vary but has included visits to the NGV, Royal Botanic Gardens, beaches, local parks, post office and Myuna Farm. We also provide specialist incursion programs throughout term such as Playball, Mindfulness, Drama Time and Wild Action Visits.

Bentleigh West Kindergarten is a purpose built, not-for-profit, community based kindergarten with a safe, open and caring environment.

Located alongside leafy green Victory Park in Patterson Road it has been educating the children of Bentleigh for over 35+ years.

We are passionate about the benefits of sessional kinder and would love to answer any further questions you have. Please contact us on 9557 8365 to discuss or to orgainse a tour.

RATED EXCEEDING NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

ELAA

BWK respectfully acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional custodians of the land. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to the Elders Past, Present and Future.

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Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

WE BELIEVE:

Children learn at their own rate, in their own time:

- We provide a range of experiences that support each child to explore and investigate the learning environment in ways that reflect their stage of maturity, their culture and family environment.

Open ended, creative and imaginative experiences are the basis for how materials are presented to children.

In providing experiences that are open, creative and imaginative:

- This enables children to experiment, refine and develop skills through open experiences;
- Uninterrupted periods of time enable children to immerse themselves in discovering, creating, problem solving and interacting with their peers.

That promoting sustainable and environmentally friendly practices are an integral part of our centre community:

- Bentleigh West Kindergarten has a commitment to caring about the environment and these practices are embedded into everyday experiences with the children.

In building authentic relationships between educators, children, families and community:

- Educators use a range of communication skills to develop strong links between educators and the center community;
- All educators acknowledge the importance of gaining and sharing information between the service and its families. This is vital to promoting a family centered practice and
- All educators acknowledge the valuable input that parents and carers bring to the program through special skills, knowledge and assistance.

In nurturing a culturally diverse community:

- Bentleigh West Kindergarten reflects beliefs and associated practices that actively promote respect for and acceptance of a range of abilities, equality of gender, race, language and culture.

The importance of working together and alongside each other:

- Bentleigh West Kindergarten recognises that children require time to work and play alongside each other as well as time to work independently.

In teaching and learning through play:

- Bentleigh West Kindergarten provides a play-based curriculum through a range of indoor and outdoor learning experiences;
- Educators plan for individual children's interests and culture based upon the acquisition of skills, social interactions, language development, thinking and problem solving, motor control, literacy and numeracy, dramatic play, sensory experiences, construction and reading.

In active play in an outdoor environment:

- At Bentleigh West Kindergarten educators plan outdoor programs both for the three and four year old groups to ensure lots of opportunity for outdoor and active play, even during the colder months of the year;
- We recognise the importance of active play and how active play allows children to reach their full potential;
- We challenge children to take risks as they grow and mature, through a range of outdoor experiences and by exploring the elements and the natural aspect of the outdoors and
- Educators encourage children to challenge themselves (take risks) within their own limitations.

We believe in the importance of sustainability:

- Bentleigh West Kindergarten recognises the significance of educating children and families on sustainable practices.
- We are committed to reducing our environmental foot print.

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

BWK NATURE KINDER PROGRAM

The BWK 'Nature Kinder Program' (often called 'Bush Kinder') is currently part of the 4 year old kinder program in terms 2 and 4. We use the Victory Park area behind the kinder. The program started as a trial in 2017 and it was a big success.

Why 'Nature Kinder'?
Nature Kinder often called Bush Kinder was developed in response to research that shows outdoor activities in a natural environment are extremely beneficial to children's health, wellbeing and development. Many Victorian preschools have already implemented a Nature or Bush Kinder program with great success

Time spent playing outdoors is a classic childhood image – but it's one that has been declining over time. Countless research has been conducted regarding children playing outside. The research shows that unstructured, uninterrupted outdoor play is on the decline. This decline is having a major impact on children's learning and development.

