

## Parent Handbook

1. Management – Ingrid Hazelspring is the Approved Provider and Emma To is our Nominated Supervisor. These positions are legally bound by the Early Education and Care National Regulations 2011 (as well some supplementary regulations NSW has) and jointly responsible for ensuring the Service complies at all times. There are laws around many things that we do and whilst sometimes these won't always make immediate sense or be convenient for families, we have no ability to use any discretion in their application.
2. Teachers/Educators – these terms are often interchanged in our sector. At CR we have several staff with Bachelors or Masters in Education, equivalent university qualifications to teachers in the school system. Staff with university qualifications are called Teachers, staff with a Certificate III or Diploma in Children's Services are called Educators. It is law that all staff employed to meet minimum ratios hold an approved qualification or be enrolled in an approved qualification.
3. Pets – we have a Service dog, Stella. Stella is a four year old Boxer who loves to pick lemons off the trees and roll them through the fence so the children can throw them for her. She enjoys chasing bubbles, making a mess and peering through the windows at the children! Stella has been coming every day since she was nine weeks old and is a very special part of our environment.

The younger children interact with her through the windows etc and the older children are able to go out and play with her, if they choose. Many children (and parents!) will look for Stella when they arrive and leave each day. Stella does not go into the children's environments with them with the exception of a lock down.

4. Responsible Person – there is always a Responsible Person onsite at any time. If you have any issue please bring it up with them. Even if something seems small, it's best to raise it at the time. We ask that all discussions are held in a calm, respectful way. All staff are aware of who the RP is and this can also be found highlighted in foyer/entrance.
5. Complaints – please raise any issues the first time they occur. If they have occurred once it's likely they will occur again. Your child will not be disadvantaged if you raise issues and by highlighting a problem you are helping us improve and possibly saving another family from the same experience. Our grievance policy details the process for raising concerns, particularly outlining your options if you are not satisfied with the outcome. In some instances we have a self-reporting obligation to disclose complaints to the DEC.
6. Hours of operation – We are open from 7am in the morning until 6pm in the evening. We ask that families do not enter the Centre prior to 7am and arrive by 5:50pm at the latest to allow enough time to greet your child, collect their belongings and sign out. A late fee of \$20 will be charged to all families still on the premises after 6pm. If you do not agree with

the late fee we will be happy to check the cameras for confirmation but need to be advised within two weeks. After that we will be unable to investigate and the late fee will apply.

7. Communication –our main source of communication for what is happening in the service is via our Facebook page, Cressy Road. It's important families check this at least weekly. If you don't have a Facebook account please ensure you set one up – some families have opted to use an unknown name and alternative email address for privacy reasons when setting up their account. It is common for early education services to use an online communication tool and by using a system that staff and the majority of families already use it means stakeholders can access information at the same time they are using their social media accounts, do not need to remember to login to another system (remembering passwords etc) and it's easy for us to maintain and update. Absolutely no photos of children will be used.

Your child's allocated Teacher is a source of information on a more personal level. Please do not hesitate to speak with them or write in your child's book.

From time to time we will also use the messaging function on Kiosk, our electronic sign in register.

8. Main gate – the gate is locked throughout the day to provide extra security for our children, as well as provide Stella with a place to safely play. The gate is locked until 7am, between 7am and 9:30am it will remain open and then will be locked between 9:30am and 3pm. If you're arriving close to 9:30am and the gate is still open please park out the front as otherwise your car may be locked in and you'll need to see a Nursery staff member to get the key.

If you are picking up or dropping off your child between 9:30am and 3pm please park out the front and use the side entrance (located in 16 Cressy Road). The door will be locked and a staff member will let you in as soon as possible once you've rung the doorbell. It's always worth knocking as well as someone may be in the staffroom and able to pop down to open the door for you.

9. Special pick ups with siblings – Sometimes you may have more than one child enrolled with us, but are picking up one child early (for example, to attend an appointment). This can be very upsetting for the child remaining at the Service and all care should be taken to avoid this child seeing you. If you're collecting one of your children after 4pm and your other children see you and become upset at being left at the Service, we ask that you take the upset child with you also.
10. Doors and gates – please close every door and gate behind you, even if you have found it open (it's possible someone else has left it open). It's important that you check the door or gate has closed properly and cannot be pulled open. Please close gates gently rather than allowing them to slam as this helps us create a more peaceful environment for our children.

