**Welcome**

We warmly welcome you to Seaview Downs Kindergarten and trust that this booklet will be useful in answering some of your questions. Please feel free to email, phone or come in for a chat if you have any further queries.

**2015 Staff**

Director:       Trudy Lawson  
Teachers:      Kate Peel (0.5) plus additional part time teacher (to be advised)  
ECW’s:          Michelle Sibbons/Karen Baum

Additional part-time staff also work in our kindergarten from time to time, including Preschool Support Workers who support children with additional learning needs, Bilingual Workers who support children and families from non-English speaking backgrounds and relief teachers and ECW’s who work when regular teachers are ill, engaged in professional development or attending to other commitments.

All staff possess a continuously updated professional body of knowledge about Early Childhood Development and Education so please feel confident to discuss any developmental or learning concerns with any of the educators.

Seaview Downs Kindergarten is a DECD (Department for Education and Child Development) centre and is obligated to adhere to policies (including conditions of enrolment) formulated by DECD.

**Programs Offered**

**Kindergarten**

Under the new ‘Same First Day’ policy, children who turn 4 on or before April 30th are eligible to commence Preschool at the beginning of the year. Children turning 4 on or after May 1st can commence in January of the following year.

From term 1, 2015, the following attendance options are available:

Option 1:  Children attend 5 days per fortnight from 9.00am to 3.00pm  
Option 2:  Children attend 2 days per week from 8.30am to 4.00pm  

Sessions are currently offered on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Your preferred attendance options will be negotiated with the Director prior to commencement and are subject to availability of places. Alternative options e.g. half days may be available (depending on child and family needs) through negotiation with the Director.

Preschool fees for term 1, 2015 are $150. The fee has remained at this level for more than 2 years and will be reviewed during the year.

Please note: Attendance options in future terms/years are subject to change depending on Government policy, enrolments, parent’s needs and staffing considerations.
**Transition visits**

Children commencing Preschool in 2015 will be able to attend 4 transition visits during term 4, 2014. Days/times will be discussed and negotiated with families at the enrolment interview.

**Early Entry**

Early entry to Preschool may be available for children with additional needs. Early entry is dependent on eligibility and the availability of appropriate resources and is at the discretion of the Director. Please speak to Trudy if you think your child may be eligible for early entry.

**2015 Playgroup**

A community Playgroup is available on Friday mornings during school terms from 9.30 – 11.00 am. There is a cost of $2.00 per family per visit. All children under school age along with a parent or adult carer are invited to attend. Please tell your friends about our Playgroup as everyone is welcome.

**OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE**

**Parent and child library**

One of the best predictors of success with literacy development is the number of books a child has read to them daily while they are young. We invite and encourage you to borrow a book from our lending library. Books about parenting and child development are available for parents to borrow. Please see staff for recommendations.

**Kindergarten photos**

Each year a photographer visits the Kindergarten to take individual and group photos of the children. Photo packages are available for purchase with no obligation and extra photos may be re-ordered for family and friends.

**Dental Health Service**

Kindergarten children are eligible to attend government dental clinics. The closest clinic is situated at the GP Plus centre at Marion. If you wish to access the dental service, please contact the clinic on 7425 8400 for information and appointments.

**Child and Youth Health Preschool Checks**

Health checks for children may be available at the Kindergarten through the local Child and Youth Health nurse. The kindergarten staff will inform you of any available dates. Alternatively, parents can make an appointment directly with the Child and Youth Health Clinic at Marion by phoning 1300 733 606. These free health checks are available to children from approximately 4 ½ years of age.
DECD Support Services

DECD provides a range of support services to children and families. Speech Pathologists, Social Workers, Psychologists, Preschool Support Workers, Bilingual Workers and Special Education advisers are available. Referrals can be made after consultation between parents, the Director and DECD support services staff. Please don’t hesitate to contact the Director to discuss any issues, questions or concerns regarding your child’s development, behaviour or well-being.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent involvement is not only encouraged, it is VITAL for the kindergarten to operate effectively. There are many ways in which you can be involved, including;

