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GUIDELINES FOR THE OPERATION OF **PLAYGROUPS**



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Mission Statement:

GWC Community Services mission is to provide services and programs that empower individuals and groups from the Greek community and the community at large, to participate in all aspects of Australia's Culturally and Linguistically Diverse society. This mission is underpinned by the values and principles espoused by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia and, as such, recognises welfare and community service provision as a sacred task.

Playgroups:

In 1980, GWC Community Services established and began operating its Playgroups. This was in response to the community needs for linguistically and culturally relevant services, catering for children 0-6 years and their parents/carers. Playgroups are educational, provide social interaction and reduce isolation. At Playgroup the children are provided with the opportunity to develop new skills through a variety of stimulating activities such as painting, drama, cutting, pasting, singing, story time, dancing and outings to the local park. Our groups are unique because they extend themselves to offering a bilingual program, which provides cultural awareness of Greek traditions and the promotion of the Greek language. More recently we have undertaken to deliver Playgroups to Australia's multicultural community. The first such Playgroup began operating in Parramatta in 2018 to the Indian community.

Playgroups at GWC Children Services are one of the numerous programs the centre provides within the Centre's philosophy and aims, which espouse the right of people to dignity, respect, privacy and confidentiality.

COVID-19 SAFE PROCEDURE

Playgroups will be run a little differently than they were prior to COVID-19. Please read the COVID-19 Safe procedure below.

- Vaccinations are mandatory for all who work in Early Childhood Education and Care settings under the current Public Health Order. This includes Playgroup Facilitators.
- **Wearing Masks**: COVID-19 spreads more easily indoors and in setting where you cannot physically distance. NSW Health highly recommends that everyone wears a mask when they are unable to physically distance, particularly in indoor settings. GWC Community Services highly recommends that all adults participating in a playgroup wear a mask during playgroup when you are unable to maintain 1.5 metres from other adults.
- Only one adult per family is to attend playgroup. Some group numbers may be limited based on size of venue. Capacity must not exceed the 2 square metres of accessible space. Children count towards the capacity limit.
- **If a person is unwell or presenting with flu like symptoms, they will not be permitted to enter the facility.** They will be asked to leave and seek medical attention. NB Suspected cases i.e. recent O/S travel is close contact with a confirmed case or awaiting test results will not be permitted to enter.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided upon entrance and we ask that there is no handshaking, high fives, hugs and kisses upon arrival amongst group members.
- On arrival we ask that you sign in writing your name, address, phone number and signature on our attendance sheet. This record will be kept for a period of at least 28 days. Records will only be used for purposes of tracing COVID-19 infections and will be stored confidentially and securely.
- Parents will be seated 1.5m away from one another during the playgroup and during activities Craft time will be set up amongst separate tables to allow space for parents to assist their children whilst maintaining physical distance.
- There is to be **NO SHARING OF FOOD.**
- Story time will be run differently. We will ask you all to sit on chairs during this time and maintaining physical distance of 1.5m. Children are able to sit together on the mat provided or they can sit with you.

With your cooperation and understanding, we can work together to ensure the safety and wellbeing of everyone whilst attending our playgroups.



PART A

Playgroups Operate During School Terms

Every Monday:

Kingsford Σπουργιτάκια (Little Sparrows) 10am - 12pm
St. Spyridon G.O. Church Hall
72-76 Gardeners Rd, KINGSFORD

Parramatta Κουνελάκια (Little Rabbits) 10am - 12pm
St. John's G.O. Church, Education Rooms
Level 1, 163-165 Purchase St, PARRAMATTA

Every Tuesday:

Blacktown Ψαράκια (Little Fish) 10am – 12pm
House next to St. Paraskeve & St. Barbara G.O. Church
51 Balmoral St, BLACKTOWN

Belmore Αστεράκια (Little Stars) 10am – 12pm
All Saints GO Church Hall (Side of Church)
Cnr. Cecilia & Isabel St's, BELMORE

Burwood Λιονταράκια (Little Lion Cubs) 10am – 12pm
5 Burleigh St
BURWOOD

Every Wednesday:

Crows Nest Περιστεράκια (Little Pigeons) 10am – 12pm
St. Michael's G.O. Church Hall
49 Holterman St, CROWS NEST

Bankstown Πεταλουδίτσες (Little Butterflies) 10am–12pm
St. Euphemia's G.O. Church Hall
6-12 East Terrace, BANKSTOWN

Parramatta Little Rabbits Multicultural 10am - 12pm
St. John's G.O. Church, Education Rooms
Level 1, 163-165 Purchase St, PARRAMATTA