Please do not allow children to help.

11. Entrances to the Service – 18 Cressy Road is a dedicated Nursery building and we aim for this to be a quiet, homely environment for our babies. You can help us to achieve this goal in a few ways. If you are dropping off a child, or picking up a child, in either the Elephants, Giraffes or Lions please use one of the entrances to 16 Cressy Road instead of entering the babies' building.

If you're dropping off a baby please come into the house quietly and calmly. If you have an Elephants child and you are dropping off before 7:30am then you will need to drop your child in the Nursery until Trish begins her shift.

Nursery parents, please do not use the rear verandah of 18 Cressy Road. It enters into the Bottle Prep room which, as a food preparation area, cannot be used as a thoroughfare.

Elephants parents, there are two rooms downstairs. If you need to walk through one please go through the Giraffes room (the room furthest from the car park). This is because the Lions room has many small pieces, scissors etc which are easily accessible and not appropriate for younger children.

12. Developmental records – each child has their own book and their own individual program written by a university-trained teacher. Educators contribute observations and discuss evaluating and planning ideas with your child's teacher but generally do not analyse learning or forward plan.

The books belong to CR and form part of our recording obligations; we recommend parents read these books regularly and take a photo of anything they'd like a copy of as we do not provide take-home copies.

For the families enrolled at the end of the year we aim to gift a photo album to each child as a keepsake.

13. Room setups - when walking through a room please ensure things are left as they were. It is so tempting for little ones to have a quick play on their way through, however children have often left toys set up to come back to or teachers have set things up a certain way for a specific purpose. All our activities and experiences are set up in a way to be inviting to children. It's our job to make learning fun and to document your child's learning.

If you need to walk through the building please use the Giraffes room instead of the Lions room.

14. Staff changes – staff changes occur for several reasons. Generally staff choose to leave for personal reasons and we've found most do not continue working or work in their own businesses. Sometimes we will terminate under-performing employees who have been given every opportunity to change their practices. Reasons for this could vary from safety

concerns to not being competent at the level they have been employed. It's always a hard decision for us and we try everything possible to avoid this situation as children and families become attached to educators. However, no matter why someone is leaving, we consider the children's best interests and make decision for their continued education and care that will least affect them. We always make sure they are with an educator who knows them and has bonds with them. From time to time we also have students with us and you will find an introduction poster at your sign in desk if there is a student in the room. We've found children are incredibly resilient and as much as they may enjoy a strong bond with one educator they show little or no distress when that educator leaves. This is possibly because they have a strong sense of belonging to the service and it doesn't rest with one person. This is certainly what we aim for.

15. Food – our food is nutritionally balanced, low in fats and sugars and brown products are preferred over white (wholemeal breads and flours etc) Children used to sweetened foods, fried foods, McDonalds etc find it difficult to adjust. We encourage children to try meals and respect their decision if they don't like it. They will be offered a sandwich instead. Our goal is to have all children eating our meals and we work with them on this continuously. As part of the settling process some children do not eat when with us for the first few days, this can be common and if we are concerned that your child is not eating or drinking water we will call you.

#### 16. Dietary requirements

We are very happy to provide alternative meals to children with allergies or religious requirements. All allergies must be documented and an Allergy Action Plan (completed by an approved medical professional )submitted along with any prescribed medication, regardless of the allergen(s). Children with allergies will also be provided with a separately plated meal; staff are not allowed to serve children with allergies anything that is not specifically labelled for them (regardless of the allergy).

Most common intolerances are dairy/lactose and parents are welcome to provide alternative milks (eg soy, rice, oatmeal milks) which we will serve instead of milk at morning tea. There is a difference between an intolerance and an allergy and any queries or concerns should be discussed with your family GP.

17. Children in our care – Whilst it is our goal for children to skip off and play with their friends on arrival we ask that you speak with a staff member each morning just to let them know your child has arrived. Children cannot be left unattended at any time in the service. Door handles are high or have safety covers on them to prevent children from opening the doors themselves. Please do not allow your child to open doors or to leave the room you're in. If you have forgotten something in the car either take your child with you or sign them in and take them to play in the usual place and then retrieve items from the car.

