Early Learning Centre
2014

Excellence in Education, Christianity in Action
Welcome to the
NORWEST CHRISTIAN COLLEGE EARLY LEARNING CENTRE
Incorporating Pre-School and Preparatory Programs

Message from the Principal

The Norwest Christian College Early Learning Centre is a very special place. The early years of learning are a vital time and we feel privileged that you have entrusted your children to us.

We are committed to establishing and maintaining a partnership with you that will last your child’s whole school life. This partnership will address your child’s education and well-being whilst remaining focused on their future, which we believe will be bright. Our goal is to instil character and purpose in each and every child. Purpose will ensure that they make a lasting difference in the world, and character will ensure that the difference they make will be worthwhile.

I hope your time in the ELC is a blessing to your whole family,

Ian Maynard
Principal

Introduction from the Director

We look forward to working alongside you as we partner in your child’s development and education through the Early Years and then into the Primary and Secondary Years.

The Preparatory Program began at the College in 1998 as a response to our community for a high-quality, Christian Early Learning environment. Since that time the Preparatory Program has grown to be a priority entry point into the College where children engage in social, emotional, physical and spiritual development consistent with the values of our families and College in a safe and secure Christian environment. We have a wonderful reputation in the local community for our program, especially our school readiness program, and for the care we provide to each child.

This booklet provides valuable information about your child’s Early Learning experience and will help you with a range of important details as your child enters the Centre.

Of course, should you have any questions about your child’s progress, including settling in, please take a moment to speak with one of the teachers/educators. Mrs Amy McCoy (Early Childhood Teacher) and Mrs Melissa Churchward (Educator) lead the Butterfly and Caterpillar programs. Joining them are Miss Kristen Southwell, Mr Ben Zamor and Miss El Traynor.

I trust that your experience in the ELC will be a happy one and I look forward to getting to know you and your family in the time ahead.

Linsey Moir
Director, Early Learning Centre
THE CENTRE
Pre-School & Preparatory Class

The Pre-School class is known as the ‘Caterpillars’ and Prep is known as the ‘Butterflies’. The names reflect the transformation that we hope each child undertakes over two or more years. The main teaching times will be in the green room for Caterpillars and our new larger room for the butterflies; though there will be times when the children move between the rooms.

Our Service Philosophy

The Preparatory philosophy guides its programming practice and day-to-day decisions about learning in the Centre. The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is built on the understanding that the principles of early childhood pedagogy guide the practice of our early childhood educators.

The EYLF assists educators to guide children’s play by carefully designing learning activities and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments. We also acknowledge that each child is unique and therefore will progress at their own pace.

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

- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life - where 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

We believe that:

- children are created in the image of God and that we are also responsible to Him for their care;
- parents are the primary educators of the children in our care;
- the care and education of children is a partnership between the College and the parent;
- each child is unique, with their own social, emotional, physical and educational strengths and needs;
- a positive start to early learning plays a significant role in shaping a child’s social, emotional, physical and educational development, values and attitudes;
- a sense of belonging, identity, individuality, compassion, empathy and resilience is important for the development of emotional intelligence and social skills in children;
- children develop and reach milestones at different rates and they should be supported through each of these developmental stages;
- learning through a blend of age-appropriate play and instruction will guide children’s development across all areas and support the achievement of important milestones; and
- all children should be afforded equal opportunities to play and learn regardless of age, gender, cultural background or religion.

We will achieve this by:

- interacting and communicating with children and their families in a warm, respectful, caring and friendly manner;
- teaching children that God loves and cares for them, and by providing a Christian context and perspective in teaching and learning;
- guiding behaviour in a positive way and fostering positive interactions between children and teachers/educators;
- encouraging children to share their interests and abilities with others, including their cultural background;
• encouraging children to explore, imagine, solve problems and express their ideas;
• programming and planning activities to support the learning of individual students; and
• providing a learning environment that is safe and secure with age appropriate opportunities for learning and opportunities for exploratory play.

**Policies**

The College, including the Early Learning Centre, has a suite of policies available for families to view, including those relating to the educational program, child safety and family relationships with the College. You are invited to inspect these policies at any time. They are available in printed version in the Early Learning Centre (ask a member of staff) or can be found electronically in the Community Section of Insite on the College Intranet.

**LEARNING**

**Curriculum - Play is the Work of Early Childhood**

Our Preparatory program is based upon many years of experience in teaching in the early years where we value and prioritise the teaching of the whole child – academically, socially, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Our curriculum is derived from the national framework of learning and implemented from a Christian perspective.