Here at BWK we are hoping to reduce this trend by adding a 'Nature Kinder' program. 'Nature Kinder' is classed as a regular outing. The session will start and end as normal, however during the session staff will take the children out to Victory Park for 'Nature Kinder'. During 'Nature Kinder' the children will remain outside for 2-3 hrs, only coming inside to use the kindergarten's bathroom. They will have the opportunity to run, to climb trees, dig in the dirt, explore and connect with nature. The program will follow the 'no toys' philosophy and require children to use what nature has provided. The program is a 'all weather' program and will only be cancelled in extreme weather. The program requires additional adult supervision and therefore we ask for 2 family helpers each week on a roster system.

5 Benefits of Nature Kinder

1. Connecting children to their natural environments

We learn to know, wonder about, understand and love the natural world only by spending time in it. Nature play will help foster this sense of connection to nature through play and exploration.

2. Developing children's creativity, social confidence and physical skills

In a 'Nature Kinder' setting there are none of the usual toys, prebuilt cubbies and set climbing equipment that the children have at home or kinder. Instead, they must use the rocks, plants and earth as their 'toys'. Much of the play is challenging. It may require many sets of hands and shared experiences, or problem solvers and innovators for success. Children will learn to share ideas, cooperate and build upon the ideas of others' through the 'Nature Kinder' program.

3. Extending children's language skills

Language skills are best learnt in context, through participation. To understand what eucalyptus oil is you have to crush a leaf in your hand and smell it. To fully understand the meaning of the word 'muddy', you have to experience all the sensations of being muddy. 'Nature Kinder' provides the kind of rich experiences that generate broad vocabularies and deepened understandings.

4. **Learning dynamic risk assessment**

One of the most important life skills that children need to learn is how to assess, manage and take risks. Risk is ever present in our lives. Some risk taking is essential if we are to live full and happy lives. Studies have shown that children who have had the opportunity to engage in 'risky' play when they are young are more responsible and capable by the time they are in their teens.

5. **Better health outcomes**

Research shows that playing outside with mud, sand, water, leaves, sticks etc. can stimulate children's immune systems making them sick less often. Children who play outside are more physically active resulting in better health outcomes.

6. **The most important reason of all, it's FUN!!!!**

BELONGING, BEING & BECOMING

The Early Years Learning Framework for Australia

Information for families

EARLY YEARS LEARNING FRAMEWORK

A new, national early learning framework for children from birth to five years

"I want my child to have lots of opportunities for creative play"

WHAT IS THIS NEW LEARNING FRAMEWORK ABOUT?

We have developed the Early Years Learning Framework to ensure your child receives quality education programs in their early childhood setting. This is a vital time for them to learn and develop.

The Framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

It is a guide for early childhood educators who work with children from birth to five years. They will use the Framework in partnership with families, children's first and most influential educators, to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities, and recognise that children learn through their play.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of *belonging*, *being* and *becoming*.

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. Children feel they *belong* because of the relationships they have with their family, community, culture and place.
- **Being** is about living here and now. Childhood is a special time in life and children need time to just 'be'—time to play, try new things and have fun.
- **Becoming** is about the learning and development that young children experience. Children start to form their sense of identity from an early age, which shapes the type of adult they will become.

PLAY IS LEARNING

Play is very important for children. Through play babies and young children explore and learn to understand the world around them as they come to communicate, discover, imagine and create.

When children play they are showing what they have learned and what they are trying to understand. This is why play is one of the foundations of the Early Years Learning Framework.

By using this Framework educators will guide your child's play by carefully designing learning activities and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments.

RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY

It is well known that children learn best when they have secure relationships with caring adults. When children from a very early age develop trusting relationships they feel more confident and able to explore and learn.

In early childhood settings, when children feel emotionally secure they learn through play to develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others and gradually learn to take responsibility.

"The learning outcomes are positive and help me to think about how my child is progressing"

HOW WILL IT WORK?

Educators will use this new Framework in a range of early childhood settings, including long day care, preschools and family day care to ensure that your child receives a high quality experience. It has been created and trialled by experienced early childhood educators, academics, parents and carers.

The Framework focuses on your child's learning. Educators will work with you in order to get to know your child well. They will create a learning program that builds on your child's interests and abilities, and keep you in touch with your child's progress.

