



# The Cottage School Inc.

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## INFORMATION FOR NEW FAMILIES

*The Cottage School is a vibrant, non-sectarian community of children, parents and teachers which strives for active participation by all in the creation of an optimal learning environment.*

*Individuals are valued as unique and are nurtured and encouraged in a supportive atmosphere of small multi-age groups.*

*Meaningful learning experiences sustain a spirit of inquiry and a love of learning.*

### Cornerstones of Cottage School Philosophy

- Nurturing children's spirit of inquiry and love of learning
- Development of meaningful learning programs
- Respect for individual development and choice
- Development of a non-competitive environment for learning
- Respect for the environment and regular outdoor learning opportunities
- Respect for diverse values and beliefs
- Consultation and considered decision making between community members
- Careful use of resources.

### Core Values and Guiding Principles

- Development of the whole child
- Respect for individual differences and rates of progress
- Children are engaged in activities that stimulate and challenge them
- A safe, supportive environment for social development
- A commitment to 'best practice' in teaching and ongoing professional development of staff
- Children participate in a wide range of learning experiences and cultural activities
- Small class sizes and a 'homelike' learning environment
- Regular outdoor learning experiences
- Different modes of thinking are fostered
- Interaction across age ranges – in class groups and in play times
- Respect for other cultures and celebration of diversity
- A cooperatively managed school system
- A healthy and effective food policy
- Sustainability is practised
- Interaction between school and local community.

## **Goals for our students**

We believe that by working in small groups in a non-competitive, family atmosphere, our students will become confident, caring, competent, co-operative individuals able to adapt in a changing world.

We believe that they will be caring about themselves and aware of their feelings. They will be caring of others, tolerant of differences and beliefs. They will care for their belongings and the belongings of others. They will care for the environment and be aware of their role in society.

We believe that our students will have the skills to be co-operative with their friends, their classmates and with adults with whom they work.

We believe that our students will have the skills to be competent.

- They will develop competencies in basic skills
- They will have strategies for finding out and reporting information
- They will develop skills in various thinking modes
- They will develop competencies in a range of physical skills
- They will develop aesthetically, learning to appreciate literature, media and music
- They will grow creatively and technologically
- They will be competent in daily living skills and be able to carry out daily living tasks.

We believe also that our students will be confident: confident to express themselves, to make decisions, to make mistakes, to accept challenges, to take responsibility for their safety and their actions.

With the school supporting families and families supporting the school, we believe that our students will be competent, co-operative, caring persons, confident to learn and go forth.

## **INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT**

The academic program is designed to maintain children's love of learning and spirit of enquiry. It is meaningful, relevant and where possible, practical.

Learning occurs in an unpressured, stimulating environment. We allow children to develop at their own pace and we respect different learning styles.

We recognise that it is important to develop different modes of thinking.

We want children to be able to: -

- Pose good questions
- Generate a range of possible solutions
- Make reasonable decisions
- Choose appropriate strategies
- Critically evaluate
- Reflect on the ways they have solved a problem.

Good thinking skills help children to become self directed learners who take responsibility for their own learning.

We understand that learning is sequential and practise is necessary.

We acknowledge that parents, teachers and peers are powerful models.

Curriculum documents are available, updated and presented to the Government Registration Board.

The academic program is in line with the National Guidelines.

Grade 3 and Grade 5 children complete National Testing and throughout the school children's progress is carefully monitored.

Reporting to parents happens informally throughout the year when necessary and formally for all children in Term 2. This oral reporting allows opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss the children's progress. At the end of the year children receive a short positive written precis.

### **Implications for parents**

To understand that learning is developmental. To support you child through these stages it is important to:

- Foster their spirit of enquiry
- Take every opportunity to talk with them
- Enrol them in a library
- Read to them
- Wisely monitor TV and computer use.

Parents are encouraged to attend any discussion evenings on curriculum development or educational issues.

## **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

Success in all areas of life is linked to confidence and social competence

Social development is nurtured through: -

- Play
- Cooperative learning situations
- Games
- Mixed age grouping
- Drama
- Camps
- Parent participation.

Small groups at Cottage School enable children to work with different ages.

There is specific teaching of social skills and parents are asked to support each unit of work in this area.

At all times we expect children to interact positively.

As with other areas of development we recognise there are individual differences and some children need extra help. At times it may be necessary to liaise more closely with parents.

### **Implications for parents**

- Support the school's social awareness programs
- Encourage your child to be considerate and respectful of others
- Participate in any behaviour modification strategies if necessary.

## **EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

We nurture emotional development by:

- Recognising that self esteem is vital to well being
- Providing a positive, caring, challenging and stimulating environment.

Individual talent and effort is acknowledged.

Small groups, catering for individual needs, enable children to succeed.

All children participate in all activities and the variety of activities offered provide different opportunities for success.

We recognise the importance of self expression through the arts to emotional well being.

Ample opportunities for play provide a means for expressing emotions, understanding the self, others and the world they live in.

