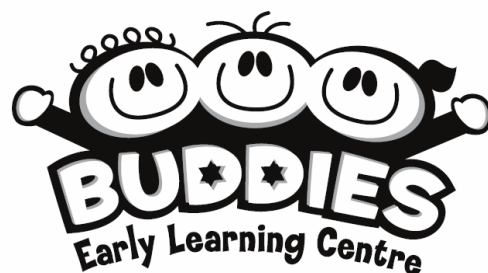


SMALL BUSINESS  
CHAMPION  
AWARDS  
STATE WINNER 2009

---

# Parents' Handbook 2010

Published: November 2009



## **INDEX**

|                                |    |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Shalom from the Founders ..... | 3  |
| Centre Information .....       | 4  |
| Centre Design .....            | 6  |
| Centre Staff .....             | 8  |
| General Studies Program .....  | 10 |
| Jewish Studies Program .....   | 12 |
| Parent Communication .....     | 14 |
| Family Involvement .....       | 16 |
| Classroom Routines .....       | 17 |
| Drop Off & Collection .....    | 19 |
| Kitchen & Meals .....          | 20 |
| Health & Safety .....          | 22 |
| General Administration .....   | 25 |
| <u>Appendices</u>              |    |
| Index of Centre Policies ..... | 27 |
| Fees Policy .....              | 28 |

### Attachments

Staff Team 2010  
Buddies 2010 Calendar  
NCAC Quality Profile

## SHALOM FROM THE FOUNDERS

Almost five years ago we went searching for a quality kindergarten that could provide us with the flexibility of year round, long day care and give our children a uniquely Jewish experience as well. When we couldn't find what we looking for, we decided to create our own.

This year Buddies' celebrates its 4<sup>th</sup> birthday and there is much to be proud of. Since opening we have provided care and education for more than 150 local families. In 2008 our practices were audited over two days by the National Childcare Accreditation Council; we achieved a rating of Good to High Quality in every area, well above the Satisfactory standard required as a minimum for accreditation. In 2009 we were recognised as a benchmark centre for excellence, winning in the child care category of the Victorian Small Business Champion Awards.

In 2010, we remain as passionate about the place as ever, motivated by the vision of a centre that tickles the senses and stimulates the imagination, and where:

... children feel happy, challenged, loved, and inspired about being Jewish!  
... parents feel confident, involved and well informed; and  
... staff feel supported and empowered.

2010 sees us introduce some wonderful new initiatives. These include Hebrew sessions every day, a Parent Welcome Night in January, a communal model seder held off site, a rejuvenated kitchen garden, Family Education nights, walking excursions to Bentleigh Library, and new teacher rosters that will deliver greater continuity of care and programming.

We continue with the initiatives launched in the second half of 2009 that have delivered such huge benefits, including our Weekly Bulletin, our year-end DVD of photo highlights, developmental checklists for Parent/Teacher Interviews, PhysEd activities, communal Kaballat Shabbats on Friday afternoons and communal Chaggim celebrations.

Then of course there is everything else that has differentiated Buddies from the start – including our General and Jewish Studies curriculum, our weekly enrichment sessions in music and movement, our literacy program, our bi-lingual staff, our home-cooked meals, and our investment in excellent facilities, staff and resources.

The care and education of children at Buddies is a team effort. In 2010 our team comprises an outstanding group of people, each of whom brings a mix of skill, passion and positive energy to our centre. Together they are ready to engage your child in an exceptional learning experience.

We hope that as you read this Handbook, you will become as excited as we are about what Buddies can offer your child and your family. 2010 is going to be a great year and we are so pleased that you will be a part of it.

Sam & Darren Bihary  
(email [sfbihary@optusnet.com.au](mailto:sfbihary@optusnet.com.au) or mobile 0423 834 593)

## CENTRE INFORMATION

### Centre Details

Provider Number: 407235047X  
 Address: 143 Jasper Rd. Bentleigh 3204  
 Phone: (03) 9557 8772  
 Fax: (03) 9557 8773  
 Email: [info@buddies.net.au](mailto:info@buddies.net.au)  
 Website: <http://www.buddies.net.au>  
 ABN: 67 112 010 803  
 Ownership: Buddies is privately owned by husband and wife Darren & Sam Bihary.

### Operating Hours

The centre operates with extended hours for 51 weeks of the year from 7.30am until 6pm Monday through Friday.

### Office Hours

The centre office is open between 8am - 4.30pm daily, closing for lunch between 12 – 1pm. An answering machine takes phone messages when the office is closed or temporarily unattended during the day, and the messages are checked regularly by the staff on duty. The Centre Director responds to emails promptly during office hours, and emails for teachers are passed on at the first available opportunity.

### Academic Year

In 2010 the Buddies year commences on Monday January 4 and concludes on Friday December 24. A Graduation Ceremony in late November marks the end of the formal academic year. The year is split into four quarters in sync with the Victorian school terms.

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| Quarter 1 | Monday January 4 until Friday April 9     |
| Quarter 2 | Monday April 12 until Friday July 9       |
| Quarter 3 | Monday July 12 until Friday October 1     |
| Quarter 4 | Monday October 4 until Friday December 24 |

The centre will close at 6pm on 24 December 2010 and re-open at 7.30am on 3 January 2011.

### Centre Closures

The centre is closed on the following Public Holidays in 2010:

|                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Australia Day   | Tuesday January 26 |
| Labour Day      | Monday March 8     |
| Good Friday     | Friday April 2     |
| Easter Monday   | Monday April 5     |
| ANZAC Day       | Monday April 26    |
| Queens Birthday | Monday June 14     |
| Cup Day         | Tuesday November 2 |

### Curriculum Planning Days

A Curriculum Planning Day involving all permanent staff is held offsite each quarter, providing an important opportunity for the team to collaborate on the program, evaluate policies and practices, and undertake training. Relief staff are in attendance at the centre. In 2010 the Curriculum Planning Days will be held on: March 2, June 8, August 31 and November 23.