Mascot Κουάλες (Little Koalas) 10am – 12pm
St. Catherine's the Old Church Hall

13-15 Tunbridge St, MASCOT

Every Thursday:

Liverpool Αρκουδάκια (Little Bears) 10am – 12pm

Saints Raphael, Nicholas & Irene G.O. Church Hall
29 Forbes St, LIVERPOOL

GyMEA Αρνάκια (Little Lambs) 10am – 12pm

St. Stylianos, St's Peter & Paul, St. Gregory Palama G.O. Church Hall
806-808 Kingsway, GYMEA

Earlwood Δελφινάκια (Little Dolphins) 10am – 12pm

The Transfiguration of our Lord (Hall behind church)
175 Bayview Ave, EARLWOOD

Brighton-Le-Sands Αγγελάκια (Little Angels) 10am – 12pm

Millennium Centre
The Grand Pde, BRIGHTON-LE-SANDS



General Program

To ensure your children get maximum benefit from the playgroup program, members are encouraged to arrive as close as possible to the starting time.

- 10:00 am** Everyone sanitises hands upon entry. Sign-in and playtime (various toys, puzzles, blocks etc.)
- 10:30 am** Wash/Sanitise hands before Craft activity (a different activity every week in program)
- 11:00 am** Wash/Sanitise hands before morning tea break. Parent/carer to bring food **only for their own child/ren**. Announcements will be made by the facilitator to the group. Payments can be made to the facilitator at this time.
- 11:30 am** Story, song and dance time
- 12:00 pm** **CLOSE**

- Every parent/carer is expected to join in activities with social distancing (story time, dancing, and singing) as it will be of benefit to all the group and will assist your child/ren participating in a group environment.
- Everyone is required to assist with packing up after each activity.
- Each week, a parent/carer is allocated to bring one of their child/ren's favoured story book to be read at the playgroup.
- Each week, a parent/carer is allocated to bring morning tea (biscuits etc) individually wrapped.

REGISTRATIONS

- A registration form must be completed **annually for each family prior commencing playgroup**. Please register via our website: www.gwccservices.org and follow the links.
- **It is the parents/carers responsibility to notify the facilitator of any changes to their current details.**
- All registration forms must be kept in a locked file and kept confidential from all but the approved persons who enrolled the child/ren, relevant staff and management.
- Depending on the vacancies available for each playgroup, taking into consideration COVID -19 restrictions, you can register your child/ren at any time throughout the year. Parents/carers may also place their child/children on a waiting list if no place is available. GWC will contact the family when a place is available.
- The centre requires the signature of the parent/carer for permission to take or not to take photos of their child (ren) during Playgroup sessions for the Centre's publicity purposes.

Children Ratios

- Due to COVID-19 safety recommendations, numbers of each playgroup will differ based on the size of each venue. If there are **no** vacancies the child's/ren's names will be placed on a waiting list. GWC **will contact the family** when a place is available.
- Only one adult per family is to attend playgroup.



Contribution Payment

We aim to provide a quality service that is affordable.

Contribution payment of:

- **\$40.00 Per family per term OR \$10.00 Casual rate (per session)**
- **\$20.00 Per family for fortnightly run playgroups**

Payment to the facilitator should be made during **Week 1 or Week 2 of each term. New comers will be allowed a free first visit.**

First Aid

- All staff members are qualified in first aid.
- A fully stocked and updated first aid kit will be kept in a designated and secure place in the centre. Facilitators are to ensure that this is easily accessible and kept inaccessible to the children.
- First aid will be administered in minor accidents or to stabilise the victim until expert assistance arrives in more serious accidents.

Accidents

- We will ensure the safety and wellbeing of staff, children and parents/carers, within the Centre and visits to the park, through proper care and attention in the event of an accident.
- Each parent/carer is directly responsible for the child/ren they bring with them.
- If a child has an accident while at the Centre, they will be attended to immediately by the parent/carer and the facilitator.

In the case of a minor accident the first aid attendant will:

- Assess the injury
- Attend to the injured person and apply first aid as required

- Ensure that disposable gloves are used in contact with blood or bodily fluids

In the case of a major accident requiring more than first aid, the first aid attendant will assess:

- If the child's injury is serious the first priority is to get immediate medical attention. Call 000
- Attend to the injured person and apply first aid if required.
- Ensure that disposable gloves are used when in contact with blood or bodily fluids
- Try to make the child comfortable and reassure them.
- Await for medical assistance



Hygiene

- We aim to provide a clean and hygienic environment.
- The playgroup facilitator will be arriving prior to playgroup commencement to sanitise and to set-up.
- All toilet facilities should have soap and paper towels for washing and drying of hands. The facilitator will be responsible for monitoring the availability of soap and paper towels to ensure they do not run out.
- Hand sanitiser will be provided upon entrance. All need to sanitise/wash hands before eating food, before each craft activity and after all dirty tasks such as toileting and playing outside.
- There is **NO** handshaking, high fives, hugs and kisses upon arrival amongst group members.
- Staff must wear disposable gloves when in contact with blood, open sores or other bodily substances.
- Tables and chairs will be sanitised before and after playgroup sessions.
- Toys will be sanitised by the facilitator prior commencement or after finishing playgroup session.
- Bins should be emptied at the end of each playgroup session.