The Early Years Learning Framework (ELYF) describes the principles, practice and outcomes essential to support and enhance young children’s learning from birth to five years of age, as well as their transition to school. The Framework has a strong emphasis on play-based learning. Play is the best vehicle for young children’s learning providing the most appropriate stimulus for brain development. Play develops concentration, creativity, empathy and positive attitudes towards schooling in general. It also recognises the importance of communication and language (including early literacy and numeracy) and social and emotional development. It is built around the themes of Belonging, Being and Becoming. Information for families about the EYLF is available in the Welcome Area or the DEEWR website (www.deewr.gov.au).

The Preparatory teaching program of the centre is programmed for a mix of group and individual opportunities for learning that reflect the philosophy of the centre and the interests of the individual child and their developmental stages. Educators make regular observations of children and their interactions with their peers and their environment. This information is then used to shape the teaching and learning program for the following week/s. Please refer to the weekly program on display in the Welcome Area for information about the current week’s learning and program.

**EYLF Principles**

- Principle 1: Secure, respectful and reciprocal relationships
- Principle 2: Partnerships
- Principle 3: High expectations and equity
- Principle 4: Respect for diversity
- Principle 5: Ongoing learning and reflective practice

**EYLF Practice**

- Holistic approaches
- Learning through play
- Learning environments
- Continuity of learning and transitions
- Responsiveness to children
- Intentional teaching
- Cultural competency
- Assessment for learning

**EYLF Learning Outcomes**
EYLF Outcome 1: Children have a strong sense of identity
EYLF Outcome 2: Children are connected with and contribute to their world
EYLF Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
EYLF Outcome 4: Children are confident and involved learners
EYLF Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators

**Teacher Initiated Learning Activities**

Many of the learning activities your child will undertake will be initiated by the teacher or another educator. These may include stories, songs and participation from the children as well as the teachers’ prepared input. These sessions usually last for 30 minutes and are valuable as they encourage a more focused learning approach and prepare the children for activities they will experience at school. The educators follow the Ants in the Apple phonics program which encourages a child’s developing phonemic awareness (the sounds of letters and combinations of letters), this being the foundation children need to read and spell effectively. This program is also carried through into our Primary Years so that in Kindergarten, many of our students already have these foundations for developing their overall literacy. The program also focuses on numeracy, science, personal health and development, and music and movement during group times. Learning experiences are differentiated for children in the Pre-School and Preparatory programs where appropriate.

**Positive Behaviour for Learning**

The College has an overall commitment to Positive Behaviour for Learning, including the Early Learning Centre. We expect that children will demonstrate age-appropriate behaviours at all times and that families will support us as we guide their child’s behaviour.

The Early Years are a formative time where children need to learn how to interact appropriately with their peers and educators. We will do this by praising positive behaviours (eg being kind to others, cooperating with staff, using our words to show how we feel, etc.) and discouraging negative behaviours by providing space for children to think and ‘regroup’ and providing options for replacement behaviours. Positive behaviours should always receive the best and most frequent reactions and response from adults and as a result, these are the behaviours children will value. The Centre does not use ‘time-out’ preferring to use a ‘time-with’ strategy where the child accompanies one of the educators for a short time to talk about what has happened and how they could behave in future.

**STUDENT WELL-BEING**

**Sickness and Exclusion Policy**

Please do not send your child to the Centre if they are unwell. Sick children often need more intimate care and we cannot provide the comfort your child may need when they are not well. The College has responsibility for all children and is required, under national law, to take steps to prevent the spread of infectious diseases; the exclusion of sick children may be necessary. You should keep your child home when they present with symptoms including vomiting, diarrhea, high temperatures, rashes, severe skin irritations, productive cough (mucus), tonsillitis, conjunctivitis, impetigo, chicken pox, whooping cough and head lice.

In all cases, if your child becomes unwell during the day we will contact you to collect them or to arrange for another family member or friend to collect them. Please ensure that the nominated carer brings photo identification with them in this instance. If there is an occurrence of an infectious disease at the Centre, parents and guardians will be notified and a fact sheet will be provided.

**Medication**

Should your child require medication during the day we require written permission providing all the relevant details. We keep liquid paracetamol on site or you may provide your own. All medication MUST be handed to a staff member upon arrival in its original container bearing the original label with the name of the child to whom the medication is to be administered. The instructions for staff should not differ from those prescribed by your doctor. Expired medication will be returned to you.
Strict policies have been developed to protect your child from incorrect administration of medication. All medication (prescribed, natural and over the counter) are required to have a chemist’s dispensing label attached with the child’s name, dosage, time/s and instructions for administering the medication, or a letter from your GP stating the above information. This must also be handed to the child’s teacher. Children are not permitted to self-administer medication, including epipens and anapens.