Through the Framework's five learning goals educators will assist your child to develop:

- a strong sense of their identity
- connections with their world
- a strong sense of wellbeing
- confidence and involvement in their learning; and
- effective communication skills.

"The Framework helps me to understand how skilled the staff at my centre are and what a great support they are to me and my family"

WATCHING YOUR CHILD'S PROGRESS

Using the Early Years Learning Framework educators will observe your child's learning so they can build on it and plan the next steps. They will do this by listening, watching and talking to your child.

They will keep in touch with you regularly to discuss your child's progress. They may use photos or keep a folder of your child's work to show what your child is learning, how they are developing and what particular learning interests them.

Before your child starts school educators will prepare information about your child's learning and development to share with their new teacher. This will help ensure that your child's new school is well prepared to continue your child's learning.

WORKING TOGETHER

By working together parents and educators can enhance a child's learning and wellbeing.

As the most important person in your child's life you can make a difference by talking regularly with your child's early childhood educator and asking about their learning.

Information you provide allows educators to link your child's experiences at home with the time they spend together in the early childhood setting.

FIND OUT MORE

This booklet is an introduction to the Early Years Learning Framework.

To find out more or to access translations visit www.deewr.gov.au/earlychildhood or ask your child's early childhood educator.

Produced by the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations for the Council of Australian Governments.

A09-824

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

RATED EXCEEDING NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD

Why should you consider Bentleigh West Kindergarten over other Kindergarten services?

OUR KINDER FEATURES	HOW YOUR CHILD WILL BENEFIT
OUR PROGRAM	
1 Our curriculum follows the *Kathy Walker Learning Approach* and caters for different abilities and learning styles.	1 Well known, credible Australian education expert.
2 Our program incorporates children's ideas and interests into planned experiences and routines.	2 Close observation of your child allows our staff to identify their interests and strengths to support their learning.
3 Our program offers flexible routines that have minimal disruption to children's play.	3 Your child will be part of an unhurried environment and won't be forced to move away from an activity they are engaged with and stimulated by.
4 Our program fosters literacy and communication skills, maths and thinking skills, science and nature, sustainability, creative arts and sensory exploration in a fun and play-based manner.	4 Your child will have solid learning foundations, preparing them well for primary school.
5 Our program has a strong interest in developing children's independence, thinking skills and social skills.	5 We will prepare your child to become independent and a lifelong learner.
STAFFING	
1 High staff retention rates.	1 Provides consistency in teaching and familiar faces for your child. Staff will become familiar with your child's individual learning needs.
2 Dedicated and highly trained staff who regularly upskill with further professional development.	2 Quality education is delivered from staff who share a wealth of experience and knowledge based on modern teaching theories.
3 Lower class numbers with 22 children in each group and two staff members (including one-degree trained staff member).	3 Your child will be more engaged and get both one on one and group teaching time.

OUR KINDER FEATURES	HOW YOUR CHILD WILL BENEFIT
PLANNING TIME	
1 Staff recognise and plan for individual children's needs and interests through their expert child development knowledge.	1 Personalised education for your child so they remain interested and engaged.
2 Our 4 Year Old group teachers have over 11 hours planning time.	2 Two hours of dedicated planning time for each child's learning vs child care programs which may offer 3-4 hours per week / per group.
INDOOR AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT	
1 Large, open outdoor play space which features lots of shaded areas, undercover sandpit, sensory garden, music, water wall and a creek bed with water pump.	1 Your child will be able to explore their natural environment and be stimulated by a range of outdoor activities.
2 Large veranda area that can be utilised all year round.	2 Your child can enjoy the outdoors and fresh air even if it's raining.
3 Large stimulating indoor room including book corner, creative corner, home corner and lots of natural light.	3 Your child will feel comfortable to explore the various learning areas that meet their needs and interests without feeling restricted.
4 We offer a natural, stimulating environment to explore.	4 Your child will receive a strong focus on sustainable programs including vegetable gardening, worm farming and composting.
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	
1 Family participation during session time is encouraged.	1 This brings a sense of community and belonging for your child and allows parents to see the program first-hand.
2 We offer social opportunities to meet other parents and families in the area.	2 Your child will make connections and friendships with other children. Families often form long term friendships too.
3 Dedicated Committee of Management made up of Kinder parents and local families.	3 Decision-making made by other parents, who will always have your child's best interests at heart.
FINANCIALLY SUPPORTIVE	
1 We are a not–for-profit Community Kindergarten.	1 We continually invest in our facilities and new learning resources and equipment from profits, fundraising and grants.
2 Low fees compared to Long Day Care Kinder services.	2 Your family will receive quality, subsidised education.
3 Our fees include specialised teachers.	3 Your child will receive a range of dedicated, specialised programs (music and physical education) teaching as part of our curriculum.