### **Kitchen Planning Days**

A Kitchen Planning Day involving the centre cook, director and owner is held offsite each quarter and includes a review of the menu and food safety/ handling issues. Parent input into the agenda is always welcome.

### **Family Assistance Office**

Buddies is an approved child care service so the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the 50% Child Care Rebate are available to assist with the cost of fees. The centre's provider number is 407235047X.

### **QIAS**

Buddies is an active participant in the Quality Improvement and Accreditation System (QIAS), which aims to provide children in long day care with quality experiences that foster all aspects of development. Centres that meet QIAS standards become accredited by the National Childcare Accreditation Council. The standards are based on the following 7 areas of care:

1. Staff relationships with children and peers
2. Partnerships with families
3. Programming and evaluation
4. Children's Experiences and Learning
5. Protective Care and Safety
6. Health, Nutrition and Wellbeing
7. Managing to Support Quality

In our first accreditation decision in 2008, Buddies achieved a rating of Good to High Quality in every area, well above the required minimum standard of Satisfactory. Our Quality Profile is proudly displayed in our foyer and attached at the end of this Handbook.

### **Small Business Champion Awards**

Buddies is proud to be the Victorian winner in the child care centre category of the Small Business Champion Awards, announced in October 2009. Entrants are judged on multiple criteria, including quality of programs and services, relevance to and involvement in the local community, development of staff and general achievements, and our win recognises Buddies as a benchmark centre for excellence.

### **Centre Policies**

Extensive policies are documented to cover every aspect of centre operations and are updated continuously in accordance with our commitment to continual improvement. All policies are governed by the Children's Services Act and Regulations. Throughout this Handbook our most important policies have been summarised. A complete list of policies has been included as an appendix. All centre policies are available in our office for you to review at any time. Policies may not be taken off site. Throughout the year we will keep you advised of policy changes via the Weekly Bulletin.

## **CENTRE DESIGN**

### **Facilities**

Buddies is a purpose built centre designed to maximise the children's comfort and stimulation, with the warmth and intimacy of a family home. The centre comprises two classrooms, children's bathroom and nappy change area, a playground, a rubber-soft-fall yard, a vegetable garden, a kitchen, laundry with shower, staff room, adult toilet, office, foyer and car park. No smoking is permitted on centre grounds. No foreign food may be brought into the centre.

### **Class Sizes**

The centre is licensed for 47 children. Classes average between 22 - 25 children per day, depending on the mix of full and part timers. Minimum enrolment is one day per week. Both classes have their own teacher, who works with an assistant alongside at all times.

### **Heating & Air Conditioning**

The centre is fitted with advanced heating and cooling systems that enable rooms to be kept at a comfortable temperature year round. We recommend that children be dressed in layers so they can easily adjust between indoor and outdoor playtimes, and choose how to undress for rest time.

### **Internal Décor**

Our centre has been designed in neutral colour tones and using natural materials wherever possible, with limited equipment that is fixed in place either indoors or outside, to create an environment that can continuously be transformed to stimulate the children's thinking and imagination. Children's projects are displayed proudly throughout the centre. Classroom spaces are open plan, allowing separate areas to be created for quiet time, drama/ make-believe, manipulative/ construction work, and sensory activities including painting and pasting.

### **Children's Bathroom**

The children's bathroom is equipped with 3 child-sized toilets and nappy change facilities (with steps). Staff provide assistance as required and windows allow for constant supervision of children's toileting and hand-washing.

### **Class Toys & Supplies**

We maintain our own library of children's musical CDs and storybooks, but always appreciate loans from parents, especially items from overseas and in different languages. Our arts & craft supplies are replenished throughout the year and twice annually we order new toys and equipment. Our first order is placed in February after we have assessed the needs and interests of the new class groups. Parent ideas are always welcome.

### **Environmental Friendliness**

Your assistance in helping us be environmentally friendly is appreciated. Clean paper is used for Shabbat notes and specific projects, but at all other times we are grateful for paper that we can recycle in the classroom - sheets only need to be plain on one side. We have labelled recycling bins throughout the centre and a compost bin outside, and our unused water from jugs and troughs are emptied onto our garden beds. As much as possible, natural sunlight is used in preference to electricity in the foyer and corridor, and lights in our classrooms are turned off when rooms are not in use. Children are taught to respect and care

for their environment, and to help us in assessing whether items can be repaired, re-used or recycled before disposing.

### **Environmental Audit**

A full environmental audit has been performed to confirm that the land on which Buddies is built poses no health or environmental risk.

### **Security Code Entry**

The security code for the front door is changed annually and you will be advised of the new code at the start of the year. Please take care to watch that no child slips through the door when you arrive or leave, and to pull the door firmly closed behind you.

### **Prams/ Bicycles/ Car Seats/ Animals**

There is an undercover area outside the front door and within the security gate for storage of prams, bicycles and car seats. Please do not leave these items in the foyer.

No animals are allowed on centre premises without prior permission. You are welcome to tie up pets in the undercover area but please keep leashes short so that families can enter/ exit without trouble.

### **Car Parking**

A short-term car park is available for parent use. The six car spaces at the top of the car park are designed for forward entry whilst the two spaces to the left of the entry driveway are to be reversed into. If using the top car spaces, cars should be driven right up to the fence to ensure that someone else can do a quick drop-off and park their car behind you. Please do not park within the circular driveway or across neighbours' driveways and watch for pedestrians and cyclists when exiting. We appreciate parent cooperation in parking on the street if coming to the centre for an extended visit or meeting. If parking a 4WD on the street, please avoid the car space between the driveway entry and exit as this can block visibility for cars exiting the centre car-park.