There are times when specific lessons teach children to feel comfortable with talking about their feelings.

Opportunities are taken to help children empathise but also to deal with inappropriate behaviour from others.

Parents, staff and children have written a supportive school document.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Physical Development is nurtured through a range of physical activities. Skills and game sessions are held throughout the week and during the year all children participate in a range of activities such as bike days, swimming, dance, environment days and camps.

We aim to help children understand the importance of physical fitness and develop in them an interest that they will carry through life.

The older children participate in a variety of activities such as surfing, abseiling, squash, golf, table tennis and lawn bowls.

As with other areas of the curriculum everyone participates. We expect the children to 'have a go' and support each other. The school doesn't field sports teams but many Cottage School children join outside clubs.

## **CAMPS**

The advantages of camps are numerous. As well as providing opportunities for learning and expanding children's horizons, children learn to be adaptable and responsible. Grades 3 - 6 children go three times a year, Grade 2 children twice a year, while Preps and Grade 1 children go to camp in November. The first experience away is in a homely atmosphere and Preps stay for one or two nights. By the time they are in the Primary years we expect that they will have two to three nights away - sometimes this will be in a tent.

### **Implications for parents**

- Children must be properly equipped with clothing and camping gear appropriate to the weather conditions
- The concept of camp, and time away from home, must be supported
- A camp job to ensure the smooth running of the camp will be assigned as necessary.

## **ENVIRONMENT DAYS**

During each term the children will participate in a number of excursions (Environment Days). The Kinders, Preps and Grade 1 go out for half a day and the older children go for the whole day.

Environment Days are important to all areas of the curriculum as they provide opportunities for children to learn through direct experience. They provide opportunities for play, stimulate children's imagination and give them an appreciation of the natural world.

The school bus makes Environment Days possible. The bus is equipped with seat belts and is regularly inspected by the Transport Commission. The Health and Safety policy outlines guidelines for camps and Environment Days.

### **Implications for parents**

- Children must be properly equipped with suitable clothes and footwear
- Environment Day planning takes into account weather conditions and will take place whatever the weather.

## **HEALTH**

Our program has been designed to help children know and care for themselves. On a two yearly rotation we employ the skills of Family Planning to talk about aspects of growing up. The school has a Supportive School Environment policy and a nutrition and hygiene policy.

## **NUTRITION**

Our food policy is very different from other schools. It is about sharing nutritious food, expanding our tastes and learning practical skills in preparation. We share fruit and vegetables at morning break; occasionally, and at the discretion of the classroom teacher, we share wholemeal sandwiches and salad at lunch and we drink water. Once a week we involve small groups of children in shopping and preparing lunch for the whole school. On special occasions and working bees parents and children come together and share a meal.

### **Implications for parents**

- Parents should ensure that children bring appropriate food to school
- Parents are asked to support their child by encouraging them to try different foods, particularly the weekly cooked lunch.

## **CULTURAL STUDIES**

Cultural studies help children to know the world, acknowledging different cultures and appreciating their heritage. It is not limited to time slots but permeates all learning. French is the language that is taught.

### **Implications for parents**

- Parents are asked to help children appreciate different cultures
- Parents are asked to help children dress in an appropriate costume on Cultural Day.

## **AESTHETIC AWARENESS/CREATIVITY**

Children's aesthetic awareness is enhanced by learning in pleasant surroundings with carefully chosen equipment and books.

Self expression is fostered through art, drama and play.

Creativity is an important mode of thinking which permeates the whole curriculum.

## **BELIEFS AND VALUES**

- The Cottage School is a non-denominational school with no religious affiliation. There is an expectation that children, staff and parents will respect the values and beliefs of others
- We seek to educate children to appreciate and be interested in a wide diversity of religions, cultures and beliefs
- We aim to minimise the commercialisation of festivals
- There is provision for joint decisions and consultation by coordinators and other teaching staff for involvement in any festivals, celebrations and activities.

## PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent participation is vital to Cottage School.

Parent participation helps keep fees lower and gives everyone a feeling of belonging and community spirit. Cottage School is a cooperative venture between staff and parents. Staff are approachable and we encourage parents to ask questions, seek advice and raise concerns. It's only by teachers and parents communicating that different perspectives are understood.

On joining the school you will be issued with a flow chart which indicates where you can seek answers to questions you might have.

### Parent responsibilities:

**FAMILY JOBS** assist the smooth running of the school. Parents need to be able to give time each week. There are a variety of jobs and everyone finds one to suit their skills and time schedules.

**WORKING BEES** are held 3 times a year and each family is expected to contribute 4 hours. These times also give you an opportunity to meet others and everyone comes together for a shared morning tea.

**FAIR** - This is held in November and is the school's main fundraiser. Everyone contributes to and works on a stall.

**MANURE** - We also dig sheep manure to raise funds.

**FUNDRAISING** – Any additional fundraising activities are welcomed provided they support the school's philosophy of non-commercialism, and comply with the school's Fundraising Charter.