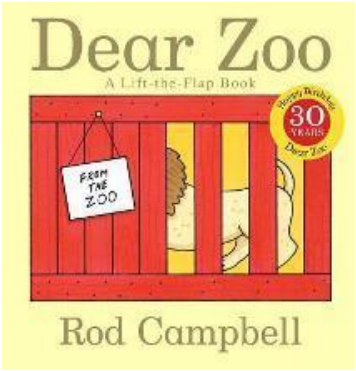
OUR KINDER FEATURES	HOW YOUR CHILD WILL BENEFIT
EXCURSIONS	
1 Our 4 Year Old Program enjoys a range of local community walking excursions alongside exploring the wider community via bussed excursions.	1 Your child will be involved in real life experiences such as community walks, visiting a local school, post office, art gallery, botanical gardens, theatre, and the farm.
INCURSIONS	
1 Our 4 Year Old Program includes a range of educational-based curriculum events and incursions. 2 Our 4 Year Old Program includes a regular cooking program (beginning term 2). 3 Our 4 Year Old Program includes a regular science program (beginning term 3). 4 Our 3 Year Old Program includes a range of educational-based curriculum events and incursions.	1 Your child will explore further age-appropriate learning with programs such as Dreamer Puppet Show, Wild Action Australian Animals, Hey Dee Ho Music, Playball and Mindfulness (as examples). 2 Your child will receive hands-on fun, educational and cultural cooking experiences where they will be proud to show you what they have made. 3 Your child will explore science concepts through fun, play based experiments to ignite their curiosity in and wonder.
FAMILY CONNECTION	
1 Regular communication with families. 2 Our teaching team email children's learning and development along with specific goals and intentions on a regular basis. 3 We foster strong partnerships between educators, children, families and our local community.	1 You will receive ongoing dialogue on your child's progress, so you are aware of how they are developing. 2 We provide a lovely keepsake for you to remember your child's Kinder years through their personalised Learning & Memory Books. 3 Your child will build positive relationships and enhanced understanding of their local community and those who play important roles within it. 4 Your child will feel that they are in a safe, nurturing learning environment.
SCHOOL TRANSITION	
1 We have a strong alignment with local primary schools in the area including excursions to local schools. 2 Our staff communicate with Prep teachers from local schools over the phone and face to face to facilitate the transition to school.	1 Exposing your child to a familiar environment can often assist with their transition to primary school. 2 This will assist your child with having a smooth school transition.

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

Benefits of our 3 Year Old Program at BWK

The 3 Year Old Kinder program here at BWK is many children's first experience away from home. Every effort is made to support children to make a smooth transition from home to Kinder. We begin the year with staggered orientations to ease the children into the program. If children are not settling in, our friendly staff will arrange a tailored orientation schedule to suit your family's needs. There are many exciting opportunities that the 3 Year Old program has to offer as outlined below, including:

- Various incursions throughout the year, e.g. drama, music, animals.
- Special dress up days throughout the year, e.g. 'Crazy Day' & 'Pyjama Day'.
- Celebrations at Kinder, e.g. 'Mother's/ Special Persons Day', 'Blokes Day', 'Grandparents Day', Easter, Halloween, Christmas (and other celebrations relevant to the group).
- 'Walk to Kinder Day'.