### **Lockers**

All children have an assigned, clearly named locker in the corridor. Part timers may share a locker with another child who attends on days they are absent, so it is important that these lockers are emptied daily. All lockers (including those of full timers) need to be emptied for cleaning on the first Friday of each month, or any belongings left will be put in the Lost Property basket in the foyer.

Part timers who share a locker and book in for extra days should store their bag on top of the lockers, if their own shared locker is not available to them on that day. A locker map is displayed at either end of the corridor with all locker assignments.

### **Parent Pigeon Holes**

Each family has an assigned, named Pigeon Hole in the corridor. Pigeon Holes are organised by class, in alphabetical order by surname. Please check your pigeon hole daily. Parents who are living separately can request a second pigeon hole and duplicate of all correspondence. You are welcome to use the pigeon holes to circulate party and play-date invitations (in named envelopes please) – to distribute other material please check with our office first. If you are having an event and will not be inviting the whole class, please consider mailing the invites as the children do notice when they are excluded. Any inserts are the responsibility of parents; staff members are unable to distribute material on your behalf.

## **CENTRE STAFF**

### **Staff "Family"**

The care and education of the children at Buddies is a team effort. The team comprises a Director, Cook, Teachers, Assistants and the Centre Owner – and all team members have input into the program, routine and policies at the centre and spend time in both classrooms each week. Children are taught to address any staff member joining them in the classroom as their "teacher". All staff and children gather together for Kabbalat Shabbat, Chaggim celebrations and regular communal lunches. Together Time is also scheduled at the top and tail end of each day.

### **Teachers**

A Class Teacher in each room is responsible for planning, delivering and evaluating the educational program and maintaining the children's developmental records. A third Support Teacher covers lunch breaks and works in each classroom two afternoons a week when the Class Teacher is on planning. All teachers are at the centre five days a week and have permanent weekly shifts designed to provide stability, focus and continuity of care:

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Junior Room Class Teacher: | 7.30am – 4.30pm (incl. Together Time 7.30am – 9am) |
| Senior Room Class Teacher: | 9.00am – 6.00pm (incl. Together Time 4.30pm – 6pm) |
| Support Teacher:           | 10.00am – 4.30pm                                   |

### **Assistants**

One assistant works alongside the teacher in each classroom at all times. Extra assistants may be rostered to provide support during busy times of the day (eg. nap time) or busy times of the year (eg. the January settling in period). We operate with a team of assistants, many of whom balance their work commitments with studies in childcare. We take care to rotate the assistants through both classrooms so that they can form strong relationships with all the children and teachers, and are available to work a variety of shifts through the week.

### **Relief Staff**

We use our own team of relief staff to cover staff meetings, sick leave, training and holidays, and employ outside agency staff as a last resort. All relief staff members undergo an orientation program to ensure they are familiar with our policies and children.

### **Formal Kinder Program**

Our formal kinder program runs starts at 9am and concludes at 4.30pm each day. We welcome the opportunity to include children with both full and part time bookings and take special care to plan a program that can accommodate changing group dynamics. Please be mindful that your child may not be able to participate in all the day's scheduled activities if they arrive late or are collected early.

### **Together Time**

Between 7.30 – 9am in the morning, and 4.30 – 6pm in the evening, all children and staff join in one classroom or outside for Together Time. In Quarters 1 and 2, indoor Together Time is always in the Junior Room as this allows our new juniors to remain in a familiar environment. In Quarters 3 & 4, indoor Together Time may happen in the Senior Room and is an important part of our transition program. In 2010 our Junior Room team supervises morning Together Time and our Senior Room team supervises afternoon Together Time.

### **Staff Uniforms**

We aim to create a relaxed and friendly 'home-like' environment at our centre and it is for this reason that staff members do not wear uniforms. Photos of all staff members, including relief staff, are displayed in the foyer.

### **Bilingual Staff**

Hebrew and Russian speaking staff are included wherever possible within the staff mix to support the needs of our ESL (English-as-a-Second-Language) families. When staff converse with a child in Hebrew or Russian, phrases are always repeated in English to educate that child and aid the understanding of other children within hearing range.

### **Staff Leave**

Our educational program runs continuously for 51 weeks of the year and staff annual leave is scheduled to minimise disruption as far as possible. No leave is scheduled in the first 6 weeks of the year to facilitate successful settling-in. Staff members are encouraged to take leave in December (after the formal Graduation Ceremony) to recharge for the new year. During the year, especially over Jewish and school holiday periods, rosters may be changed to enable team members to cover for staff on leave and avoid the need to employ Agency staff.

### **Staff Breaks**

Our rosters include one hour lunch breaks, as well as morning and afternoon tea-breaks. We ask for parent cooperation in not disturbing staff or entering our staff room while they are taking their well-earned breaks from the classroom.

### **Teachers' Planning Time**

Our Class Teachers have planning time scheduled two afternoons a week. During these times, our Support Teacher works in their classroom. Parent meetings (in person or by phone) may be scheduled during these times. Please make an appointment through the office.

### **Staff Absences**

The Weekly Bulletin will update you on planned staff absences (for holidays, study or training) and any roster changes. For unplanned absences, notice of relief staff is posted in the foyer.

### **Children of Staff**

Some members of staff have children at the centre and may attend functions in a parent capacity or be in the classroom outside of their work hours doing drop offs/ pick ups. If you are informed that a staff member is off duty, we ask that you please respect their privacy accordingly.

### **Students**

We enjoy hosting tertiary students on placement and school students on work experience and you will be notified of their visits via the Weekly Bulletin. All visiting students are supervised by staff and are not left alone with or in charge of a group of children.

### **Weekly Staff Memo**

A weekly staff memo is circulated to all staff (permanent and relief) to ensure all team members are well informed of changes to children's routines, parent feedback and new policies/ practices. All staff are required to have read the memo before commencing their first shift of the week.

# GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM

## Group & Individual Programs

The General Studies program in each classroom is planned in response to the observed needs, abilities and interests of the group and provides a balance of active and passive play, indoor and outdoor play, messy and clean play, quiet and noisy play, and individual and group experiences. From February, the Class Teachers also focus on a small sub-set of children each month, reviewing their developmental files and adapting the group program to reflect goals for each of them individually. These programs are then evaluated and guide the ongoing priorities for each child. Program overviews are included in each Quarterly Newsletter and displayed on the Classroom Notice Boards.

## Literacy Program

A literacy program is delivered twice weekly in our Senior Room. Sessions are one hour in length and run on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 2.30pm. The program is delivered by Buddies' staff trained in the curriculum and teaching methods of "Little Learners Love Literacy", in which each letter of the alphabet is represented by a special pictogram character that has been designed to represent the sound which that letter makes. The program incorporates songs, books, games, and craft. Children learn phonic skills and phonemic awareness, language skills (listening, speaking and communicating), and in time, whole word recognition. More information about Little Learners Love Literacy can be found at [www.littlelearnersloveliteracy.com.au](http://www.littlelearnersloveliteracy.com.au).

## Physical Education

Opportunities are provided for the children to be physically active outdoors every day. Our playground climbing equipment is rearranged according to the strengths and abilities of the children and both classes participate in regular PhysEd sessions in our rubber-soft-fall yard, including different games, drills and directed play all designed to improve concentration, increase co-ordination and build self-confidence.

## Enrichment

Music and Movement enrichment sessions run weekly in both classes from the start of February until the end of November, with short breaks coinciding with the term 1, 2 and 3 Victorian school term holidays. Part timers who do not attend Buddies on the enrichment day/s may book in to attend the sessions for a fee. Payment must be made in advance for the quarter and parents need to stay on-site; please speak with our office.

- **Music Enrichment:** Hey Dee Ho runs on Wednesday afternoons at 2.30pm in the Senior Room and at 3.00pm in the Junior Room. Hey Dee Ho is a structured music education program introducing new themes and musical activities each week with puppets, props and instruments and featuring songs ranging from traditional nursery rhymes to Hi-5 and Wiggles, as well as different languages and basic 'signing'. More information about Hey Dee Ho can be found at [www.heydeehomusic.com.au](http://www.heydeehomusic.com.au).
- **Movement Enrichment:** Kinderdance runs on Monday afternoons at 2.30pm in the Senior Room and at 3.00pm in the Junior Room. Kinderdance classes promote physical development, motor skill development and self-confidence in children, by blending educational concepts with various forms of movement, dance, and gymnastics. The programs help develop gross motor skills, movement creativity, fitness, and body awareness. Each class is taught using lesson plans which incorporate original and traditional age-appropriate music and songs. More information about Kinderdance can be found at [www.kinderdanceoz.com](http://www.kinderdanceoz.com).

### **Kitchen Garden & Compost**

We have two vegetable gardens, a mini vegetable garden and a herb garden at the centre and gardening activities feature regularly in our program. Children are involved in planting, weeding and maintaining the garden beds and in picking, washing, cooking/ preparing and eating our home-grown produce. A professional horticulture service is engaged by the centre to oversee our planting activities each season. Vegetables we have grown in the past include: corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, lettuce, zucchini, silverbeet - and in our herb garden: parsley, mint, coriander, basil and rosemary. In 2010 a compost bin in our garden will enable the children to learn about the importance of recycling fruit and vegetable waste.

### **Cooking Experiences**

Cooking experiences are included in our program in the lead-up to each Jewish festival and where relevant to other class themes. Consideration is always given to children with special dietary needs. At the start of the year you will be asked to sign a Standing Authority giving permission for your child to participate. Past cooking experiences have included: damper (Australia Day), anzac biscuits (Anzac Day), hamentashen (Purim), apple muffins and honeyjoys (Rosh Hashana).

### **Dress Up Days**

As well as dressing up for our Chaggim celebrations, we also schedule a number of Dress Up days during the year linked to class themes or simply as an excuse for fun! In 2010 our Dress Up days include Green & Gold Day (before Australia Day), Crazy Hair Day, Pyjama Day, Footy Day (before Grand Final Weekend), Jeans for Genes Day and Crazy Hat Day. A School Uniform Dress-Up Day is held in December for children in the Senior Room and is an exciting culmination of their time at Buddies.

### **Incursions**

Confirmed incursions in 2010 include the Matzah Baking Factory in Quarter 1 and the Shofar Making Factory in Quarter 3. Additional incursions are scheduled throughout the year as learning themes evolve, with dates advised in the Weekly Bulletin. We love to involve our parents so please let us know if you have a skill or profession that we could include as an upcoming incursion. Past parent-led incursions have included: Karate, Yoga, Dentist, Doctor, Nurse, Didgeridoo, Drama, and Ball Skills.

### **Library Excursions**

Visits to the Bentleigh Library for storytime and book borrowing will be scheduled from Quarter 3 for the Senior Room class. Your permission will be required before your child can participate in the Walking Excursions to and from the library, which is located at the intersection of Jasper and Centre Roads.

### **Staff Cameras and Computers**

You may observe the teachers or their assistants using digital cameras or laptops in the classroom. Both are supplied by the centre to assist with the recording of child observations and/ or the implementation of class projects. Please appreciate that for confidentiality reasons, staff may be unable to discuss in detail the reason behind certain activities being recorded.

## **JEWISH STUDIES PROGRAM**

### **Calendar of Festivals**

The Jewish Studies program is a sensory experience involving food, music, stories, arts & craft, games, dramatic play, and the Hebrew language. We spend 2 – 5 weeks exploring the customs of each Jewish festival and take a flexible, child-centred approach that promotes exploration and free choice. Our goal is to relate each festival back to universal themes and ideas that enable the children to connect not just with the Jewish world but with the world at large, and enable the Jewish Studies and General Studies programs to blend and overlap.

