

Henderson College

Early Learning Centre Family Handbook



Important Contact Information

Early Learning Centre Office

elc@henderson.vic.edu.au

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Welcome

Welcome to Henderson College Early Learning Centre.

It is our privilege and a wonderful experience to nurture, educate and care for your child in our Early Learning Centre at Henderson College.

Working with children and influencing their early years is a passion of every staff member at our centre. It is without a doubt, a rewarding job, and we like to think that the children that learn in our classrooms influence and impact us just as much as we influence and impact them.

We would like to warmly welcome you to Henderson Early Learning Centre, and we look forward to working alongside you.

The information in this handbook will assist you and your children in settling in and enjoying your experience at our centre.

If you require further information after reading this document, please do not hesitate to contact the Early Learning Centre staff through the contact information found on page 1.

The Early Learning Centre Policy and Procedures manual is available on our website for you to view at any time.

Once again, welcome to our Henderson College Early Learning Centre. We look forward to sharing the wonderful journey of early education with your family.

Our Philosophy

At Henderson College Early Learning Centre, we believe childhood is a precious gift! For our children, it's about creating a joyful, caring Christian space where each child feels loved and special, just as God made them.

Our philosophy is all about play. Through exciting adventures and hands-on fun, children naturally grow in every way: they explore big ideas, discover how they feel, move their bodies, and learn about God's love. We weave Christian values like kindness and gratitude into everything we do, helping little ones understand how wonderful it is to care for each other.

We're also big on connecting with our community. We love partnering with families and our school, because together, we can make your child's early learning journey even richer and more supportive. Our goal is simple: to create a safe, inspiring place where your child feels happy, confident, and ready to explore the world with curiosity and faith.

Enrolment

Henderson College Early Learning Centre is licensed to provide education and care for children from 3 years of age. Children must turn 3 on or before their first day of attendance.

Children must turn 3 on or before 30th April prior to enrolment in 3-year-old funded kindergarten, and 4 on or before 30th April prior to enrolment in 4-year-old funded kindergarten.

Children turning 3 after the 30th of April are able to be enrolled in the centre from their 3rd birthday and will be eligible to enrol into the funded 3-year-old kindergarten program the following year.

All enrolments received by Henderson Early Learning Centre will be accepted in accordance with State and Commonwealth 'Priority of Access Guidelines'. Any applications for enrolments received after all places are taken will go onto a waiting list. As vacancies arise, the priority of access guidelines will be applied to place children into the centre.

If day/s requested are not available, Henderson Early Learning Centre will contact parents/guardians and discuss the following options:

- Change of days (subject to availability)
- The child's place on the waiting list
- Cancellation of a booking enabling the child to enter care

Parents will be notified by phone if their place is to be given to a higher priority child. This notification will be given with a minimum of 14 days notice.

Priority for allocating places

First Priority

High priority children:

- A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children
- Asylum seeker and refugee children
- Children eligible for the Kindergarten Fee Subsidy

Children with additional needs (as outlined by the Department of Education)

Reference: [Priority of access for early childhood education](#)

Second Priority

A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the Family Assistance Act.

Third Priority

Children enrolled for prep at Henderson College College

Fourth Priority

Siblings of children attending, and children of staff working, at Henderson College

Fifth Priority

Any other child

From 2026, Henderson College Early Learning Centre can access 15 hours of 3 or 4-year-old funded kindergarten per week.

From 2026 children from the following high priority groups will be eligible for up to 25 hours of 'Pre-Prep' per week:

- Children who identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Children from a refugee or asylum seeker background
- Children who have had contact with Child Protection

Further information can be found in our Enrolment Policy.

Places and Hours of Operation

Henderson College Early Learning Centre is registered for 66 places. The centre is unable to accept any children over this approved number of places.

Centre Operating hours are from 8:00am - 5:30pm 48 weeks of the year.

The Service will close for three weeks over the Christmas period, and also on the Monday before the Melbourne Cup Day public holiday.

Opening and closing dates will be advertised on the school website: henderson.vic.edu.au.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Henderson College Learning Centre supports a fee system that is affordable and accessible to all families. Clients of the centre are eligible to receive reduced fees when they register with the Centrelink for Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

CCS for all eligible families will be paid directly to the centre and a reduced statement will be received by those eligible families.

Common reasons why the government would stop your CCS payments:

- You have not completed in full your assessment for the current financial year.
- Your prior year tax return has not been completed.
- Your child's immunisations are not up to date.