Children in our care also refer to those that you may know outside of the service. We ask that you keep in mind that when children are with us we are responsible for them so please do not cuddle, attend to etc children other than your own.

18. Sign in kiosk – we use an electronic sign in register rather than a paper based one. Each parent is set up in the system separately. Please do not share sign ins. Signing in under someone else’s password is the same as signing someone else’s signature. If grandparents are collecting a child we will sign the child out and you will be asked to confirm this when you next sign in. If you have family/friends who regularly collect your child and they are not in the system please let Ingrid know and she’ll set them up. When you initially sign in you will use your mobile number and a generic password of 0000. You will then be prompted to choose a new password.
  
19. Illnesses – from time to time your child may fall ill. We do our best to limit this from happening and rely on all parents sharing this responsibility. Unfortunately it is usually the one or two children that seem to catch every illness and this is hard on their families (and expensive). We have strict procedures in place to keep this to an absolutely minimum and hope all parents will play their part in helping reduce the risk to others by not sending children to us who are not well. Sadly, sometimes children are given medication in the morning and this wears off around lunchtime and the child goes down-hill very quickly. The child will appear fine in the morning and so is accepted into our care, but of course, have played with others all morning without our knowledge they have not been well. Please, do not do this.

Children may not attend the service when they are not well enough to participate fully in our programs. Children are also excluded for 24 hours when they have had a temperature, have vomited or suffered diarrhoea. In the case of two children in the service having vomiting or diarrhoea within 24 hours of one another we follow the NSW Health’s mandate of a 48 hour exclusion. If your child sees a doctor it is a good idea to obtain a Doctor’s Certificate as this may be required, depending on the child’s symptoms before they can attend the service again. The Certificate needs to state exactly what the doctor has examined the child for (eg if your child presents with a rash they will not be able to attend without a clearance letter, the letter needs to state the areas of the body the rash has been examined in) and state “is not contagious and may attend child care”. The reason we ask for this is so that we know the doctor has cleared the child to be around other children in a group environment.

If your child is unwell and we are concerned about the symptoms they are showing, we will give you a Medical Confirmation/Clearance Form to take to your doctor to sign off on their return. This ensures the issues we are concerned with have been considered and limits miscommunication between us and families.

20. Medication – under no circumstances may medication of any kind be kept in your child’s bag. The same goes for any type of cream, ointment etc. If your child needs medication you will need to fill in a form and take the medication to the Kitchen to be locked in our fridge or medication cupboard. Please give the form to your child’s teacher or any of the permanent teachers. Unless the form is completed with all details we cannot give medication.

Medication must be prescribed and labelled with your child’s full name, this includes any

common over the counter items such as hand creams etc. We do not give any pain management medication and do not keep any on the premises.

21. Allergy, Eczema and Asthma Action Plans

If your child is marked on the Personal Review Form as having either an allergy or Asthma then we need a plan from your doctor. It's a standard template (the correct template may be found in our Drop Box) and we request these are used as opposed to a letter. The standard template is something all staff are used to looking at and should include a photo of your child which makes them easily identifiable (especially important for new or casual teachers). A plan for Eczema is also available in the Drop Box.

22. Personal Review Form – These forms are the only means teachers have of contacting you. Please give some thought to your emergency contacts. If your child is unwell or potentially contagious you will be required to collect your child within 60 minutes. If we cannot contact you then we will call an emergency contact. It is important that these contacts have a driver's licence for us to check their name and address against and that these details are written on your Personal Review Form, in full. If the contact is driving please give some thought as to whether they have the appropriate child restraints fitted in the car.

23. Lockers – lockers are often used on the days you're not with us. They may be permanently shared or a child coming for a casual day may use them. Please take all belongings home each day and leave your child's locker empty. This also gives us a chance to clean the lockers more regularly and check the hinges are working.