- Sharing your skills with staff and children - music, craft, storytelling, gardening, science, exercise, typing, cooking etc.
- Helping with end-of-term clean ups and Working Bees
- Saving useful junk / recyclable materials for the children to use
- Supporting fund-raising events and activities
- Joining the Governing Council (parent committee)
- Gardening and helping to maintain the outdoor learning environment
- Committing to stay and help during session time on a regular basis
- Helping to clean up at the end of session.
- Taking home the Kindergarten washing
- Offering to do any mending / sewing jobs that may need to be done
- Administrative tasks such as typing, photocopying etc.

We have an open door policy at the kindergarten and welcome parent participation during session times.

The Kindergarten Governing Council

Joining the Governing Council is an ideal way to become involved in your child’s Preschool experience. A committee of parents is elected at the Annual General meeting in February. The Governing Council is the body with responsibility for maintaining the kindergarten and managing its finances. The Council’s responsibilities include:

- Planning and authorising the use of kindergarten funds
- Arranging fundraising activities
- Supporting the development and maintenance of the kindergarten
- Maintaining the buildings, grounds and equipment in a safe, secure condition
- Communicating with members of the kindergarten through the staff, meetings, informal functions, newsletters, notices etc.
- Promoting interest in the kindergarten throughout the local community
- Working with staff to develop a Quality Improvement Plan

All parents are eligible for election as a Governing Council member and all parents are invited to attend meetings (approximately 2 meetings per term). Minutes of Governing Council meetings are available for interested parents.

WE HIGHLY VALUE A POSITIVE AND ACTIVE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN STAFF AND PARENTS
WHAT TO BRING TO KINDERGARTEN

Hat
A broad brimmed or legionnaire style hat is required to provide appropriate sun protection.

Bag
Children need a bag to keep their snack, drink, hat, spare clothes and other belongings. Please ensure that bags are clearly named. We suggest an easily recognisable name tag to help your child to locate their bag as other children will often have identical bags. Bags can be placed on a bag hook or in one of the lockers located on the back verandah upon arrival at Kindergarten each morning.

Clothing
Children are required to wear practical and comfortable clothes and shoes that are suitable for climbing and other outdoor activities. Children need clothing which they can independently manage e.g. so they can go to the toilet without having to seek assistance. Please note that long skirts and dresses are not suitable as they are unsafe for climbing.
Many activities that are important for children’s development involve mess. Smocks are provided but are not always sufficient protection for very messy activities. Please send children in clothes you don’t mind getting dirty.
Shoes that fit securely are essential for safety when children engage in physical activities such as climbing and running. Thongs and ‘croc’ shoes are not appropriate footwear for Kindy.
Please note that there may be times when shoes are removed as some activities are best without shoes, including sand play and some gross motor activities. Please provide a spare set of clothes to be kept in your child’s bag (just in case!).

Water
Filtered water is available to children throughout their session time. Please do not send juice, cordial or water bottles to Kindergarten.

Snack
We have a ‘fresh fruit and vegetable only’ policy for morning and afternoon snack time. Children need to bring at least 2 pieces of fresh fruit or vegetable each day. We appreciate your adherence to this policy as it supports our health education program and assists us to provide a safe environment for children with allergies.

Lunch
Children staying all day will need a healthy packed lunch. Highly processed foods and foods high in sugar, salt and additives are discouraged. Research shows that nutritious foods support children’s brain function, learning and energy levels.

** Please take note of our Healthy Eating Guidelines handout which will be provided to you prior to your child’s commencement at preschool.

Please clearly name all of your child’s belongings.
BRINGING YOUR CHILD

Staff are very aware that adjustment and separation in the first weeks of children’s kindergarten experience can be quite challenging for some children and parents. We aim to respond to individual needs of children and their families in a sensitive and supportive manner. If you feel that your child may experience difficulty with separation, please discuss this with the staff so we can put in place appropriate strategies and support to assist both you and your child to experience a positive start to Preschool.

