



Providing valuable early educational experiences for children



2023

PARENT INFORMATION HANDBOOK

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Welcome to Birralee Preschool Lane Cove

At Birralee we recognise each child as an individual and programme to each child's strengths, interests, and unique qualities. We value each child's prior knowledge and experiences within the context of their family, culture and community, and recognise families as children's first and most influential educators.

We believe children learn in a variety of ways through play, intentional teaching and experimental experiences within the structure of a daily routine, supported by caring and consistent staff members. While we provide the security of a structured daily routine, we endeavour to be flexible and responsive to the children's needs and interests. Learning occurs within a programme which is actively reflected by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), placing an emphasis on a child gaining a sense of belonging, being and becoming.

We recognise children as capable, competent and resourceful individuals and organise a programme which aims to maximise learning opportunities and challenge each child. We believe children progress well when they, their families and educators hold high expectations for their achievement in learning. We make curriculum decisions that promote inclusion and participation of all children.

The preschool programme aims to prepare children for future learning by:

- Encouraging independence;
- Extending imagination and creativity;
- Developing interaction and communication;
- Encouraging exploration and questioning;
- Fostering friendships;
- Developing fundamental skills in writing, reading and numeracy; and
- Respect for others and the environment.

Relationships with Children

At Birralee we aim to build strong, meaningful and positive, relationships between educators and children. Every child, family and educator is valued and catered for by:

- Respecting and recognising individual differences;
- Developing a positive self-esteem and social confidence;
- Creating a shared sense of belonging to the community;
- Listening and responding to others' ideas and opinions;
- Working and co-operating together on shared projects; and
- Providing opportunities of socialising together as a community.

Staffing

Birralee provides families with the assurance of stable and consistent staff, which contributes to a happy and friendly environment. Our staff are committed to providing high quality early childhood education to preschool children by:

- Providing higher adult/child ratios than is recommended under the National Quality Framework (NQF);
- Ensuring each classroom has a University trained teacher;
- Attending regular training and professional development;
- Keeping up-to-date with the latest educational practices and principles;
- Working as a team and reflecting on practices;
- Employing specialist staff to support children with additional needs; and
- Working collaboratively with other professionals in the community.

The Environment, Health and Safety

Birralee is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for the children, ensuring regular maintenance of the building and playground. Children are supported and supervised in their play at all times by caring professionals, this gives them a strong sense of security.

We endeavour to develop healthy lifestyle habits with the children by:

- Using a sun safe policy and providing families with hats and sun creams while at Birralee;
- Modelling healthy eating habits and educating families on providing healthy lunches to children;
- Planning and promoting physical activities as part of the daily programme;
- Maintaining current First Aid certificates for all staff; we also have select staff trained in Asthma and Anaphylaxis management.
- Ensuring all staff are informed about children with allergies and medical conditions.



Collaborative Partnerships with Families and Communities

Birrahlee gives children opportunities to share their own experiences by welcoming families to participate in the programme. This helps to build strong connections within our community and gives children an understanding of what it is to belong to their community. As we initiate and maintain community relations, we seek to foster open communication between staff and families in various ways.

We believe communication is pivotal to strengthening relationships with our families and community and we do this by:

- Providing a monthly newsletter;
- Organising family events and activities at the preschool;
- Making time for families to discuss their children's development with the teacher;
- Encouraging parents to be involved with the Board of Management and Parents Club;
- Providing opportunities for families to socialise;
- Working on community projects with Lane Cove Council
- Attending activities at the local schools and library;
- Producing a portfolio for each child, with work samples, photos and observational notes.

Ownership

- Birrahlee Preschool is a community based non-profit organisation, a company limited by guarantee.
- The members of the company consist of parents at Birrahlee.
- Birrahlee commenced in 1959 in the current building which is erected on land owned by Lane Cove Council.
- The cost of running the preschool and extending the facilities and equipment is financed from preschool fees, donations, Government Grant (State) and some fund raising activities.
- Parents are encouraged to participate in the various social activities throughout the year to ensure their success.
- Birrahlee receives some additional funding from the Department of Education to assist children with additional needs who qualify for the subsidy.



Management

- The management of Birralee Preschool and the control and administration of Birralee is vested in the Board of Directors who are parents elected from the members of the company. The Board of Directors consists of a President and not more than ten (10) Directors including a Secretary and Treasurer.
- The responsibilities of the Board of Directors include staff matters, the standard of building, grounds and equipment, and all matters relating to the finances of the company.
- The Board reports to the members of the company at least once a year at the Annual General Meeting in March. Members are able to attend monthly meetings if they wish. These are usually held on the second Monday of the month at 8.00 pm.
- The fundraising aspect of management is performed by the Parents Club.