24. Lost Property and labelling your belongings – if you have lost something please speak with a staff member on the day. There is a lost property basket outside the Kitchen. Please feel free to check here for any misplaced belongings. Labelled belongings may also end up here if you haven't taken them home at the end of the day. For the last week of the month we will hang Lost Property near the main gates. This will be your final chance to grab your child's belongings. Lost Property is gratefully received at a local women's shelter or charity organisation.

25. Bottles, dummies and hats – these are considered hygiene items and must be labelled, particularly dummies and bottles. We may only accept a bottle if:

- a. It has a lid
- b. Both the bottle and lid are uniquely labelled (that is, child's full name)

We may only accept a dummy if:

- a. It has a cap
- b. Both the cap and dummy are uniquely labelled (that is, child's full name)

This is common practice under the Health and Safety requirement of the law and DEC will check our fridges and cupboards to ensure we are complying.

Hats need to be sunsafe, this means broad brimmed or legionnaire style caps. No baseball caps.

26. Accident forms – any time a child is injured, no matter how small, we will fill in an accident form. If the injury is serious we complete an Accident Report and have an obligation to self-report to the DEC. A serious accident is generally when medical attention has been sought, or ought to have been sort.
27. What to pack – your child will need a spare change of weather appropriate clothes (including socks and undies), a broad brimmed hat (no baseball caps), sheets and sleep time comforter (if needed). Please do not bring toys to Cressy Road. These get broken, go missing etc which can be very distressing. We have had all manner of items found in children's bags (cigarettes, iPads etc), it's a good idea to have a bag specifically for CR if you're using your child's bag for personal items at other times. We can't check each bag and rely on families to ensure they are safe for all children.
28. Sleeping – as children get older they require less sleep during the day. Some children will continue to have big day-time naps that may have an impact on their night-time routine. We cannot deprive a tired child of a place for rest/sleep. We are legally responsible to provide this opportunity. However, we will work with families to assist where possible.
29. Toileting – as much as we aim to provide individual care moments, the centre remains a group care environment. This means that we are unable to take your child out of nappies until they are exhibiting signs of being ready (due to hygiene reasons). Toilet timing is different to toilet training.  
  
During toilet training time, it is important your child comes to kindy with lots of spare underpants. All soiled clothing will be put in a plastic bag in the soiled clothing bin in the bathroom. Some parents prefer us to dispose of dirtied underpants which we are happy to do, but only if it has been requested.
30. Sunscreen – all children (except non-walking babies) need to arrive with sun-cream on. Sunscreen is then applied in conjunction with our sun policy, depending on when the children are outside after this time. We usually use Coles sunscreen but If you would prefer your own you are welcome to bring it in. A label with your child's full name needs to be on the lid and bottle/tube. Sprays are not used due to children with respiratory issues being cared for.
31. Nappy cream – we use Curash at the Service. If a child is prone to nappy rash we use cream at each change, otherwise we use as necessary. Again, if you would prefer us to use your own you are welcome to bring it along. Again, a label with your child's full name needs to be on the lid and jar/tub/tube.

32. Extra days and public holidays – fees are payable all year round, with the exception of public holidays and our Christmas shutdown period. This means fees continue to be due when your child is absent (such as family holidays, illness etc).

If you require extra days (for example, your work requires you to attend a course on a different day or your house is being painted and you would like your child away from home for the day) please email Ingrid or speak with your child's Teacher. We try our best to accommodate all extra days.

Extra days help us recoup some of the fees we lose by not charging for public holidays as well as our very high staffing and maintenance costs.

If your child is going to be absent please let us know as soon as possible. We need to record all illnesses (NSW Health requirement) so if your child is away and we haven't heard from you a staff member will need to come away from the children to phone you.

33. Lock downs and evacuations – by law these must be practised at least every quarter. We practise both approximately 12 times a year. There is no point always practising at the same time of day so different periods of the day are chosen. Unfortunately this means families may be impacted. We apologise for any inconvenience but ask that you follow staff's direction and wait until the all clear has been given before leaving.