Assisting children to learn to manage preschool routines independently will support their confidence in their ability to participate successfully when parents are not here. Upon arrival, children need to find their name tag and put it under their photo; put their lunch in the provided lunch container; put their bag in a locker; greet the staff and select their first activity for the day. Please support your child to learn how to be independent when using our toilet and hand-washing facilities, to manage their own clothing and to be responsible for their own belongings.

Parents are welcome to stay at the start of the session to participate in an activity with their child as they settle in. This may alleviate separation anxiety and assist with familiarisation to the kindergarten setting. If your child is experiencing separation anxiety and you need to leave, please seek the support of a staff member as we have a range of strategies for supporting children and parents in this situation.

PROCEDURES

Arrivals and departures

Upon arrival at Kindergarten please:

- Ensure that children are brought inside the building and a staff member is informed of their arrival. (If you arrive early you are obligated to stay with your child until the start time of the session as the staff will be busy preparing the learning environment).
- Sign-in on the sign-in sheet in the foyer.
- When children are to be collected by someone other than usual, it is essential that staff are notified of these alternate arrangements. Please write any collection arrangements in the collection diary (on the foyer bench next to the sign-in folder) and also verbally notify a staff member.

Departure considerations:

- Please collect your child punctually at the end of a session. Should an emergency arise and you are unavoidably delayed, where possible, please phone the kindergarten so that the staff can reassure your child. A late collection can be stressful and upsetting for the child.
- A staff member must be informed if you collect your child early. For safety reasons, no child shall be taken from the centre without notifying a teacher of their departure.
- Please sign-out in the attendance sheet in the foyer.

Much behind-the-scenes work goes into the provision of a quality Kindergarten program. The time before and after sessions is very important for the staff. Your punctuality will be appreciated. Fees may be levied for late collections.
**Communication**

Open communication between parents and staff is important. We strongly encourage parents to discuss any issues, concerns or questions with the staff. Please be aware that the children are our first priority during session time, so it may sometimes be necessary to make an appointment to see staff after a session when we have uninterrupted time to chat with you.

Each child has a communication pocket. Please check your pocket regularly for newsletters, notes, fee invoices, receipts etc.

Staff keep parents up-to-date with what is happening at the Kindergarten in a variety of ways such as newsletters/notes, informal chats, parent meetings, photo displays and notice boards. Information about our program is provided within newsletters and is on display within the Kindergarten. Please check the notice board, program board and wall displays regularly to ensure that you are informed about what is happening at the Preschool.

If your family circumstances are such that your child shares their time between 2 homes or has more than one main carer, you may require duplicates of newsletters, notes, reports etc. If this situation applies to your family, please advise Trudy so that an additional communication pocket can be arranged.

**Absences**

If your child is unwell or has an illness which may be infectious please keep them at home and advise the Kindergarten staff. If your family is planning a holiday during term time or if your child is absent for any reason, please let us know.

**Updating information**

It is essential for staff to have access to current information about your child. Please inform staff promptly if any information provided at enrolment changes, particularly your address or contact numbers, emergency contact details, changes to your child’s health or change in a decision about which child your school will attend.

**Money Matters**

DECD provides funding to the Kindergarten to pay for salaries and some general operating costs. The Kindergarten must raise extra funds to pay for materials and equipment for the children and to cover basic costs such as electricity and the daily cleaner. This money is raised through a combination of parent fees and fundraising activities. Your prompt payment of termly fees and support of fundraising activities is greatly appreciated.

All money paid to the Kindergarten for fees, fund-raising, excursions etc. should be placed in a sealed envelope and clearly labelled with your child’s name, amount of payment and purpose of payment. Please place notices and envelopes containing money in the wooden fees box on the bench near the doorway of the children’s bathroom.

**Correct money is required as change is not available on site.**
Parking

DO NOT PARK IN THE DRIVEWAY!! Children enter and exit the Kindergarten via the drive way, therefore it is not safe to drive into or park in the drive way at any time while children are present at the site. Please help to keep our children safe.