**Immunisation**

Upon enrolment up-to-date immunisation records, or a doctor’s letter stating the reason for non-immunisation, must be provided for each child. In the event of an outbreak of a vaccine preventable disease an information sheet from the Department of Health will be sent home for your information. The College reserves the right to refuse the enrolment of a child where it cannot take reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of this child or other children.

**Injury to children**

Minor injuries are recorded on Injury Report forms, which detail the nature of the injury and action taken. In the case of serious illness or accident, every effort will be made to contact you so that you may come and take your child to hospital or to a medical practitioner. It is therefore vital that the contact number you provide on the enrolment form is correct and updated. If your child’s condition requires urgent medical attention an ambulance will be called to transport them to the casualty section of the nearest hospital and you will be contacted and advised to meet your child there. A staff member will accompany the child if you are unable do so.

**Sun-Safe Policy**

The Early Learning Centre is an accredited Sun-Safe Centre and our Sun Safety Policy refers to information supplied by the NSW Cancer Council’s Sun Smart Program.

Cancer Council NSW Sunscreen 30+ is applied before going outdoors. Outdoor play times are restricted between 10am and 2pm (11am-3pm Daylight Saving time). Children must wear sun hats that cover the face, neck and ears. If children do not bring a hat, they will play in the covered area. Children must wear clothing which covers the shoulders and neck and should preferably cover to the knees. Sun-Safe information is displayed in our policy folder in the Welcome Area. Please apply sunscreen to your child prior to starting the day and note this on the sign-in sheet.

**Critical Incidents**

All staff are familiar with the Critical Incident procedure of the College including the Emergency Evacuation and Lock-Down Procedures. The evacuation procedure is posted near the entry doors. In the event of an evacuation to a safe place each child will be accounted for by using the sign-in sheets. It is absolutely essential that the sign in sheet be completed correctly each day and that all visitors and volunteers sign in at the College office when on campus (other than dropping off and collecting your child).

Emergency support will be called upon if necessary. Children regularly practice emergency evacuation drills to ensure they are familiar with the processes of evacuation and lock-down. If you are on campus during an emergency, please kindly follow the instructions of staff. Do not attempt to leave the campus in the case of a drill.

**Child Protection**

All Norwest staff are trained in matters relating to Child Protection according to current legislation. Staff are trained to recognise the signs of abuse, neglect or risk and are required to comply with the College Child Protection Policy and associated guidelines.

All staff, volunteers, visitors and parents are compelled to abide by the relevant Code of Conduct formulated to comply with Child Protection legislation. These Codes of Conduct are available on the College Intranet and in the Information Guide provided to families.

Staff will maintain confidential and specific written records regarding the pertinent physical and emotional state of children as presented each day as well as other relevant information concerning family or other circumstances.
If you, as a parent, suspect that a child at the Centre is at risk of harm, please notify the Principal. Wherever possible, the identity of the notifier will remain confidential.

ROUTINES

Day One

Day One is the beginning of an exciting new journey. However, it can be an anxious time for young children, and their parents, when they start any new routine. The educators are acutely aware that some children will experience difficulty separating from their parents in a new and unfamiliar place.

Typical Daily Routine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:00am</td>
<td>Children arrive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Play-based programmed learning / children’s choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00am</td>
<td>Indoor / Outdoor play depending on the weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:45am</td>
<td>Toileting and Hand Washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00am</td>
<td>Welcome, devotion and prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30am</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00am</td>
<td>Group Time One</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes music, movement, literature, school readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30am</td>
<td>Play-based activities / Free Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00am</td>
<td>Group Time Two</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Includes music, movement, bible stories, literature, school readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45am</td>
<td>Toileting and Hand Washing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 noon</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:45pm</td>
<td>Rest Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00pm</td>
<td>Free play (inside)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00pm</td>
<td>Story time and sun-screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:15pm</td>
<td>Outdoor Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:15pm</td>
<td>Indoor play-based activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00pm</td>
<td>Centre closes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Rest Time

All children are given the opportunity to rest or sleep during the day. Quiet activities are provided for those children who do not sleep while gentle music or a storybook is played on CD. The rest time routine varies throughout the year, according to the changing needs of the children. We are required by regulations to provide adequate time for rest during our day.

Attendance

The Early Learning Centre is open between the hours of 7:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday, 48 weeks of the year. This includes most school holidays; however, your child’s attendance during holidays is optional (refer to fee schedule).
It is important that the College is informed of your intended drop-off and pick-up times and days of attendance so that we are able to staff appropriately at all times. Applications to change an attendance pattern must be made in writing to the Director, ELC at least one week prior. You will be notified as soon as approval has been granted. Of course, we understand that from time to time an emergency may arise - in this instance please call the office on 8889 4600, or 8889 4661 after 4:00pm. Generally, casual days are not available unless by prior arrangement.

Unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate ‘make-up’ days for non-attendance due to illness, holidays, etc.

Children in the Pre-School program are able to attend from 1 to 5 days per week, and children in the Preparatory Program, from 2 and 5 days per week. We ask that Preparatory children attend a minimum of 2 days per week to ensure they benefit from the school readiness program and to assist in their social development. These days do not need to be consecutive. Many families choose to increase their child’s days over the year, subject to availability. If your child is going to be absent, please let us know as soon as possible.

Arriving and Leaving the Centre

On your child’s first day you will be required to complete a Daily Routines form to identify people for whom you give permission to drop off or collect your child. The first time this person attends the ELC they will be required to provide photo identification before the child will be released into their care.

Your child must be accompanied to the ELC rooms by a responsible adult or nominated person and signed in and out each day on the register in the Welcome Area. When picking up your child, please let a staff member know that your child is leaving with you, and sign the attendance register.

Please advise a staff member if someone other than you or the person nominated previously is collecting your child. Your child will not be released into the care of anyone under the age of 18 years without the prior written consent from the parents or to an adult unknown to staff.

Custody and Access

The College is required to keep a copy of current court orders. It is each parent’s responsibility to notify us of any changes to court orders or if any custody/access difficulties arise. Access to children will only be given where the legal guardian has provided written authorisation via the Daily Routines form. It is important to keep us informed of any changes to custody and access as it arises.

Settling in each day

Your child is very important to us and we aim for the settling in period to be as gentle as possible. Please do not leave the rooms when your child is not looking. It is much easier for the child to cope with the parent leaving when he or she is being held or with a member of staff.

Once you have said good bye, it is important that you leave quickly and calmly. Be assured that we will always contact you if your child is extremely distressed or inconsolable. Feel free to contact the Centre during the school day if you would like to check on your child.

What should my child wear?

Children are required to wear the College sports uniform - bucket hat, polo shirt, shorts, socks and sports shoes (no canvas please). A tracksuit jacket and pants are also available for the colder months. Children are permitted additional layers under their polo shirt for extra warmth, or may also wear the College knitted jumper under their jacket. All clothing must be clearly labeled with your child’s name, including shoes.

What should my child bring?

- A College school bag with an identifying tag and name.
- A separate lunch box or bag for each meal break, morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea; two drink bottles.
- Please provide healthy and nutritious food suitable for each meal break eg fresh sandwiches with nutritious fillings.
- Please also send at least one piece of cut fresh fruit or vegetable as we encourage healthy eating before children eat any ‘treats’. All foods must be self-contained and easily managed by your child (of course we are there to help when they are learning).
- We prefer the drink bottles to be filled with healthy beverages, preferably water.
- Nut products, including muesli bars with nuts, are not permitted. Some children have severe allergies and we request that you assist us in ensuring the health and safety of all the children in our care.
- A sheet set (top and bottom) clearly labeled on the outside - cot size is suitable - inside a zip case, provided by the Centre. These are returned for washing each week.
- Something that your child may like to make rest time more enjoyable (eg teddy).
- A library bag with strong plastic lining.
- A spare set of clothing in plastic bag (non-uniform is fine) - leave this in your child’s bag

**What should my child not bring?**

- Jewellery, including badges; other than those provided by the Centre.
- Metal food containers that have a sharp edge such as tins.
- Toys - these may become lost or damaged. Special items brought from home for Talking and Listening (‘news’) should be placed in your child’s locker or given to a staff member.

**Birthdays**

Birthdays are very important events in a child’s life and we love to share this important day with them. You are welcome to send along cup cakes (no whole cakes please as it is easier to share individual cakes) on your child’s birthday so that they may celebrate among friends, but please ensure you give us a full list of all ingredients. This is very important for children who have allergies. Speak to one of the educators to determine the number of children who will be present on the day you send cakes.

**Excursions and Incursions**

There will be times throughout the year when we will have special guests and combined events with the Primary Years students including the Mother’s Day concert and Literacy Fun Day. Examples of some of our incursions in the past are drama, puppet shows, multicultural celebrations, festivals and the baby chicks hatching (over a 2-week period). You will be notified of these events in our newsletter and are welcome to come along to these as your availability permits.