34. Exclusion periods and clearance letters

We exclude children according to the Staying Healthy in Childcare guidelines, but we also exclude above and beyond this, for example:

- a. Head lice – may return after treatment providing there is no evidence of either eggs or live insects.
- b. Vomiting – 24 hours exclusion\* (see above)
- c. Diarrhoea – 24 hours exclusion\* (see above)
- d. Temperature – if a temp reaches 38 degrees they are excluded for 24 hours.
- e. Rash
- f. Generally unwell – if a child is not themselves and unable to participate in the program we will request you pick them up. We all feel better when we're home!

If we call you for any of these reasons your child must be collected within 60 minutes. With regards to rashes you must provide a doctor's certificate which clearly states the doctor has examined the rash, where on the body the doctor has examined and that it is not contagious. Certificates stating "fit to return to child care" and no other information are not sufficient. We are happy to provide you with a Medical Confirmation Clearance Form at any time, if this helps.

35. Signing in and out

We rely on the accuracy of the information in our electronic kiosk to know where staff need to be at the start of their shifts. If children are not signed in then we may not allocate the correct ratio of staff to that room. Likewise at the end of the day if children are not signed out we may hold staff back unnecessarily. Please be sure to sign in and out every day you



are with us.

### 36. Nursery

- a. Individual books – please record all feedback in your child’s book. Of course feel free to speak with the teacher, but please understand mornings can be busy and teachers are focussed on settling your children and when told verbally only, then need to come away from the children to write it down. It is then their interpretation of what has been said. So best if you write it down and the each teacher/educator will read the same message. At a minimum, please record what time your child woke, what time they ate, what they ate, last nappy change.
- b. All children must arrive in a clean nappy. If your child dirties it in the car please feel free to use our facilities prior to signing your child in.
- c. Bottle preparation area needs to be inaccessible to children at all times. If you enter this area to put your bottles away please lock the door behind you. Even if going in for a second, it only takes a second for an accident to occur. No children are allowed in this area.
- d. Care moments and quiet observations. Conversation amongst staff is kept to a minimum as staff observe children’s behaviours. These are key moments in identifying a baby’s developmental progress. Care moments are routine experiences such as nappy changes, meal times and sleep times. These are not rushed as we aim for each child to have loving, dedicated interactions with their teacher during these times. Babies are given choices and are always given explanations of what is happening and why. It’s amazing how much they understand!

### 37. Visiting the service and Orientation

Children will soon begin orientation visits and you may continue encouraging your child to feel safe and secure with us by talking to your child about Cressy Road. Drive past on your way to the shops etc, come for a walk down Cressy Road and try to be positive (even though you too might be anxious about leaving your child!). Children pick up on these things very quickly so it’s important you feel comfortable and communicate any concerns. We are here to help your family settle into our Service so please come and talk to us.

38. Parent involvement – we would love you to be involved with the service. If you have any interests you’d like to share (eg play a musical instrument, collect things) or you’d like to be more passive and join an activity in the room please let an educator know. We are currently putting together a calendar for next year, if you’d like to be involved in helping to organise events please let us know asap.

39. Sustainable practices – we are committed to limiting our impact on the environment wherever possible. We teach children to look after resources so they last and the earth doesn’t need to produce so much. We use recycled products in our play, all our paper is generally donated by families and we collect every day objects like bottle lids as these can represent a varied number of play ideas. Other items that are great are CDs, CD cases, nuts and bolts, beads, empty jars...the list is endless.

40. Birthdays – we love celebrating a child’s birthday! Each child is given the opportunity to make birthday cupcakes with their friends. The recipe is simple and most allergies can be accommodated. They are made in small mini-muffin tins and we use naturally coloured/flavoured sprinkles that are put directly onto the uncooked cake batter – avoiding the need for icing. The children love them and it’s a great source of excitement on the day.

Party invitations may be emailed to Ingrid and she will forward them on. Paper invitations provide many learning opportunities but there are always a few children that are rarely invited. Whilst this may be ‘life’ it’s something we are not comfortable with at this young age. Via email the children are unaware of who is invited and it’s not obvious to them when they see invitations lined up on the sign in desk. If families bring in invitations they are given to the child’s Teacher and we hand them out to parents personally. This avoids a fuss around invitations and also ensure parents have actually received them.

Thank you for choosing Cressy Road, we hope your family will enjoy being with us and look forward to getting to know your child and family in 2018.