Bringing toys and items from home

Please discourage your child from bringing toys from home. Children can experience great distress when toys are lost or broken or when conflict arises due to other children wanting to play with the item. We do understand that your child may sometimes wish to share their special things with the teachers or friends. In this case we suggest that you take the special item home with you after your child has had the opportunity to share or that you instruct your child to keep the item in their bag. If there is a special reason to bring an item (e.g. your child requires a special ‘comfort’ toy in times of anxiety) we shall try our best to care for your child’s possession however staff are not responsible for damage or loss.

HEALTH

Precautions against the spreading of colds, viral infection and contagious diseases are necessary at kindergarten. Parents should keep a child at home who is running a temperature or showing any signs of being unwell. Children who have had vomiting or diarrhoea should be kept at home for 24 hours after the last episode. Children with thick or coloured nasal discharge should also be kept at home. Resting at home aids your child’s recovery, as well as preventing the spread of infection.

Should your child become unwell at kindergarten, you will be contacted to arrange for your child to be collected.

Infectious conditions

Please notify the staff immediately should your child contract an infectious condition. Information about a range of common childhood illnesses and exclusion guidelines is available at the Kindergarten. Please contact staff if you have any questions.

Medication

Should your child be taking any form of medication, please inform the staff as occasionally children experience side effects which may cause drowsiness or other symptoms.

Staff are not authorised to administer medication without a doctors written advice. Where possible, medications should be given by parents before and after session. If it is necessary for your child to take prescription medication while attending Kindergarten, please see staff for a form to be completed by your child’s doctor.

Injuries

Only minor injuries and illness i.e. those that respond to TLC, Band-Aid or minor first aid are treated by the staff. All others injuries are referred to you, and/or Medical Officers. In case of serious injury or illness, an ambulance will be called.
Centre policies are developed and endorsed by the Governing Council to ensure our kindergarten runs effectively and consistently. The following site specific policies and procedures are available in the ‘Policies and Procedures’ folder which is located in the foyer:

- Behaviour Code
- Healthy Food Supply and Nutrition Policy
- Hot Weather and Sun Protection policy
- Parent Concerns and Complaints Procedure

All parents are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the policies prior to their child commencing the service.

The Kindergarten follows the policies, procedures and guidelines of the Department for Education and Child Development. Parents are encouraged to access the links to this information on the following website:


Please see below for brief notes about some important policies and procedures:

**Allergy Policy**

Exposure to particular foods or substances can cause an anaphylactic reaction for some children. An anaphylactic reaction is so severe it can cause serious illness or even death within minutes of contact (including contact with the skin surface).

We have children with severe allergic reactions attending our Preschool in 2015. Please take particular note of the food and allergy information which will be provided to you prior to your child’s commencement at preschool. This will outline any food exclusions that may be put into place to support the safety of children.

In order to ensure a safe environment for all children we request that you adhere strictly to the snack policy which states children shall bring a piece of fruit or vegetable only for morning and afternoon snack time.

Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.

**Sun safety policy**

Our sun policy is in effect from September 1st to April 30th and when the UV rating is above 3 (in accordance with the Anti-Cancer Foundation recommended guidelines). The policy requires that children wear a suitable hat for outdoor play. Broad brimmed or legionnaire style hats are necessary for proper protection. Please put sun screen on your child before the Kindergarten session each day and ensure that your child’s shoulders are covered by clothing. Sunscreen will be applied at the centre when children will be going outdoors after lunch.

**Emergency Procedures**

Emergency evacuation procedures are explained and practiced with the children each term. Please familiarise yourself with emergency procedures by reading the emergency plans displayed within the Kindergarten building. If you happen to be in attendance at the Kindergarten during an emergency invacuation/evacuation drill, please follow the emergency protocols along with the staff and children.
**Attendance**

Regular attendance at Kindergarten is important for several reasons:
- Research shows that success in learning is directly proportional to regular attendance and participation in education programs.
- Children’s development of friendships and social groups can be affected by irregular attendance.
- Attendance data directly affects future staffing levels at the centre. Attendance data will be collected during the first two or three weeks of each term. Of course, if children are ill they should not attend but, where possible, please try to avoid absences due to appointments etc. during the first weeks of term.