Parents can register by calling Centrelink or by completing your assessment online through MyGov (my.gov.au).

Free Kinder in Long Day Care

Free Kinder is available for all children enrolled in our funded kindergarten program at Henderson College ELC. Please note that your child can only access a Victorian Government funded kindergarten place and receive Free Kinder funding in one service at a time.

For further information on what Free Kinder looks like in a Long Day Care setting, please take a look at the following information sheet:

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/childhood/three-year-old-kinder/Advice-for-families-Free-Kinder-in-long-day-care.pdf>

Confidentiality and Privacy

Henderson College Early Learning Centre protects the privacy and confidentiality of individuals by ensuring that all records and information about individual children, families, staff and school are kept in a secure place.

CCS assessment notices, enrolment forms, attendance sheets, attendance amendments, payment sheets and medical certificates will be kept in the Centre's office. This information is only accessed by, or disclosed to, those people who need the information to fulfil their responsibilities at the centre or have a legal right to know.

All photography and/or filming of children will only be allowed with written permission from the parent/guardian/approved person and will be used in line with our Privacy and Confidentiality Policy.

Bond Payments

It is a requirement that all families pay a \$250.00 bond per child at the time of accepting their place at Henderson College Early Learning Centre. Your place will not be secured until the payment has been received. Your payment can be made by contacting the Centre and paying over the phone or by bank transfer. (As per the bank details under the section: Statement & Collection of Fees)

Bond Requirements:

1. Your booking must remain locked in for your first 12 weeks, from your start date. Decreased days within your locked period will result in forfeiting your bond payment.
2. If you have forfeited your bond payment and your child is returning to the Centre the next year, it is a requirement that you pay bond for the new year with the same 12 weeks locked period for the new year.
3. Returning children for the next year (bond still in place), there is a locked period from the 1st October to the end of Term 1 the next year. (Same ruling as Rule 1)
4. Increased days in your locked period will not affect your bond payment.

The bond is held by the Centre until the family completes a de-registration form with the two weeks notice requirement. The bond will be returned to the family via bank transfer or credit card a minimum of 8 weeks after your deregistration date, this gives the Centre time to ensure there are no change to any CCS entitlements.

Statement & Collection of Fees

Family statements are available to the primary carer only (CRN holder) through their Xplor Home app. Payments must be made by the due date advertised fortnightly to parents.

An enrolment fee of \$50 is payable on each individual child's enrolment application.

For an up to date schedule of fees, please visit:

Fees are reviewed at the beginning and middle of each year, any increases will be advertised 4 weeks before being applied.

Payment Options

The payment options available to parents/guardians are:

1. Xplor Debit Success - automatically processed every Thursday (set-up through your Xplor Home app) [CLICK HERE: Direct Debit Information](#)
2. Manual payment process through the Xplor Home app, PAYNOW under finance
3. Eftpos or credit card payments can be made at the ELC office.
4. Payments can be made by direct deposit into Henderson College's ELC's bank account, by electronic funds transfer (EFT).

Please ensure you use your child's name as your reference in the description if paying by EFT.

Account Details for Bank Transfer

Account Name: Henderson ELC
Account Number: 613825
BSB: 033 135

Non-Payment of Fees

Henderson College Early Learning Centre encourages parent/guardian/approved persons to contact the centre if there is a problem with paying their account. Any difficulties encountered in paying the account should be discussed with the Bursar or the Centre Manager. Continuous non-payment of fees may jeopardise your child's place at the Centre. Please refer to our Payment of Fees policy for further information.

Late Pick-up Fee

Children collected **after 6:00pm** will incur **a fee of \$15 per 15-minute block** (or part thereof), which will be charged to the child's account. For example, a pickup at 6:05pm will incur one 15-minute fee, while a pickup at 6:20pm will incur two 15-minute fees.

Please be aware that this fee is not claimable through your Child Care Subsidy.

Staff will endeavour to contact the families/caregivers or emergency person nominated. If late fees are incurred on three occasions within a term, the family's ongoing enrolment will be reviewed.

Bookings, Cancellations and Absent Days

Bookings and cancellations are essential. Casual bookings will only be accepted where and when vacancies are available. Casual bookings must be cancelled by 9am the day prior to avoid the casual fee being charged. Casual bookings can be requested through the Xplor Home app.

Fees are payable for all permanent booked days including absent days. Absent days **MUST** be recorded in the Xplor Home app by the parent/guardian as soon as you know your child will not be attending their booked day.