Our teachers and educators are committed to supporting the smooth transition into 4 Year Old Kinder in the following ways:

- Children experience similar routines; rich play-based learning opportunities and continuity of teachers and educators.
- Children's learning is documented each term and this information is then used to support and extend children's development in the 4 Year Old program.
- Many children in the 3 Year Old program transition into the 4 Year Old program as a group and every effort is made to evenly distribute children into two groups based on their friendships, interests, strengths and abilities.
- The children form bonds with their teachers and educators which in turn supports learning and development.
- During term 4 children will have visits from their 4 Year old Teachers and Educators to build a rapport with their new students and support transition.

If you have any other questions about the 3 Year Old Kinder program, please don't hesitate speak to our teaching team.

3-YEAR-OLD KINDER
Best Start
Best Life

KINDERGARTEN
Victorian Government Approved

Starting Three-Year-Old Kindergarten

What is a kindergarten program?

Kindergarten (also known as kinder) is an early education and care program for young children aged three to five, led by an early childhood teacher. From 2022, with the introduction of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, Victoria will offer two years of funded kindergarten to families across the state.

How will my child benefit from kindergarten?

Kindergarten helps your child to learn and grow.

Research shows that quality kindergarten programs support children to thrive throughout their lives.

This includes supporting them to develop positive relationships, problem-solving skills, ways to manage their emotions, and approaches to exploring, discovering and learning about themselves and the world around them.

Children who attend kindergarten programs are generally more independent and confident and are more likely to make a smooth transition to primary school.

Evidence shows that two years are better than one when it comes to early learning.

Taking part in a quality kindergarten program from three years old leads to positive effects on a child's learning and development. It has even greater benefits for children who need extra support or are experiencing vulnerable circumstances.

When can my child start kindergarten?

From 2022, children will be able to attend kindergarten programs in the two years before they start at primary school.

Families with children born between January and April can choose which year to start at Three-Year-Old Kindergarten. These children can start in the same year they turn three, or in the year they turn four years of age. Due to staff requirements, some services may ask that children start attending at kindergarten only after their third birthday. This may mean that some children may not start until part-way into Term 1, and have less time overall as part of a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program, in comparison to their peers.

If this is the case for your child and you accept a place, kindergartens will hold your child's place until they are old enough and only charge you fees for the weeks your child attends.

Kindergarten services will discuss with you directly about how they can support your child to join their program once they turn three.

When your child starts at kindergarten directly relates to the age they will start at primary school. When enrolling at Three-Year-Old Kindergarten, we encourage families to plan ahead and consider the age they would like their child to start at primary school.

3-YEAR-OLD KINDER

Best Start Best Life

KINDERGARTEN
Victorian Government Approved

If your child was born between	Your child is eligible to attend Three-Year-Old Kinder in:
1 Jan 2018 – 30 April 2018	2021 or 2022
1 May 2018 – 31 December 2018	2022
1 Jan 2019 - 30 April 2019	2022 or 2023
1 May 2019 – 31 December 2019	2023
1 January 2020 - 30 April 2020	2023 or 2024
1 May 2020 - 31 December 2020	2024

1 Use the calculator on **vic.gov.au/kinder** and enter your child's birthdate to find out what year your child can start Three-Year-Old Kinder.

2 Refer to the **Selecting a kindergarten service for your child** factsheet. Children can attend a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program at either a long day care (childcare) centre or at a standalone (sessional) kindergarten.

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government Education and Training

3-YEAR-OLD KINDER
Best Start
Best Life

KINDERGARTEN
Victorian Government Approved

Where can I get advice on the best time to start kindergarten?

Each child learns differently.

They have unique learning and developmental needs and interests; for example, children might become toilet trained, learn how to draw and hold a pencil, develop different communication skills, or deal with strong emotions, like frustration or anger, at a range of different ages.

In partnership with you, teachers and educators will provide education and care programs to suit your child's individual learning and development.

In some cases, your child may benefit from starting a kindergarten program later. You know your child best, and there are steps you can take if you are unsure about the best time for your child to start a kindergarten program. Consider seeking advice from trusted early childhood professionals by:

- attending kindergarten information sessions or open days at your local services and talking with early childhood teachers or educators
- speaking to your child's current educators. If your child attends a long day care program, their educators will be regularly assessing their learning and development needs
- talking with your child's Maternal and Child Health nurse, family doctor and any other professionals your child sees (for example, speech therapist, physiotherapist or paediatrician).