**Curriculum**

Curriculum at Seaview Downs Kindergarten is based on the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

The EYLF 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 Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming.
- **Belonging** is the basis for living a fulfilling life. 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.

**Play is learning**

Play is very important for children. Through play, young children explore and learn to understand the world around them as they come to communicate, discover, imagine and create.

When children play they are showing what they have learned and what they are trying to understand. This is why play is one of the foundations of the Early Years Learning Framework.

By using this Framework educators will guide your child’s play by carefully designing learning activities and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning environments.

It is well known that children learn best when they have secure relationships with caring adults. When children from a very early age develop trusting relationships they feel more confident and able to explore and learn.

In early childhood settings, when children feel emotionally secure they learn through play to develop the skills and understandings they need to interact positively with others and gradually learn to take responsibility.
The Framework focuses on your child’s learning. Educators will work with you in order to get to know your child well. They will create a learning program that builds on your child’s interests and abilities, and keep you in touch with your child’s progress.

Through the Framework’s five learning goals educators will assist your child to develop:

- a strong sense of their identity
- connections with their world
- a strong sense of wellbeing
- confidence and involvement in their learning; and
- effective communication skills.

The educators at Seaview Downs Kindergarten acknowledge the diversity of children’s backgrounds, knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and dispositions and value the importance of parents and families as central to each child’s learning. Children’s potential to be active, curious, imaginative, creative and responsible learners with expanding capability for language and communication is fostered by a responsive curriculum, resulting in new understandings, further questioning, reflection and discovery.

Information about the Kindergarten program (curriculum) and the children’s engagement in it is provided in many ways:

- General program information along with the current program is displayed within the centre. Parents are encouraged to look at this display regularly to see what learning activities are being provided.
- Information about our program is provided in regular newsletters.
- Children’s work is displayed within the Kindergarten. Children feel proud to see their work displayed and to have their efforts noticed by others.
- Photographs of the program in practice are often displayed within the centre, including slide shows on the digital photo frame.
- Formal and informal chats with staff regarding your child’s engagement within the program are available throughout your child’s time at Kindergarten.
- Parent involvement in the program is encouraged and staff are available to discuss the Kindergarten program with you. If you have any comments or suggestions, please have a chat with the staff.

Please take the time to look at displays of children’s work and photos. Your children will be encouraged by your interest in the Kindergarten program.

**Child protection Curriculum**

The Keeping Safe: Child Protection Curriculum will be implemented at this Preschool. A letter outlining the program will be provided early in term 1 and information will be provided as the curriculum is delivered throughout the year.

**ASSESSMENT AND REPORTING**

The five learning outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) provide educators with key reference points against which children’s learning is identified, documented and communicated to children, their families and schools. During the enrolment process, educators learn about children’s current knowledge, abilities and interests. Educators further their understanding of the unique needs of individual children through observations and analysis of their
engagement within the kindergarten program. Staff observations, along with photographs and samples of your child’s work are collected and analysed to provide a record of your child’s learning journey at Kindergarten.

A Statement of Learning is written during your child’s final term at Kindergarten. The statement includes a summary of your child’s learning against the five outcomes of the EYLF as well as a summary of the child’s learning and development in Numeracy and Literacy. A copy of this report is also provided to families and schools.

We provide opportunities for parent/teacher meetings during the year to discuss your child’s progress and engagement within the Kindergarten program. Further meetings may be initiated by either parents or staff if wanted. If you have any concerns or questions about your child’s development or engagement within the Preschool program, please have a chat with one of our educators. If needed, we can negotiate a suitable time to meet for a longer discussion.

Please don’t hesitate to ask a staff member if you have any questions about your child’s participation and learning or any general questions about the program or the Kindergarten’s operations. Your constructive feedback and suggestions are always welcome.

The Seaview Downs Kindergarten staff team is looking forward to working together with you and your child in 2015.