Change of a permanent booking or discontinued enrolment requires two weeks' notice. If no cancellation is received or cancellation is made after the specified time, the session fees will be invoiced.

For booking or cancellation queries, please contact the Early Learning Centre on: phone: 03 5024 5192 (Ext: 2) or email elc@henderson.vic.edu.au

Public Holidays

Public holidays are charged at 50% of the daily rate.

Signing In and Out

Accurate attendance records need to be kept, as this is a legal requirement of the Department of Education and Training. Only parents/guardians, or their authorised representatives are permitted to sign children in or out of the centre.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Only parents/guardians will be able to use contactless sign in/out using the Xplor Home app. All other authorised persons must be set up by the parents/guardians in the Xplor Home app as a 'Contact'. A Contact will use their own details to sign in/out on the iPad. This is a very important step in our process of ensuring **ALL** children are leaving our centre with a safe and authorised person.

IT IS A BREACH OF OUR SECURITY PROCESSES IF YOU SHARE YOUR LOGIN DETAILS WITH ANY OTHER PERSON.

If you require someone other than an already authorised person to collect your child, please add them as a 'Contact' on the Xplor Home App, or call the office - 03 5024 5192 (Ext: 2) and follow the steps in the next section, Alternate Pick Up Arrangements.

Authorised person/s must be 16 years or over.

No children will be permitted to leave the Centre/school grounds alone.

Alternate Pick Up Arrangements

If a parent is aware that they are unable to pick up their child by closing time, they need to organise another authorised person to collect their children.

If an existing authorised person is unable to collect a child then the parent can give verbal or written consent (email) for another person to come and pick up their child. They must give the staff member the authorised person's name, their relationship to the child, address, date of birth, and phone number.

The unauthorised person's photo identification must be verified by an ELC staff member and will be photocopied and kept on file before they can sign the child out.

All authorised person/s must be 16 years or over.

Custody

The centre will abide by any existing court orders issued by the Australian Family Court where a child attending the centre is not living with both parents. A copy of the court order must be attached to the enrolment form or supplied to Administration. Families need to provide legal documentation for any changes to a court order, as soon as possible.

Protective Care of Children

Henderson College Early Learning Centre has a responsibility to all children attending the centre to defend their right to care and protection against abuse and neglect. Procedures are in place to record and report any cases of suspected abuse. The Centre Manager will be notified and will report the claim further. All matters will be kept confidential.

First Aid

All permanent staff will receive training to 'Provide First Aid in an Education and Care Setting', which meets the Children's Services National Regulations.

The Centre will ensure that a First Aid kit is maintained in effective order at all times on the premises in a position readily accessible to staff in an emergency.

Immunisation Requirements

No Jab, No Play legislation requires parents/carers to provide evidence that their child has received all the vaccines they need and can confirm enrolment in a service. Following enrolment parents are required to keep this evidence up to date with the service.

An up to date immunisation statement must be provided before a child's starting date, you are also required to provide an updated statement when changes have been made to your child's statement.

If you do not keep your child's immunisations up to date, the government will stop your rebate payments to the centre (CCS).

Medical Details

Henderson College Early Learning Centre aims to provide a safe environment in which children may play free from harm. In the event of an accident, trained staff will apply appropriate First Aid.

Parents/guardians are required to provide written authority (included in the enrolment form) for staff of the centre to seek medical attention for their child if required. All children's medical records will be kept readily available for all staff.

Parents/guardians will be asked to check and update children's medical details annually. However it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the centre of any changes throughout the year.

Parents/guardians must provide the centre with up to date medical action plans if these apply annually.

Parents/guardians need to provide the centre with any required medication, and complete the relevant Medication Authorisation Form.

Children with inaccurate medical forms or no medication provided will not be allowed to attend the centre.

Food Allergy Management

Henderson College ELC is an [Allergy Aware](#) service. This means that there is no blanket ban on particular foods, however we have a range of procedures and processes in place to ensure that children with all allergies are kept safe at all times, whilst also educating children to be aware of and sensitive to food allergies.

A list of current food allergies will be available in each room and updated and shared electronically with families as any changes occur.

Nutrition

Each day, children are invited to bring their own packed lunchbox, containing nutritious choices for morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea. This daily routine is a wonderful opportunity for them to develop essential skills: deciding what to eat and when, making healthy food choices, and fostering independence as they practice opening containers and packages.

