



# Birrahlee Newsletter

## March 2023

### WELCOME

Dear Parents,

It's hard to believe that we are already half way through the term. It has been lovely meeting all the new families for 2023 and welcoming back returning families. The children have settled in so quickly to their classes and are exploring the environment and making new friends.

The first social event for the year will be a morning get together in March, please see attached information.

Included in this newsletter is important information which you may need to refer to throughout the year. Please keep this handy as it relates to information about the preschool such as the Board of Management, Parents Club, and various policies such as Sun Smart policy, medication, fees, excursions etc.

We send important information to you via OWNA so it is important that you turn on the notifications, so you don't miss out on anything.

Please encourage children to wear their own backpack. This also allows adults to have their hands free to open/close gates.

We are looking forward to another busy year.

**Deánné Allan**

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION

#### Staff Parking



**Please take note of this sign on the fence next to the main gate.**

Birrahlee staff have two allocated car spaces at the front of the preschool; **these spaces are for Birrahlee staff only and not for child drop-off.**

**Please do not park in these spaces** even momentarily as staff begin at different times and anticipate their space being free. In addition the ranger patrols these spaces and will fine anyone for parking there without a permit.

## Who do I contact....

### If you need to contact the office...

It would be helpful when you contact the office (email, phone or intercom) if you could provide your name and your child's name and class as well, as there are many families where the child's surname is different to their parents (especially to their mothers). We appreciate your assistance with this.

We have 160 children spread across 4 classrooms at Birrahlee Preschool. The Rosella room, Kookaburra room, Kingfisher room and Cockatoo room. Children attend our preschool for either 2 or 3 days per week.

### If my child will be away from Preschool...

Please use the OWNA app to mark your child as not attending.

- open the App
- select the + sign at the bottom of the page
- Mark child **not attending** (you can then put a reason in the comments section such as unwell (specify), holidays etc)

### Illness

If your child is unwell with an illness of a contagious nature such as impetigo, gastro, chicken pox etc, please inform the preschool.

## Important dates

<b>2022 School Term Dates</b>	<b>Term 1</b> Tuesday 31 January – Thursday 6 April	<b>Term 3</b> Monday 17 July – Friday 22 September
	<b>Term 2</b> Monday 24 April – Friday 30 June	<b>Term 4</b> Monday 9 October – Friday 15 December

**Board AGM** Monday 20 March

**Welcome BBQ** Saturday, 18 March

**Open Day (for prospective families)** Saturday 20 May (help spread the word!)

**Last Days for the year**

**Rosella & Kookaburra 2 day** – Tuesday, 12 December  
**Cockatoo & Kingfisher 3 day** – Wednesday, 13 December  
**Rosella & Kookaburra 3 day** – Friday, 15 December  
**Cockatoo & Kingfisher 2 day** – Friday, 15 December

## StEPS Vision Screening

The StEPS program is a free population based vision screening program and is designed to identify childhood vision problems which cannot be detected by observation, behaviour, family history or vision surveillance. The StEPS program will actively identify and target all 4 year old children in NSW to offer them a free visual acuity screen using a validated test.

**Dates: 9, 10, 11 May (Term 2, Week 3)**

Information has been uploaded onto OWINA and permission forms will be distributed closer to the date (once we receive them).

## Do you have an artistic flair or know someone who does ?

We have several puzzles which previously had pieces missing. Fortunately the Men's Shed have helped us by cutting new pieces to replace the ones that have gone missing – now we need the pieces painted to match the rest of the puzzle.

If you are the person for the job (or know a friend or relative who is) please see Deanne or Jody.

## Birralee T-Shirts and Hats

Every new child enrolled at Birralee should have received a free t-shirt and hat as part of their initial enrolment.

Additional t-shirts and hats can be purchased via the jot form sent via OWINA. Additional t-shirts are \$12 each and hats are \$15 each.



## Birthday cakes



Cupcakes are our preferred way to celebrate your child's birthday at preschool. Please discuss with your class teachers prior to the day.

We ask that you DO NOT send lolly bags, chips, popcorn, donuts etc. as these will not be able to be distributed.

If your child has a food allergy please provide a suitable substitute (ie. cupcake) which can be stored in the freezer. Please talk to your child's teacher to discuss a suitable substitute.

## Daily preschool program

The main body of the programme runs from 9am until 3pm with extended activities before and after these times. The program is flexible and changes with the interests and needs of the children, as well as seasonally due to the weather.

8.15 to 9.00am	Welcome children, inside
9.00 – 12noon	Indoor/Outdoor programme
10.15am	Acknowledgement to Country/morning song/discussion
10.30am	Wash hands, fruit time
12.00pm	Story / group time
12.30pm	Wash hands, lunch
1.00pm	Outdoor experiences
2.15pm	Outside pack away
2.30pm	Inside and pack bags
2.45pm	Inside quiet time - books/music/yoga
3.00pm	Quiet activities
3.40pm	Last pick up time
3:45pm	Preschool closed





## BIRRAHLEE NUT FREE POLICY...

This year Birralee has several children enrolled with severe allergies.