### **Chaggim Activity Days**

Our study of each Jewish festival culminates in a communal celebration at the centre involving all children and staff. The day involves dressing up, participating in activity stations and, of course, lots of festive food. The Jewish Festivals that we celebrate at Buddies are Tu Bishvat, Purim, Pesach, Yom Ha'atzmaut, Lag Ba'Omer, Shavuot, Rosh Hashana, Sukkot and Chanukah. Where festivals fall on a weekend, our celebration is usually scheduled in the week prior.

### **Hebrew**

Hebrew ("Ivrit") is included in our program to arouse children's interest in Jewish culture and enhance their learning about the Jewish festivals. A Hebrew mat session is held in each classroom every morning, involving story time, singing and games. Children learn general words and phrases, including colours, numbers and everyday objects, as well as the words for ritual items relating to each Jewish festival. Transliteration of the Hebrew songs/ phrases/ words used at the centre are provided wherever possible for parent and staff reference.

### **Model Passover Seder**

In 2010 a communal seder experience will be held at the Community Hall in Higgins Road. Your permission will be required before your child can participate in the Walking Excursion to and from the Hall.

### **Shabbat**

Fridays at Buddies provide an opportunity for the children to experience the traditions and values of Shabbat, a day dedicated to rest, reflection, family and friends. In the morning children bake challah and prepare special Shabbat letters. In the afternoon children and staff gather together for a Kabbalat Shabbat experience including candle-lighting, kiddush grape juice and challah, the collection of charity "Tzedaka", singing and storytime. Kabbalat Shabbat starts at 3pm and runs for approximately 30 minutes. Family visitors are always welcome.

### **Tzedakah**

We collect money/ Tzedakah on Fridays to donate to different causes – the causes we support change each quarter and are advised in the Newsletter. We encourage you to deposit some coins in a named, sealed envelope in the Collection Box in our foyer on Friday morning. The coins will be given out to your child in the afternoon for them to place in our Tzedakah boxes during Kabbalat Shabbat.

### **Imma & Abba Roster**

An Imma & Abba roster is published quarterly in advance in the Newsletter and reminders are given in the Weekly Bulletin. If you have any special scheduling requests for the upcoming

quarter, these should be forwarded to the office 4 weeks before the end of the current quarter. The office is unable to coordinate any swapping of days once the roster is published, nor can children have make-up days if they are absent on their assigned day. You are welcome to use the class lists and pigeon holes to coordinate swapping of days directly with fellow parents. Please inform the office of any swaps that are agreed upon.

## **PARENT COMMUNICATION**

### **Emails**

Parent memos, newsletters and the Weekly Bulletin are distributed via email. Please ensure that we have an email address that is checked regularly. If you would like us to send correspondence to multiple email addresses (eg. home, work, grandparents, etc) please let our office know.

### **Buddies Bulletin**

An email bulletin is distributed every Friday to update you on the week just ended and the week ahead. The Bulletin is our most important method of parent communication.

### **Quarterly Newsletter**

A comprehensive Parents Newsletter is published at the start of each quarter to provide more in-depth information regarding the curriculum, policy changes, and upcoming events. In line with our environmental sustainability policy, the newsletter is distributed via email.

### **Parent Welcome Night**

A Parent Welcome Night is held in January to provide new and returning families with information regarding the Jewish and General Studies curriculum, room routines, enrichment sessions, centre events and policies, as well as the opportunity to meet one another and members of the 2010 staff team. All families are expected to be represented.

### **Daily Checklist**

A daily checklist is completed in both classrooms to record your child's meals and nap times. The checklist is posted outside the classroom door.

### **Class Communication Book**

A communication notebook is located outside each classroom where you can leave messages for the teachers

### **Class Notice Board**

A notice board is located in each classroom with information on the class routines and messages for parents from the class teachers.

### **Parent Teacher Interviews**

Each child has a developmental file kept at the centre containing teacher observations, programs and evaluations. A formal Parent/ Teacher interview is held in June, giving teachers the opportunity to provide a face-to-face update on their observations and expand on areas of relevance. Teachers also summarise the results of a Developmental Assessment that they have completed and discuss children's readiness for transition to school/ senior room. The Developmental Checklist we use is circulated prior to the meeting so you can familiarise yourself with it. Interviews are held during the day on site at Buddies.

### **Online Photo Albums**

Digital photo albums are uploaded for key centre events and activities, including Jewish holiday celebrations, incursions and special visits. The photo albums can be accessed via the

Buddies website at [www.buddies.net.au](http://www.buddies.net.au). You will be notified of new album additions via the Weekly Bulletin.

### **Year End DVD Compile**

It is our pleasure to provide all families with a DVD of photo highlights from the year at our Graduation Ceremony.

### **Centre Paperwork**

A selection of administrative forms is available in the foyer. These include: Notice of Absence, Request for Change of Booking, Request for Change of Routine, Payment of Fees, Notice of Holidays. Forms can be left in the locked foyer letterbox when the office is unattended or the Director is busy. Please note that all centre forms (and any additional notes of instruction) must be completed in English.

### **Website**

Various parent resources are available on our website, together with copies of our administrative forms. Our website is [www.buddies.net.au](http://www.buddies.net.au).

### **Donations**

Your trash is often our treasure. We will keep you advised of our "wish lists" via the Weekly Bulletin. Any donation of goods/ toys to the centre must be approved by the Director, who will assess suitability/ safety/ need. Please do not be offended if a donation is kindly declined.

## **FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**

### **Parent Helpers**

Notices are posted regularly at the centre calling for parent helpers to participate in different activities. Throughout the year you will be invited to special cultural events and class celebrations and can volunteer to spend time in the classroom sharing a special skill or just your enthusiasm. Please liaise with your Class Teacher.