These conversations will help you make an informed decision about when to start your child at kindergarten. If you feel that your child may benefit from being older when starting school (that is, five years old turning six during their Foundation year), then consider starting your child at Three-Year-Old Kindergarten later.

Three-Year-Old Kindergarten is for all children

Kindergarten programs are for all children. If your child has a disability or learning difficulty, the educators will talk with you about how the program and environment can support your child.

If you need support to enrol your child in a kindergarten program or to find a program that suits your family, talk to your local services or contact your local council.

Can my child go to a second year of Three-Year-Old Kindergarten?

Children's learning and development does not follow a straight line – each child learns differently throughout their early years. This means deciding when your child should start school is a decision that is best made when your child is closer to school age. For this reason, there won't be a second year of funded Three-Year-Old Kindergarten available.

All children in a Three-Year-Old Kindergarten program will move onto Four-Year-Old Kindergarten the following year. A second year of funded Four-Year-Old Kindergarten will be considered when a child shows delays in key areas of learning and development.

(21-037)

THE EDUCATION STATE

VICTORIA State Government | Education and Training

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

3YO Kindergarten Timetable 2023

{1st Year of Funded Kindergarten}

GREEN GROUP	
Monday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

4YO Kindergarten Timetable 2023

{2nd Year of Funded Kindergarten}

YELLOW GROUP (GROUP A)	
Monday	
Tuesday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Wednesday	
Thursday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Friday	

PURPLE GROUP (GROUP B)	
Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	8:30am – 4:00pm
Thursday	
Friday	8:30am – 4:00pm

ATTACHMENT 1. FEE INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES

BENTLEIGH WEST KINDERGARTEN INC 2022

Bentleigh West Kindergarten Inc.

1. General information

The Department of Education and Training (DET) *(refer to Definitions)* provides funding for each child enrolled and attending kindergarten in the two years before school as a contribution toward the costs of providing the program. Services meet the balance of costs through charging fees and fundraising activities.

DET provides a Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (see below) that enables children from eligible families to attend a kindergarten program free of charge in the two years before school.

DET also provides Early Start Kindergarten funding to assist eligible three-year-old Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, from a refugee or asylum seeker background or children known to Child Protection, to access kindergarten programs.

BENTLEIGH WEST KINDERGARTEN INC provides a range of support options to parents/guardians experiencing difficulty with payment of fees (see below).

2. How fees are set

As part of the budget development process, the Committee of Management sets fees each year for the programs of the service, taking into consideration:

the financial viability of the service
the level of government funding provided for the program, including the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy and Early Start Kindergarten
the CPI Increases for Education
the availability of other income sources, such as grants
the fees charged by similar services in the area
the capacity of parents/guardians to pay fees
reasonable expenditure in meeting agreed program quality and standards
requirements of The Kindergarten Funding Guide (Department of Education and Training) available from the DET website: www.education.vic.gov.au

Once fees are set for the year, they will only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if enrolments drop and the service is at risk of not being able to meet its expenses.

3. Other charges

Other charges levied by BENTLEIGH WEST KINDERGARTEN INC are included on the Statement of Fees and Charges. These include:

Kindergarten Enrolment deposit: This non-refundable payment secures a child's place at the service and is payable on acceptance of enrolment. The deposit is retained as payment additional to term fees.

Excursion/service event charge: This additional charge is required to cover the cost of excursions or special events that occur throughout the year in response to emerging children's program needs and interests. Affordability and relevance to the children's interests and the Kindergarten program will be taken into consideration before a decision is made that will require families to pay this additional charge (refer to Excursions and Service Events Policy). Events that are planned ahead are included as an expenditure item in the Kindergarten's budget (4 year old program includes $160 per child and 3 year old program includes $80 per child) and do not incur this additional charge.