Parents Club

- Each parent is automatically a member of the Birralee Parents Club whose role it is to provide social contact between parents and organise fund raising activities.
- There are parent representatives for each class who assist with the co-ordination of these activities.
- The Parents Club is a sub-committee of the Board of Management and reports its activities to the Directors each month at the Board Meeting.
- As a community based preschool, we welcome any contribution that parents are able to make; we encourage families to be active participants in the preschool community.



Day-to-day at Birralee

Hours of Operation – 8.15am to 3.45pm (last pick up at 3.40pm)

- For your convenience children can start between 8.15am and 9.00am, and can be picked-up between 3.00pm and 3.40pm Monday to Friday
- There is no additional before or after school care provided.
- Please be aware that if children are not collected by 3.45pm there will be an additional charge of \$30 per 5 minutes or part thereof until the child is collected. This fee is intended as a deterrent to avoid late pickups.
- The preschool operates on term dates set for NSW Public Schools, with the exception of 4 pupil free days. The preschool is closed on public and school holidays

Security

Birralee treats with the utmost importance the safety of the children attending the preschool. We require details of parents and carers who will be collecting children listed in the online enrolment form.

Please see extract example from our online enrolment form and ensure you complete this for any additional contacts who may pick up your child – do not forget to tick the boxes to authorise pick up and activate the digital sign-in.

You can access your My Family Lounge account via our website <https://www.birralee.com/apply-online/>

Important information to note

- Each authorised individual must use their own phone number to sign in/out to identify them in the digital signature.
- Individuals must not use the child's parents ID login.
- No unauthorised contacts will be permitted to collect the child
- If you have a one-off person picking up your child, you must send your class teacher and the office (admin@birralee.com) an email with details of this person and include a photo of their ID which they will have to present at pickup.
- Unauthorised persons will not be permitted to collect the child.

Arriving and Departing

- On arrival and departure parents/carers must digitally sign in and out on their OWNA.
- On arrival, encourage your child to unpack their own bag and put items in the appropriate place.
- Children cannot be taken from the preschool at any time without notifying the teacher. Written permission is required for persons other than parents to take children home.
- Siblings are the responsibility of parents while they are at Birralee; they are not to be left unattended at any time.
- Please assist staff by leaving the playground promptly after pick up.
- Children should not be left alone in cars outside preschool; it is dangerous and illegal.
- Check that gates are closed behind you when you exit. Make sure that you don't let anyone else's child through with you. Hold on to children's hands when going into the car park.
- The centre gates are locked between 9.30am and 2.30pm during the day for child safety. You will need to use the Intercom at the Main Gate to contact the office if wish to access the preschool during these hours.



What to bring

- ✓ A school bag.
- ✓ Morning tea in a labelled small container.
- ✓ A healthy lunch in a labelled lunch box with an ice brick to keep food fresh.
- ✓ Labelled drink bottle with water (no sweet or milk based drinks).
- ✓ Sunhat – broad brimmed (a Birralee hat will be included as part of your initial enrolment)
- ✓ Spare clothes in a plastic bag (especially underwear and appropriate clothes for the season, labelled)
- ✓ Sensible footwear suitable for climbing and running, no crocs or thongs please.

Food

We encourage children to eat healthy foods at Birralee and ask that parents support this by providing nutritious lunches and snacks.

Please do not send in lollies, chips, chocolates, cakes, or other pre-packaged processed foods. The exception to this is when celebrating a birthday and children can bring in cupcakes to share with their friends.

Children should only bring water in their drink bottles; we have a water station where children can refill their drink bottle during the day.



<https://healthykids.nsw.gov.au/downloads/file/campaignsprogramms/SelectHealthierSnacks.pdf>

Nut Free Policy

We have a number of children enrolled at Birralee who are diagnosed with Anaphylaxis, a life threatening allergy to nuts as well as other foods. We are a **nut free centre** and ask parents not to provide any foods containing nuts or with traces of nuts or cooked in nut oil.

Sun Safe Policy

Birralee is a Sun Smart Centre and as such we try to encourage parents to apply sunscreen to children in the mornings before they arrive. The children will be taught how to reapply it for themselves when they go outside again in the afternoon.

We provide a bucket hat and t-shirt for every child when they start at Birralee. Children are not allowed to play in the playground without a hat, except when the UV index is low (less than 3).

We are introducing a '**no hat no play**' philosophy in 2021 as we cannot provide spare hats for the children.

Children should wear sensible clothing, i.e. shirts with collars and sleeves (no singlets or straps)

Packaging free

Please consider not using sandwich wraps and avoid pre-packaged food (yoghurts, muesli bars etc). Please use food containers where possible.

Birralee Policies

For further detail on all our policies please go to our website
<http://www.birralee.com/policies/>.

Appropriate clothing

Please dress children in suitable, labelled clothing and shoes appropriate to the weather.

As children are encouraged to play and explore in a variety of activities they must be free of restrictions. Don't dress them in good clothing that you want them to keep clean. Although we try to keep them as clean as possible, accidents do happen.