### **Birthday Cakes**

It is our pleasure to bake a cake for each child's birthday and coordinate a communal celebration involving all children and staff at morning tea time. Parents and extended family members are encouraged to attend. To coordinate dates please liaise with the Centre Director at least one month prior to your child's birthday; any changes then need a minimum one week's notice. Parents are not expected to supply non-food party favours or activities for the class, but if you would like to do so, please liaise with our office.

### **Family Social Events**

A social event is held each quarter to provide an opportunity for children and staff to meet and mingle, together with their extended families. We hope that you will join us at our Family Picnic in January, our Birthday Party (and annual Reunion) in June, a twilight event in our Sukkah in September and our Chanukah Break-Up Party in December.

### **Centre Celebrations**

Two full centre celebrations are held offsite each year; our communal model seder in Quarter 1 and our Graduation Ceremony in Quarter 4. The support of parents and extended family members ensures these events are highlights of our year.

### **Family Ed Nights**

A Family Education Night is held each quarter, providing a fresh perspective on different Jewish themes. In offering these events, we partner up again with Jewish Informal Educator Tal Spinrad. Current and alumni families are invited to attend. To accommodate larger numbers, the Education Nights in 2010 will be held at Bentleigh Progressive Synagogue on Centre Road.

### **Charity & Fundraising**

We enjoy supporting various charities throughout the year and try to involve families as much as possible. Our Weekly Bulletin and Quarterly Newsletter will update you on the causes we are supporting. Charities that we have supported in the past include: Daffodil Day, Jeans for Genes Day, Red Nose Day, and Biggest Morning Tea. Please note that we do not believe in asking parents to participate in working bees or fundraising for the centre.

### **Training & Development Sessions**

Training & Development sessions are held for the Buddies staff each quarter and when subject matter is relevant, invitations are extended to Buddies parents. Past sessions have included: Anaphylaxis Management, First Aid, Guiding Children to Positive Behaviour, and Eating & Exercising for Health. We also use our Weekly Bulletin and quarterly Newsletter to update you on other educational events running in the local community.

## CLASSROOM ROUTINES

### Flexible Routine

Our daily routine provides structure to our day yet remains flexible so that we can take full advantage of changing weather, special visitors, birthdays or other unexpected events. The routine is designed to promote independence, allowing enough time for children to do things for themselves and ensuring that transition between activities is relaxed and unhurried.

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 7.30 – 9am     | Together Time   |
| 9am – 12pm     | Indoor/ Outdoor Kinder Program & Hebrew Mat Session     |
| 12 – 12.30pm   | Lunch time (served 11.45am in Junior Room in Quarter 1) |
| 12.30 – 2.30pm | Rest Time   |
| 2.30 – 3.30pm  | Enrichment  |
| 3.30 – 4.30pm  | Indoor/ Outdoor Kinder Program                          |
| 4.30 – 6pm     | Together Time   |

### Routine Changes

We follow consistent routines in our classrooms, especially for toileting, rest time and meal time. Teachers evolve their room routines based on the observed needs of the children, and update families on any changes in each Quarterly Newsletter. If you want to request that staff follow a different routine for your child, please complete a Routine Change Request Form available in the foyer, and provide this to your Class Teacher.

### Toileting

Children are given frequent reminders throughout the day to use the toilet, and always after meals and before rest periods. Children entering the senior room must be fully toilet trained. In the junior room, staff will assist with the toilet training process, in consultation with parents and after children have settled in.

### Rest Time

All children have a rest period after lunch each day. Quiet activities are provided for children who do not sleep or wake early. In the senior room, naps are progressively shortened for the children still sleeping, and then eliminated entirely to prepare for the start of school. Sleep times are recorded on the Daily Summary Sheet for your reference.

### Children's Clothing

Children should be dressed in sturdy, weather-appropriate clothing that allows freedom of movement and promotes independence and fingernails kept short to prevent scratching incidents. Children wearing inappropriate clothing may be changed into something more suitable from their own supply or that of the centre's, or may be unable to participate in certain activities. Our Dressing for Buddies information sheet is on the website and in our foyer, with more explanation about the clothing we discourage and suggested alternatives.

### Smocks

The centre provides children with protective art smocks for messy play and uses only water based paints and textas.

### Children's Shoes

Shoes are worn at all times unless for specific activities, ie. sand play or music and movement sessions. Please ensure shoes are named. Please avoid shoelaces unless your child can re-tie

them without assistance, and avoid slippers, gum boots, thongs and ill-fitting crocs as these can be dangerous when running/ climbing/ dancing.

### **Spare Clothes**

All children are required to bring a complete change of clothes every day (including socks and underwear), in case of accidents or messy play. All clothing should be clearly named (full name or first name plus initial). The centre has a supply of spare clothes for emergencies, however many of the children do not feel comfortable wearing clothes that are ill-fitting or not their own so please bear this in mind. If centre clothes are sent home on loan, we ask that you launder and return them promptly.

### **Bags**

Your child's spare clothes should be sent each day in a named bag/ back-pack that can be opened easily by your child and that will fit in our lockers.

### **Sunscreen**

The centre's sunscreen is applied to children before going outdoors. If you want to supply your own named sunscreen, you will need to complete a Routine Change Request Form if you have not already done so on your enrolment form.

### **Sunsmart Clothing**

Children who are not dressed in suitable sun-protective clothing will be required to play in designated shaded areas only. Clothing should cover as much skin as possible. Singlets or strappy dresses do not offer protection and are not recommended.

### **Hats**

The centre provides every child with a legionnaire hat. These are worn outside during Quarters 1 and 4. During the colder months of Quarters 2 & 3 you are welcome to send a warm hat/ beanie with your child for outdoor play.

### **Fitted & Flat Sheets**

All children are required to bring a fitted and a flat cot-sized sheet for use during rest time. Sheets are kept in an assigned bed-linen bag and sent home weekly for washing. Where sheets are not returned the following week, a small fee is charged per day for the use of centre sheets to cover the cost of laundering. Pillows and blankets are not needed as our sleep mats are extra thick and our room is kept warm.