In order to keep the children safe and to minimise the risk of an allergic reaction, Birralee has a **Nut Free Policy** which includes **all nuts** and nut products such as nut butters, Nutella, muesli etc.

Please be mindful when packing food for your child's day that it does not include any nut product which may be harmful to other children.

This applies to sandwiches, some muesli bars, biscuits and of course any loose nuts packed as a snack.

### Grounds & Maintenance

As part of the ongoing maintenance and repair/upkeep of the building and outdoor environments the following items were carried out over the Dec/Jan annual holiday closure period:

- Replacement of asbestos-containing external wall sheeting by council (Clearance Certificate from independent assessor received following this work)
- Fence extender (lattice) installed
- Professional Gutter, window and carpet cleaning
- Replacement of one air conditioning unit

- Annual Pest inspection
- General maintenance items – incl. anti slip strips on ramp, privacy screen top sandpit, replacement of Perspex on internal gates
- Fire safety inspection (February - 6 monthly)

#### Future works will include:

- repair/replacement of synthetic grass/rubber softfall underlay
- children's bathroom upgrade

### Fees

As you know we are in the final stages of setting up the new Direct Debit system linked to OWNA. Please refer to the Fee information and schedule that has been emailed to the primary parent listed on your enrolment form and complete the Direct debit form as per the instructions.

As per the new Funding Guidelines all families are required to complete a Fee Relief Declaration form stating if they are claiming fee relief from Birralee or another service. This document is part of your required enrolment paperwork. If you have not completed a declaration form, please come to the office.

## Staff allocations – 2023

Please refer to the following class/staff list for the educators working with your child.

Classroom #	Class Days	Staff allocation
Rosella Room	2 day Monday, Tuesday	Majella O'Malley, Yukari Hamasuna, Mandy Brown
	3 day Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	Fiona Lucas, Yukari Hamasuna, Kylie Calman, Michele Beck
Kookaburra Room	2 day Monday, Tuesday	Leah Saez, Sue Zhao, Donia Ahoukhams
	3 day Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	Leah Saez, Sue Zhao, Donia Ahoukhams, Alicia Silva
Kingfisher Room	3 day Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	Emily Speirs, Tima Hatkic, Jasmin Sader
	2 day Thursday, Friday	Majella O'Malley, Tima Hatkic, Nga Nguyen
Cockatoo Room	3 day Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday	Hannah Parkinson, Nasren Rahim, Mio Minagi, Patricia Towers
	2 day Thursday, Friday	Hannah Parkinson, Nasren Rahim, Lily Bodulic
Inclusion Support Teacher	Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Jody Fowler
Educational Leader	Monday - Friday	Elva Zheng
Director	Monday to Friday	Deánné Allan
Office Staff	Monday, Tuesday	Cecilia Fong (Bursar)
	Wednesday, Thursday, Friday	Idalia Butler (Enrolment and Administration)

## IMPORTANT DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

### Gates – 3 safety points to remember



**Gate safety is extremely important to us given the location (in the carpark). Please shut the gate behind you**

1. Please do not have two gates open at the same time as children can slip through.  
Due to weather conditions, the gates sometimes stick/move. Always check they have closed behind you. Please do not allow children to swing on the gates or climb on the fence. **PLEASE ENSURE YOU DO NOT LET ANOTHER PERSON'S CHILD OUT THE GATE WITH YOU.**

2. Please be alert at all times when on preschool grounds and avoid using mobile phones.

3. Please ensure older siblings do not hold the gate open while waiting for you.

### Core Hours

Preschool licensed hours are 8.15am to 3.45pm. The core of our programme operates between 9am – 3pm.

Ideally children should arrive at the preschool by 9am and be collected no later than 3.40pm (which allows 5 minutes for afternoon handover procedure).

If you are delayed, please telephone the preschool on 9427-5900. Children who are not picked up by 3.45pm will be taken to the office and families will be charged an additional \$30 per 5 minutes or part thereof after 3.45pm.

### Arrivals

Children can attend from 8.15am. Please remember to use your designated gate.

All children must be signed in on arrival via OWNA on the digital tablet. Each adult must use their own unique PIN to identify them.

We ask that children arrive no later than 9.15am as the gates are locked at that time to ensure the safety of the children in the outdoor areas.

### Departures

In the afternoon, please remember to sign your child out.

**Ideally children are collected from 2.45pm onwards and no later than 3.40pm.** Preschool closes at 3.45pm as we are only licensed to operate until this time and children must leave the preschool promptly.

If you as parents are not collecting, you must give permission on the enrolment form for another person(s) to collect your child. People other than yourself will be asked to provide photo ID, such as a driver's licence.

**Siblings are always your responsibility when at Birralee**, for safety reasons please keep them with you and we ask that they do not climb or play on the equipment which is closed for safety.