Illness and Infectious Diseases

We aim to provide a safe and hygienic environment that will promote the health of all the children. Parents/carers should not bring sick children to the Centre.

A child or adult will be considered sick/unwell if he/she:

- If a person is unwell or presenting with flu like symptoms, they will not be permitted to enter the facility. NB Suspected cases i.e. recent O/S travel, in

close contact with a confirmed case or awaiting test results will not be permitted to enter.

- Has a fever over 38 degree
- Is crying constantly from discomfort
- Vomits or has diarrhoea
- Is in need of constant one to one care
- Has an infectious disease

If a child/ren is unwell at home parents/carer should not bring the child/ren to the Centre or they will be asked to leave.

Immunisation

GWC Playgroup supports the National Health and Medical Research Council of Australia's recommendations that children should be immunised using the agreed schedule, unless there is a clear medical reason why this should not occur.

In line with the evidence about child and community wellbeing, GWC Playgroup strongly encourages parents to have their children immunised using the schedule provided by the NSW Ministry of Health.

This is available on the NSW Ministry of Health Website:

<https://www.health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation/Publications/nsw-immunisation-schedule.pdf>

Please be aware that young babies and pregnant women are at higher risk if there is an outbreak of a communicable disease. We recommend that they do not attend playgroup if there has been a suspected case of one of those illnesses at the playgroup.

Allergies

We aim to provide a healthy environment for all the children. All of our Centres aim to be **Nut Free**. If your child/ren have any allergies (peanuts, other nuts, egg, milk etc.) please mark it on your child's/ren and let the playgroup facilitator know.

PART B

The centre arranges the use of Community venues to operate the playgroups (e.g. local parish, council halls and schools.)



Indoor Environment

We aim to provide a comfortable and safe environment that allows flexibility and access to a variety of activities. We will ensure that only the number of children that can comfortably fit into the building space will be enrolled.

- Only one adult per family is to attend playgroup. Some group numbers may be limited based on size of venue.
- When you arrive we ask that you sign in and sanitise yours and your child's/hands.
- Parents will be seated 1.5m away from one another during playgroup and playgroup activities. Craft time will be set up amongst separate tables to allow space for parents to assist their children whilst maintaining physical distance.
- The Centre's indoor environment is ***smoke free.***
- The indoor area is to be set up to allow children to participate in a variety of activities with easy access to equipment.
- Easy access to areas should be maintained by making clear easily definable passageways.
- Access for children and people with a disability will be considered when arranging the use of community venue.
- Parents/carer and facilitator will ensure that children bags and other items are not thrown into walkways or play areas.
- All items brought to the centre - prams, umbrellas, bags - are to be placed at a designated area.
- Every adult is directly responsible for the child/ren they bring with them. It is reasonable to expect that all members will supervise all children around them.

Outdoor Environment (If Available)

We aim to provide a safe and secure outdoor environment where children have access to a variety of activities.

The outdoor area is ***smoke free.***

Supervision should be properly maintained by parents/carers/facilitator. Children are only to play in the areas that are visible to the parents/carers/facilitator.

All gates or doors shall ***always*** be closed.

PART C

Communication



Staff/Parent:

- There will be no handshaking, high fives, hugs or kisses upon arrival and during playgroup sessions.
- Staff will create a comfortable and supportive environment for parents and strive for open communication and good relations with parents.
- Staff and parents will treat each other with respect, courtesy and understanding.
- Appropriate language is to be maintained at all times.
- Staff will not be judgemental towards the parents and respect their need to use the playgroups.
- Parents and staff are requested to maintain confidentiality at all times.
- Parents can raise any issues with their facilitator through the centre's playgroup coordinator.

Staff/Child:

- There will be no handshaking, high fives, hugs or kisses upon arrival and during playgroup sessions.
- Staff will respect children's opinions and encourage their participation in the program.
- Staff will use appropriate voice tone and level when talking to children.
- Staff will be supportive, encouraging and to communicate with children in a friendly, positive and courteous manner.
- When communicating with children, staff will ensure that they are understood and communicate at the child's level.
- Staff will not threaten or verbally abuse the children in any way.