### **Toys from Home**

We discourage toys from home as it can be devastating if they get broken or lost. The important exception is a comfort toy for rest time or an item for Show & Tell. Any items from home must be clearly labelled and will be put away after their use. The burden of responsibility for any toys/ property sent to the centre remains with parents.

### **Behaviour Management**

We believe in guiding children to positive behaviour, in a way that respects their dignity and stage of development. Where a child exhibits challenging behaviour that is ongoing or puts other children or staff at risk, staff will consult with the parents to develop a plan for successful change. Please be aware when spending time in our classroom that you may observe these programs being implemented. Staff will be able to advise you that the child's program is not part of our normal routine, but cannot disclose the details to you.

## **DROP OFF & COLLECTIONS**

### **Attendance Book**

It is a legal requirement that children are signed in and out of the centre each day. Our attendance book is kept in the foyer to ensure that drop-off in the classroom can be made with minimal fuss. Please take care to announce your arrival and departure to staff on duty.

### **Morning Drop Offs**

We ask for your cooperation in keeping drop-offs quick to avoid distressing your child or other children whose parents have just left. It also prevents congestion in the car park. If you are concerned at any time after drop-off you are welcome to call the office for an update on how your child has settled in. Please use the Classroom Communication Book for any messages to teachers, to ensure their attention is not diverted from the other children in their care and especially if they are running a mat session with the class. Staff are on hand to provide assistance in settling children into an activity, or helping them join a group activity that is underway. Children taking a long time to settle may be taken outside to avoid distressing the group.

### **Authorised Collections**

When signing in your child, you are required to indicate when your child will be collected and by whom, using full names and not descriptions like "myself" or "dad" or "nana". If during the day these collection details change and the child will be collected by someone other than a person listed on your Child Collection Authority, please leave a message by phone or email. You will always be called if an unauthorised person arrives to collect your child, or an authorised person arrives whose identity cannot be established.

### **Collection by Either Parent**

Children will be allowed to leave with either parent, whether or not they were listed in the Attendance Book that day, unless a court order is on file.

### **Collection by Siblings**

Children will be allowed to leave with any sibling, provided they are listed on the Child Collection Authority in your enrolment form.

### **Collection by Emergency Contact Persons**

Children will be allowed to leave with any person listed on the Child Collection Authority in your enrolment form, whether or not they were listed in the Attendance Book that day.

### **Late Pick Ups**

The centre closes at 6pm. If you arrive after this time you will be asked to counter sign a late-collection timesheet. Applicable penalty fees will be added to your next monthly statement. Two staff members will remain with any uncollected child.

### **Admission before 7.30am**

If you arrive before 7.30am and staff are on site, you may be admitted but are required to remain with your child until the centre opens. This is a licensing and insurance requirement.

## KITCHEN & MEALS

### Meals

Meals are prepared on site by our centre cook and include breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and supper. We offer a six week rotating menu. All dishes are vegetarian. The current week's menu is always on display outside the kitchen and the full six week menu is on our website. Recipes/ ingredient lists can be viewed on request. Cooked lunches are served four days a week, with a sandwich day on Wednesdays.

### Food Safety

The centre follows an approved Food Safety Plan that is assessed annually by both local council and an independent Auditor. Our kitchen has been awarded a Five Star Food Safety rating for the past three years running.

### Meal Times

Meal times are a relaxed and enjoyable part of our day, and used to develop the children's independence, social and language skills. Children are encouraged to try new foods but never forced to eat if they refuse. Indicative meal times are listed below. Please be mindful that your child may not be able to participate in all the day's scheduled meals if they arrive late or are collected early.

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Breakfast     | 7.30 – 8.15am   |
| Morning Tea   | 10 – 10.30am  |
| Lunch         | 12 – 1pm (11.45am in the Junior Room during Quarter 1)                              |
| Afternoon Tea | 3.30 – 4pm<br>(May be offered before/ during the 2.30 – 3.30pm enrichment timeslot) |
| Light Supper  | 5 – 5.30pm  |

### Meal Size

We manage our kitchen with a flexible budget, so that meals are not portion controlled and quantities can be adjusted easily as required. However we do not cater for siblings or parents, except on special occasions, so please be mindful of this, especially at pick-up times. To accommodate fussy eaters, lunches are presented with separate components wherever possible, to enable children to assemble their own plate of food according to their individual preferences.

### Menu Changes

On some days the menu may be varied to take advantage of seasonal produce, adapt to lower class numbers, test new menu items, or incorporate our own home-grown vegetables. The menu may also be changed in response to weather conditions (eg. offering icy-poles or shakes on very hot days). Notice of these changes will be posted outside the kitchen. When permanent changes to the menu are implemented, you will be notified via the Weekly Bulletin.

### Special Menu Items

Special items may be added to the menu at different times of the year to support the classroom educational program or the Chaggim. Consideration is always given to children with special dietary needs. Menu additions in the past have included: honey served with apple at morning tea in the lead up to Rosh Hashana, milk shakes served on Shavuot, and latkes and donuts on Chanukah.

### **Passover Menu**

The centre does not close during the Jewish festival of Passover, but does operate with a Passover Menu that excludes wheat.

### **School Holiday Menu**

The centre does not close during school term holidays, but may operate with relief kitchen staff and/ or extra sandwich days during these periods.

### **Special Dietary Needs**

If your child develops a need to exclude certain foods for dietary or intolerance reasons, and this was not indicated on their initial enrolment form, you will need to complete a Routine Change Request Form. Our Director and Cook will consult with you to develop a plan to accommodate their special needs. In most cases we will be able to alter our menu, but in some instances families may be required to supply their own alternatives, eg. gluten free bread.