Refundable Maintenance Levy: The participation of parents/guardians is encouraged by the Kindergarten and can help to keep costs more affordable. However not all families are able to assist at the Kindergarten. A refundable maintenance levy system has been introduced by the Kindergarten and replaces voluntary labour with paid labour. All families are required to pay the Refundable Maintenance Levy including those eligible for Early Start Kindergarten or Kindergarten Fee Subsidy. Payment will be refunded to parents/guardians on participation in specified activities which include working bees

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www.bentleighwestkinder.org.au

Late collection charge: The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child from the Kindergarten. In these situations, the following procedures will apply:

- The qualified staff member will inform the parents/guardians/carer that if it continues the committee will be notified and the family will be charged a late fee.
- If after the reminder, the parents/guardians/carer is 10 minutes late, a fee of $1 for every 1 minute, from the conclusion of the session/day will be invoiced by the Committee.
- After 10 minutes the parent/guardian will receive a phone call from the Kindergarten. Emergency contacts will also be phoned if parent/guardian is not contactable.

4. Statement of fees and charges

A statement of fees and charges for three-year-old kindergarten and/or four-year-old will be provided to families on enrolment *(refer to Attachment 2 and 3)*.

5. Fundraising

Not all service costs are covered by DET per capita funding and the fees charged. Fundraising is undertaken to meet the balance and/or pay for additional items for the service. While participation in fundraising is voluntary, the support of every family is encouraged. Fundraising activities are also an opportunity for families and our communities to come together.

6. Subsidies

6.1 Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

The Kindergarten Fee Subsidy is provided by DET and enables eligible children to attend 15 hours of kindergarten free of charge. Eligibility conditions may change from time-to-time and must be checked in the most recent edition of the Kindergarten Funding Guide *(refer to Sources)*.

Your child is eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy:

if your child identifies as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander
if your child is identified on their birth certificate as being a multiple birth child (triplets or more).

or if your child holds or has a parent or guardian who holds, one of the following:

a Commonwealth Health Care Card
a Commonwealth Pensioner Concession Card
a Department of Veterans Affairs Gold Card or White Card
Refugee or Asylum Seeker visa (200-204, 786 or 866)
Bridging visas for any of the above Refugee or Asylum Seeker visas

If your family or child has a humanitarian or refugee visa listed by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection which is not included in the above list, your child may still be eligible for the kindergarten fee subsidy.

Where a child is identified by a parent, carer or legal guardian as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, no verification is required.

In all other instances, supporting documentation should be sighted by the service on acceptance of a place or on commencement in the program, however where there are delays, such as in obtaining health care cards for children in out-of-home care, the delay should not provide a barrier to the child accessing the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy. Families are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy for the full term in which their concession is valid.

6.2 Early Start Kindergarten

Early Start Kindergarten gives eligible children 15 hours of free or low-cost kindergarten a week for two years before starting school.

To be eligible, the child must be three by 30 April in the year they start kindergarten and meet one of the following criteria:

be from a refugee or asylum seeker background
identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
your family has had contact with Child Protection.

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Children can also access free or low cost Four-Year-Old Kindergarten through the Early Start Kindergarten Extension Grant. Contact the service for further information.

7. Payment of fees

The Committee of Management will regularly review payment options and procedures to ensure that they are inclusive and sensitive to families' cultural and financial situations.

Fees will be invoiced to parents/guardians directly and must be paid by the date indicated on the invoice. Each invoice will be accompanied by payment instructions. The first term's fees must be received in full prior to the AGM of the year prior. For children enrolled after the commencement of a term, a pro rata invoice will be issued and must be paid in full within 14 days of the child's commencement at the service. Receipts will be provided for all fee payments on request.

Parents/guardians experiencing difficulty in paying fees are requested to contact the Fee Officer to arrange a suitable alternative payment plan. The *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy* of the service will be complied with at all times in relation to a family's financial/personal circumstances.

8. Unpaid fees

If fees are not paid by the due date, the following steps will be taken:

An initial reminder letter will be sent to parents/guardians with a specified payment date, and will include information on a range of support options available for the family.
Where payment is still not received, families will be invited to attend a meeting to discuss the range of support options available and establish a payment plan.
The Committee of Management will continue to offer support and will reserve the right to employ the services of a debt collector.
If a decision is made to withdraw the child's place at the service, the parents/guardians will be provided with 14 days' notice in writing.
No further enrolments of children from the parents/guardians will be accepted until all outstanding fees have been paid.