## SETTLING-IN PERIOD

A child's first term at the school (for those children other than Kindergarten and Prep enrolments) will be a settling-in period. During this period, there will be regular meetings between parents and the child's teacher to discuss how the child is settling into the school and any concerns parents may have. Parents are welcome to talk with the teacher at other times as well.

At the end of the first full term a final meeting will be held with the teacher and a school representative to discuss how the child is progressing and to confirm ongoing enrolment.

If, in extreme circumstances, the school believes that the child has not and will not settle into the school in the future, then parents may be asked to withdraw their child at this stage. This decision will be made by the committee based on a belief that the child's behaviour does not and will not conform to the school's standards and is detrimental to the successful running of the school.

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# COTTAGE SCHOOL HAT GUIDELINES

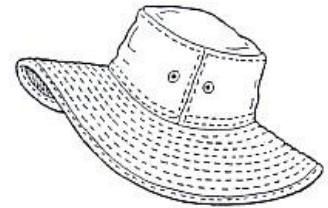
## Sun Smart information from the Cancer Council

### Which Type of Hat?

The Cancer Council recommends all students wear hats that provide good shade to the face, back of the neck and ears when outdoors.

### Broad-Brimmed Hats

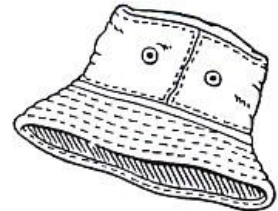
should have brims at least 7.5 cm wide. A broad brimmed hat that provides good shade can considerably reduce the exposure of UVR. The brim width for children under 10 should be proportional to the size of the child's head and ensure that their face is well shaded.



Broad-Brimmed Hat

### Bucket or Surfie Style Hats

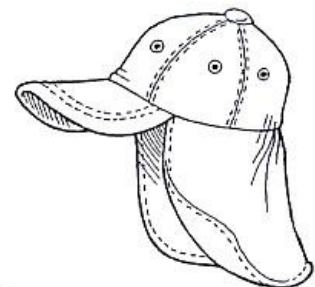
should have a deep crown and sit low on the head. The angled brim should be at least 6 cm and provide the face, neck and ears with plenty of shade. The brim width on bucket hats for pre-school Children should be proportional to size of the Child's head, ensuring that their face is sufficiently shaded (minimum of 5 cm as a rough guide).



Bucket Hat

### Legionnaire Hats

should have a flap that covers the neck and meets the sides of the front peak to provide protection to the side of the face.



Legionnaire Hat

**BASEBALL CAPS AND SUN VISORS ARE NOT RECOMMENDED AS THEY LEAVE THE EARS AND BACK OF THE NECK EXPOSED**

### Factors to consider when choosing a hat include:

- Good sun protection
- Practicality (which hat is safe for sport)
- Cost
- Safety
- Ventilation (if hat is to be used during physical activity).

## COTTAGE SCHOOL BACKPACK GUIDELINES

A few suggestions regarding your child's backpack may be useful. If a suitable purchase is made initially the backpack should last for all the primary school years. Packs can be purchased from camping shops. We prefer that you don't choose "commercial" bags (eg Bananas in Pyjamas, Batman etc).

Tear drop packs have proved to be very satisfactory and zips are much easier for young children to manage than clips. Also an outer pocket suitable for carrying sun-block is ideal.

On Environment Days the pack needs to carry a lunch box, drink flask, waterproof coat, sun-hat and sun-block. On camps, bathers and towel are often carried instead of a coat.

If you have any queries please see Michelle or Steph.

Recommendations by the Chiropractors Association of Australia and the Tasmanian Branch of the Physiotherapy Association state that backpacks should:

- have broad, padded and adjustable shoulder bands
- be no broader than the child's chest
- sit high on the hips and have a hip strap, adjustable to the size of the child
- be well padded for firm support on the part running down the spine.

Correct positioning:

- both shoulder straps should be worn, and the bag should be straight
- the bag surface should be in contact with the back
- the waistband should distribute the weight evenly onto the hips
- the top of the bag should be at shoulder height
- the bottom of the bag should sit level with the hollow of the lower back
- heavier items should be packed at the bottom of the bag



## THE COTTAGE SCHOOL

### REQUESTS

# NO NUTS

There are children enrolled at The Cottage School who have life threatening allergic reactions to NUTS.

For this reason we ask that NUTS are not brought to the school.

In highly allergic individuals ANAPHYLAXIS (a life threatening allergic reaction) can be provoked by **any** contact with nuts (ingested or physical contact).

Please be vigilant

- Do not send anything containing nut IN ANY FORM to the school.
- Use clean knives when making lunch for school.
- If children have nut butter for breakfast it is very important they wash their hands before coming to school.

**This rule must apply to  
ALL SCHOOL FUNCTIONS  
including Working Bees, School Camps, Environment Days,  
Bike Days, etc.**