**BBQ Afternoons**

The centre holds a BBQ Afternoon each term to provide parents with the opportunity to visit the Centre and talk with the educators and their children about their experiences. These are not formal meeting times but rather an opportunity for families to get to know each other and the staff in a more relaxed environment. We encourage you to try and attend these events as it is often difficult for you to stay when dropping off and collecting your children. The BBQ will run between 4:30-6:00pm.

**Photographing Children**

We use photographs to document your child’s day and create learning stories for you to enjoy with your child. Photographs also help us to inform you of our learning activities and are an important part of the Centre’s operation. These photographs are held securely and displayed to inform parents of the activities and learning experiences provided to our children. Your child’s photo may also appear on our College webpage and Facebook pages, though your child’s name or any other identifying details will not be published. If you do not wish for your child’s photograph to appear outside the Centre, please advise us.
UNIFORM

Children in the ELC wear the College sport uniform every day which helps them to feel part of the wider College community.

MANDATORY UNIFORM

- College sport shirt
- Norwest tracksuit pants
- College sport shorts
- Norwest tracksuit jacket
- College hat
- College school bag
- College sport socks
- Shoes – Velcro or lace up cross trainer / runner style shoes in standard colours (preferably predominantly white)
- The following shoes are not to be worn: Rabens, skate shoes, Dunlop Volleys, brightly coloured slip-ons or canvas style shoes.

OPTIONAL ITEMS

- For added warmth during the colder weather children are permitted to wear long sleeve white skivvies under their sport shirt. Please do not wear coloured items under the uniform.
- Additionally the College vest or jumper can be worn over the shirt and under the sport jacket. The uniform shop also stocks College beanies, scarves and hair accessories.

COMMUNICATION

Contact Details

- Phone: 8889 4600 (during hours 7am-9am and 4pm-5pm please call 8889 4661)
- Fax: 9627 4637
- Email: elc@nwcc.nsw.edu.au

Regular Communication

Feedback to Parents

Our Early Learning Teacher and Educators will endeavour to provide you with daily feedback about your child’s day. Each afternoon we will be displaying photos (in the Welcome Area) of the day’s activities to stimulate discussions with your child about their day; it is sometimes difficult for the children to remember what they did so the photos should assist in stimulating memories and discussion.

Please check your child’s communication pouch (on the wall in the Welcome Area) for newsletters and notes about special events and other activities. You may leave messages and signed notes for staff in the letterbox in the Welcome Area.

You may contact the Early Years staff for further information, or make an appointment to meet in person. Please understand that drop-off and pick-up times are generally unsuitable times for extended conversations as we are committed to the care of other students. Formal progress meetings are scheduled in the afternoon/evening twice per year in Terms 1 and 3.

Your feedback is important to us

You are welcome to provide feedback to us at any time. Please feel free to make an appointment to see your child’s educator or email the College (elc@nwcc.nsw.edu.au) with any questions you may have. You are also welcome to leave messages in the letterbox in the Welcome Area which is checked daily.

Medical Information

Please bring any medical needs to the attention of the staff member on duty when you arrive. All medication instructions must be written clearly on the medication forms provided.

Newsletter

An ELC newsletter is issued twice per term informing you of a range of matters. The calendar section will let you know about important dates, events and meetings, and other sections will inform you about the learning focus and important early childhood and parenting information from government departments and local community groups.
Complaints and Grievances
The College’s Complaints and Grievances Policy is available for parents to read in the Welcome Area, and is also available on Insite, the College's Intranet. The College is committed to open communication between its employees, parents and students. Concerns about a child’s learning, social, physical or other development should always be communicated with parents. The College encourages all members of its community to express any grievance they may have with courtesy and respect with the appropriate member of staff. Please contact the class teacher, educator or Director, ELC if you wish to express a grievance or make a complaint.

FEES AND REBATES
Fees
A fee statement is emailed weekly outlining your financial commitments. Payments can be made via direct debit (preferred) and periodical payments can be arranged by contacting the Director, ELC. Credit card and EFTPOS facilities are also available at the Centre. If you child is not collected by 5.00pm a late fee will be billed at $10 per 10 minutes and will appear on your next statement.

No charge is made for the weeks that the Centre is closed during summer school. You must notify the College by no later than Week 7 of each school term if you require care during the school holiday periods. Please refer to the College Information Guide for College term dates as they differ from those of public schools. Fees remain payable if your child is absent due to illness, vacation, or other reasons.

Child Care Benefits
The Early Learning Centre is an approved childcare service allowing parents to claim the Child Care Rebate and the Child Care Benefit. Please contact the Family Assistance Office to register your child’s enrolment at the Centre.

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet.
We look forward to working with you as we partner in your child’s development.
If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me or any of our educators by email (elc@nwcc.nsw.edu.au) or in person