9. Refund of fees

If a family becomes eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy during a term, a full refund of the applicable term fees will be provided. Fees may still apply for programs offering more than the required minimum hours per week.

In any other case, fees are non-refundable (exceptional circumstances may apply – these are at the discretion of the Committee of Management.) There will be no refund of fees in the following circumstances:

a child's short-term illness
public holidays
family holiday during operational times
closure of the service for one or more days when a qualified educator is absent, and a qualified reliever is not available
closure of the service for staff training days
closure of the service due to extreme and unavoidable circumstances.

In addition, there will be no refund where a family chooses not to send their child to the program for the maximum number of hours for which they are enrolled.

10. Support services

Families experiencing financial hardship often require access to family support services. Information on these services may be available from the kindergarten service provider or alternatively families may contact the local council.

11 Notification of fee changes during the year

Fees set for the year would only be reviewed in extraordinary circumstances, for example, if attendance rates fall below the budget 'break even' point. Parents/guardians will be notified one term in advance of any required fee increase and will be offered the option to request a payment plan.

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ATTACHMENT 2. STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES

Three-year-old funded kindergarten

BENTLEIGH WEST KINDERGARTEN INC.

Fee schedule 2023

Three-year-old kindergarten

Hours: 7.5 hours per week

	Fees ($)	Refundable Maintenance Levy	Charge($)
Kindergarten Enrolment deposit	$50		$50
Term 1	$315	$100	$415
Term 2	$315		$315
Term 3	$315		$315
Term 4	$315		$315
Total			**$1,410**

*Please Note: A refund of the $100 Maintenance Levy can be requested by the end of Term 4 if one or more working bees is attended by a family member/guardian.

Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued in October for Term 1 of the following year, and subsequently during term for the following term.

Kindergarten Enrolment deposit

Parents/guardians are required to pay the enrolment deposit on offer of a place. Payment will secure the child's place in the three-year-old kindergarten program. Families experiencing hardship should discuss any difficulties with the service.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Families who are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (refer to Fee information for families) will not be required to make fee payments but are required to pay Refundable Maintenance Levy.

Early Start Kindergarten

Families who are eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten *(refer to Fee information for families)* will not be required to make fee payments but are required to pay Refundable Maintenance Levy.

Children turning three during the year

Children can only commence the program when they have turned three. Fees will be charged on a pro rata basis upon commencement.

Late collection charge

The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child *(refer to Fee information for families*

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ATTACHMENT 3. STATEMENT OF FEES AND CHARGES

Four year old funded kindergarten

BENTLEIGH WEST KINDERGARTEN INC.

Fee schedule 2023

Four-year-old kindergarten

Hours: 15 hours per week

	Fees ($)	Refundable Maintenance Levy	Charge ($)
Kindergarten Enrolment deposit	$100		$100
Term 1	$630	$100	$730
Term 2	$630		$630
Term 3	$630		$630
Term 4	$630		$630
Total			**$2,720**

*Please Note: A refund of the $100 Maintenance Levy can be requested by the end of Term 4 if one or more working bees is attended by a family member/guardian.

Payment of fees

Invoices will be issued in October for Term 1 of the following year, and subsequently during term for the following term.

Kindergarten Enrolment deposit

Parents/guardians are required to pay the enrolment deposit on offer of a place. Payment will secure the child's place in the four-year-old kindergarten program. Families experiencing hardship should discuss any difficulties with the service.

Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Families who are eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy (refer to Fee information for families) will not be required to make fee payments but are required to pay Refundable Maintenance Levy.

Early Start Kindergarten

Families who are eligible for the Early Start Kindergarten (refer to Fee information for families) will not be required to make fee payments but are required to pay Refundable Maintenance Levy.

Late collection charge

The Committee of Management reserves the right to implement a late collection charge when parents/guardians are frequently late in collecting a child *(refer to Fee information for families*).

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