Long dresses and skirts can be a hazard for children as they get caught under foot when trying to climb and in wheels when learning to ride.

Footwear

Children should be wearing sensible covered shoes or sandals when at Birrahlee. Thongs and crocs are not safe for children to run and climb in. As children are still developing their co-ordination and gross motor skills, wearing the correct footwear assists them to develop these new skills safely.

Toys and Belongings

We ask that toys are not brought to preschool. Children become very upset if their toys are lost or broken by another child. Preschool will not be responsible for any personal belongings that are lost or damaged. However, security items such as a blanket or soft toy are permitted if you feel it is necessary.

Please ensure that all items and clothing brought to preschool are clearly labelled with your child's name.



Health

We endeavour to keep Birrahlee a healthy environment for all children and adults. Children should not attend preschool for at least 24 hours after commencement of medication to ensure the child is recovering and is not having side effects from the medication. The Director will send home any child who is not well enough to be at preschool.

Staff will administer only medications prescribed by the child's doctor and which are in the original container, labelled with chemist label with the child's name, medication, dosage and prescribing doctor.

All medications, including cream, must be given to classroom staff and the medication consent form must be completed for administering medication. Parents must sign the form and date it with the child's name, type of medication, dosage and time to be given.

Asthma/ Allergies/ Diabetes

If your child has been diagnosed with either of these you will need to provide a medical management plan signed by your doctor. Children who have an EpiPen or require Ventolin must not attend the preschool without their medication.

IMPORTANT: No cream, sun cream, insect repellent or hand sanitiser to be left in child's bag.

Parents are requested to:

1. Have their children immunised. The Health Department now requires you to show proof of immunisation before your child commences preschool. The preschool will need a copy of your child's current immunisation schedule before they start.
2. Notify the Director if your child catches any infectious or contagious illness including the list below and to observe the quarantine period.

Quarantine periods are as follows:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Measles At least 5 days from the appearance of rash. Contacts are not excluded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hepatitis A Re-admitted on Medical Certificate only.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rubella (German Measles) Until recovered – at least 7 days. Contacts are not excluded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Head Lice Until hair has been treated with anti-lice lotion or shampoo. Hair should be free of nits. Head lice management should be ongoing.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Whooping Cough Patient is excluded until the first 5 days of a special antibiotic has been taken. Non immunised contacts should be excluded until the first 5 days of a special antibiotic has been taken.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ringworm Can attend a day after treatment has begun. See pharmacist or doctor.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mumps Patient is excluded until fully recovered – at least 10 days after swelling. Contacts are not excluded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slapped Cheek Child most infectious before rash appears. Only keep home if not feeling well.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conjunctivitis Patient is excluded until all discharge has ceased.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Gastroenteritis Keep at home for at least 24 hours after diarrhoea stops.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Chicken Pox Patient is excluded for at least 5 days after first spots appear and until all blisters have scabbed over. To return to school all scabs must be covered. Contacts are not excluded.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hand Foot and Mouth Excluded until blisters have dried.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impetigo Excluded until treatment starts. Sores should all be covered with a watertight dressing. Contacts should be regularly inspected	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meningococcal Disease Seek medical help immediately. Patient will need hospital treatment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Covid Keep at home until a RAT test is negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•

Fees

- Refer to our Fee section on our website for most up-to-date information
<https://www.birralee.com/fees/>

Holding deposits and administration fees

- The holding deposit is refunded in Term 4 of the year before your child goes to school.
- If your child leaves during the year, you will be refunded the holding deposit, less \$100 administration fee when 4 weeks' notice is provided.
- The holding deposit for all children enrolled in the following calendar year is **not** refundable if you withdraw after **4pm Friday of the first week of Term 4**. Any cancellations prior to that, you will be refunded \$400 (\$100 is retained as part of the administration costs).

Note

- Birralee is a not-for-profit, community-based preschool, which relies on NSW Government Start Strong funding and parents' fees to cover its operating costs.
- The Child Care Subsidy System (CCSS) does **not** apply to Birralee as we are not a long day care, funded by the Federal Government.
- The Board of Management sets fees each year. The Board reserves the right to vary fees at any time and undertakes to set the fees as low as possible, given service costs and non-profit status

Office hours

- Office hours are 9.00am - 3.00pm, Monday – Friday
- Phone: 9427-5900
- Email:

General enquiries: admin@birralee.com	Enrolment enquiries: enrolments@birralee.com	Account enquiries: accounts@birralee.com
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- Please update OWNA in the morning to let Birralee know if your child is going to be absent.

Birralee 2023 Calendar of Events

To be updated....

Event	Audience	Date
Birralee AGM	Existing Birralee families	
Welcome BBQ	Existing Birralee families	
Open Day	Existing and new families	Saturday, 20 May 2023