**A Late Pickup fee is applied at \$30 per 5 minutes (or part thereof) to deter families from late pick up.**

### Sun Screen & Hat Policy

We ask that you apply sunscreen on your child before leaving home. Sunscreen is also available at sign-in for preschoolers only. Sunscreen will be re-applied every 2 hrs as per our Sun Smart policy

Please ensure your child wears his/her Birralee hat or a broad brimmed hat. A Birralee hat was supplied initially. Subsequent hats can be purchased for \$15.00 through the office.

### Clothing

It is important to dress your child in appropriate clothes which allows them to participate in the programme freely. This includes suitable clothing and footwear to run and climb, therefore thongs, crocs and slip on shoes are not suitable, long dresses or skirts are also not suitable.

Please **clearly label** your child's belongings - clothing, hats, bag, lunchbox, drink bottles and shoes. We cannot return items to their owner if they are not labelled.

It is important that **at least** one complete change of clothes is sent in your child's bag every day as well as extra underpants.

### Morning Tea And Lunch

We follow the Munch and Move NSW Health program, which promotes healthy eating and exercise. Please provide your child with a healthy lunch which includes some fruit and vegetables, without pre-packaged foods. Please try to include some fruit for morning tea and water only as a drink.


Morning tea, lunch and drink bottle should be clearly marked with your child's name.

All lunch boxes should contain an ice-brick to keep the food fresh. Please consider what food is appropriate to send to preschool and will stay fresh.

**Please note that Birralee is a nut-free zone. We appreciate parents not providing peanut butter, other nut butters, Nutella or similar sandwiches as we have some children with severe allergies to these products. This also includes some muesli bars and muffins.**



## IMPORTANT DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONAL INFORMATION

<b>Medication</b>	<p>Birralee's policy is that medication will not be administered without parental consent (excluding first aid). Parents must arrange with staff if their child needs medication. Please complete the details on the form located in the class and bring the medication in its original container. Medication must not be left in your child's bag but handed to a staff member who will store it safely in the kitchen. Where possible, please administer medication at home.</p> <p><b>Medication must be in the original container and in date and have a pharmacist's label attached with the child's name, dosage to be given and method typed on it.</b></p>
<b>Medical Conditions Management</b>	<p>All children with medical conditions such as asthma or allergies or anaphylaxis must provide a medical management plan from your doctor as well as any medication listed on the plan. Please update your child's teacher if there are any changes to the original plan.</p>
<b>Gates</b> 	<p><b><u>Gate safety is extremely important to us given the location (in the carpark). Please shut the gate behind you</u></b></p> <p>Please do not have two gates open at the same time as children will slip through. Due to weather conditions, the gates sometimes stick/move. Always check they have closed behind you. Please do not allow children to swing on the gates or climb on the fence. <b>PLEASE ENSURE YOU DO NOT LET ANOTHER PERSON'S CHILD OUT THE GATE WITH YOU.</b> Both gates will be locked between 9.15am and 2.45pm. During these times please enter via the main gate via the carpark.</p>
<b>Book Club</b>	<p>Good quality books at a reasonable price are available through Wombat and Lucky book clubs. You will receive regular information and orders are made on-line. Birralee earns points towards purchasing resources from the books sold.</p>
<b>Board of Management</b>	<p>As a community-based preschool, Birralee has a Board of Management, which oversees the running of the preschool. Board Meetings are usually held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month. Meetings run for about 2 hours at night and are friendly and not too formal. <b>The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held on Monday, 20 March 2023.</b></p>
<b>Parents' Club/Class Parent</b>	<p>The Parents Club is the social and fund-raising arm of the Birralee Board. As people get busier, the Parents Club has elected to focus on more social activities. In lieu of larger fundraisers, the Parents Club donation is charged per family per term. If you would like to be involved in Parents Club, please register your interest via the QR code at the sign in tables..</p> <p>The class parents organise social activities for the class such as play dates and class dinners. In addition to these, they help with Birralee engagement events. Please let your class teacher know if you are interested.</p>
<b>OWNA</b>	<p>All communication between your class teacher and your family regarding the program and your class will be via OWNA.</p> <p>The Office will use e-mail as the main form of communication with parents during the transition to OWNA, so please ensure your email address is up to date. If you are not receiving emails from us please check your JUNK / SPAM folders.</p>
<b>Suggestions/ Complaints</b>	<p>If you have an idea for fund-raising or how we can make changes for the better, please let us know. Ideas will be discussed at our staff meetings and reported to all parents in the newsletter.</p> <p>Should there be a problem or something you wish to discuss, your child's teacher is the first person to contact. If she cannot help, the next step is to talk to the Director, Deanne Allan. Most issues can be solved simply by letting us know there is a problem.</p> <p>However, if you have a problem serious enough to bring to the attention of the Board of Management, you should write to:</p> <p>The President, Birralee Board of Management PO Box 599, Lane Cove 1595</p> <p>If the problem has not been resolved by the Board, parents can contact:</p> <p>The Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate Department of Education and Communities Locked Bag 5107 Parramatta NSW 2124</p>