Please note that we do not heat children's lunches. If you wish to send a hot meal, kindly pack it in a thermos to maintain its temperature. Upon arrival each morning, children can place their lunchboxes into the classroom fridge, ensuring their contents remain fresh and cool throughout the day.

We also ask that you send along a drink bottle filled with water each day. Please choose a bottle that is easy for your child to drink from and is not prone to spilling. Bottles can be refilled at the ELC whenever needed.

For inspiration on healthy lunchbox ideas (and what to avoid), we recommend visiting the [Healthy Eating - School Lunches](#) page on the Better Health website.. Our educators are also always happy to offer guidance and suggestions!

Sun Smart

Henderson College Early Learning Centre has a responsibility to keep the children safe and protected at all times. This is especially important when children are outside and need protection from harmful ultraviolet radiation (UV) of the sun.

The centre will ensure that all children and staff attending are aware of the Sun Safe policy and procedures.

The Sun Smart program will be followed throughout the year and the UV levels are checked everyday to determine the use of sun protection.

All children attending the centre must have a hat that covers their ears and neck. A hat will be provided on your child's first day and is to be taken home and returned each day. Families can purchase replacement hats from the centre.

Staff

Henderson College Early Learning Centre acknowledges that professional staff results in a high quality centre. It is important that each family feels comfortable with the staff members supervising their children.

Henderson College Early Learning Centre staff members are offered opportunities for appropriate training to provide high quality education & care for all children. Henderson College Early Learning Centre requires all staff members to be suitably qualified, experienced and meet the requirements of the regulatory authority.

Positive Guidance of Children

Henderson College Early Learning Centre provides a safe, positive and stimulating environment. Our centre encourages responsible and constructive behaviour in all children. We firmly believe the management and guidance of children's behaviour is a critical part of providing a quality service.

Behaviour management strategies will always respect the child's rights, whilst at the same time being appropriate to the individual child's stage of development.

Staff will provide a consistent approach to the guidance of children's behaviour and will intervene to prevent inappropriate behaviour.

Rules will be clear, child focused and easy to understand. Staff will endeavour to communicate and work with the children displaying inappropriate behaviour to understand and discuss the issues. When appropriate, child/ren will be redirected into a positive experience.

Emergency Procedures

Henderson College Early Learning Centre aims to provide a safe environment for all children and staff. Personal safety and security of all children is of prime importance while in attendance at the centre.

Smoke alarms and fire extinguishers have been installed and are maintained. Emergency evacuation procedures are clearly displayed on the entrance of the centre and emergency evacuation will be practised with the children every day for one week of each school term.

Grievance Procedures

Henderson College Early Learning Centre will seek to foster positive relations between all families and staff. Every parent has the right to a positive and sympathetic response to his or her concerns.

Solutions will be sought to resolve all disputes, issues and concerns that affect the day-to-day wellbeing of the centre in a fair, prompt and positive manner. If parents/guardians/approved persons have a concern about the centre, they can discuss the issue with the Administration or put any concerns in writing.

Any grievance received will be acknowledged within one working day of receipt. All grievances will be handled in a confidential manner. If required, please see our grievances flowchart in our front foyer or our Dealing with Complaints policy.

Complaints and grievances received from children will be resolved in the same manner as parents' complaints and grievances.

Essentials for Your Child's Day

Each day, your child should bring a backpack that's just right for them – big enough to hold their belongings, but small enough for them to carry on their own.

Inside their backpack, please pack the following:

- **ELC hat:** Essential for outdoor play.
- **Spare change of clothes:** Accidents and messy play happen, so please include a full change of clothes, right down to their socks!

- **Wet bag:** This is super handy for any wet or dirty clothes that need to come home.
- **Warm jacket:** To enable outdoor play, even in the cooler months.

If your child has a special comfort toy that helps them at rest time or when settling into care, they're welcome to bring it along. However, we do ask that all other toys stay at home. This helps your child fully engage in the rich variety of learning experiences we offer throughout our program.

Our Policies: Guiding Our Service

Our Early Learning Centre operates under a robust set of policies and procedures that guide every aspect of our service. These comprehensive documents cover vital areas such as medical management, enrolment and fees, child safety, education, and staffing arrangements. They ensure we maintain the highest standards of care, safety, and education for your child.

We truly value parent and community feedback and input. Your insights help us to continually improve. Please don't hesitate to speak with our Centre Manager or your child's teacher if there's anything you'd like to discuss regarding our policies or operations.

Our policies are updated annually to reflect best practices and current regulations, and you can easily access them on the [Henderson College School Website](#).