### **Foreign Food**

No food may be brought into the centre by children or their families; this includes drinks/ snacks placed in bags and any food being eaten on arrival. The strict food safety guidelines are designed to manage children with a range of allergies, some of which can be life-threatening. If food is found in your child's bag, locker or pockets, you will be asked to sign a Foreign Food Report. If you arrive at the centre with food, you will be asked to dispose of it in one of our bins or consume it outside the front door.

### **Kitchen Access**

Our cook is on site from 9.30am until approximately 1.30pm every day except Wednesday. Parents are not permitted to enter the kitchen if it is unattended except to retrieve medication that has been stored in the kitchen fridge or to replenish a food supply due to special dietary needs.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **Illness Management**

The centre is not equipped with separate facilities and staff to care for children who are unwell. Parents are expected to keep sick children at home to ensure a healthy environment for all. A Table Of Symptoms for the most common childhood illnesses is available on our website and in the foyer, and specifies how long a child must be excluded from care. Symptoms include: Fever, Diarrhoea, Vomiting, Conjunctivitis, School Sores, Cold Sores, Head Lice, Rashes, Spots, Swelling, Weeping Sores and Nose/ Ears Discharge.

### **Sending Children Home**

When children become unwell whilst at the centre, staff will contact parents to discuss their concerns and will require the children's collection if they display symptoms as per the Table of Symptoms, are unable to cope with the daily routine, or present a risk of cross infection. The decision to send a child home is never made lightly, and staff draw on many years experience, and may consult with one another, before a parent is called or a child turned away upon arrival. Sick children will be isolated from the group until your arrival.

### **Returning After Illness**

A copy of the Table of Symptoms will be given to you if you are called in to collect your child indicating when you can return to the centre. Please understand that by bringing your child back to the centre any earlier, staff are placed in a very uncomfortable position when having to send your child back home (unless you have a Doctor's Certificate specifying they are able to return).

### **Sick Siblings**

If you must visit with sick siblings, please make drop-offs quick and supervise to ensure your sick child is not in contact with other children or centre staff.

### **Infectious Disease**

If your child is diagnosed with an infectious disease, you are required to notify the centre immediately to enable us to implement extra infection minimisation strategies and advise all families, especially pregnant parents or team members, as the consequences of some infectious diseases can be severe. Your child will be excluded from care for the minimum period set by the Victorian Health Department and notice of the infectious disease placed at the centre entrance. Infectious diseases include: chicken pox, measles, whooping cough, meningococcal, diphtheria and mumps. Non-immunised children may be excluded from care in some instances.

### **Prescription Medication**

If your child requires medication you will need to complete a Daily Medication Authority Form with clear instructions of what dosage is required and when. Dosages are checked by two staff members before being administered. On pick up you will need to sign off that your instructions were followed correctly. If someone else is picking up your child please ensure that you have notified them of this requirement.

### **Non-Prescription Medication**

Non-prescription or naturopathic medication needs to be accompanied by a letter from a doctor or naturopath if it is to be administered for more than three consecutive days.

### **Storage of Medication**

Medication must be supplied in the original container with a valid expiry date and name of the child. Please hand medication directly to staff and never leave in a bag/ locker. Medication is stored out of children's reach in the classroom or in the kitchen fridge.

### **Ongoing use of Creams & Ointments**

If your child uses a non-prescription cream/ointment (including Paw Paw cream and QV soap), you will need to complete a Routine Change Request form with instructions on when it should be applied, ensure your child's name is on the bottle/tube and hand both the form and cream/ ointment to staff (do not leave in children's bags).

### **Children's Paracetamol**

If your child is hurt or develops a fever, you will be called to collect your child. You may provide permission for Children's Paracetamol to be administered whilst you are on your way, and these instructions will need to be repeated to two staff members. On arrival you will be required to sign a Medication Authority.

### **Accidents**

Even in the safest environments accidents do happen. Staff members with First Aid training are on duty at all times. If your child is involved in any accident you will be asked to sign off on an Accident Report that records how the injury occurred and how it was treated. If the accident involves the area above the shoulders you will be notified immediately by phone. If an ambulance is needed, a staff member will remain with your child until your arrival (travelling in the ambulance if necessary).

### **Head Lice**

You will be advised every time there is an incidence of lice at the centre. Head lice inspections of the whole class are conducted after any lice outbreak, as per the Head Lice Authority on your enrolment form. Staff also conduct individual head lice checks if a child is seen to be scratching their head/ hair excessively. Where lice is detected, parents will be called to collect their child and may return after treatment has commenced. The child will be separated from the group with their hat kept on until collection.

### **Fire Drills & Evacuations**

If an emergency evacuation is required and we are unable to return to the centre you will be contacted to collect your child. Our evacuation procedure is displayed throughout the centre and we conduct an evacuation drill every month. Twice a year we evacuate to offsite assembly points and your permission will be obtained before your child can participate. If you are at the centre during a drill please follow staff instructions.

### **Hazardous Materials**

A hazards symbol is used to identify locations in which hazardous materials are stored at the centre. This symbol is on display in our foyer.

### **Appropriate Language & Behaviour**

All adults at the centre, including parents and staff, are expected to model appropriate language and behaviour at all times. If parents initiate a discussion within the hearing of children or other persons that staff believe is inappropriate, staff may request that the discussion be relocated to the office or staffroom, or continued at a later time by meeting or

by phone. If a person at the centre shows signs of physical violence or other threatening behaviour towards staff or children, police will be contacted immediately.

### **Cleaning**

A professional cleaning service is engaged to clean the Centre each night. A daytime cleaning routine in the children's areas is also implemented by staff during the day.

### **Hand Washing**

Visual material throughout the centre reminds staff and children when to wash hands and how to do so correctly. Hands are washed regularly and always: after toileting, before and after meals, after handling rubbish or animals, and after playing outside.

### **Maintenance & Gardening**

Professional maintenance and gardening services visit the centre at regular intervals throughout the year. Internal audits are conducted each month. If you notice any items and/or areas needing attention that we have overlooked, please notify our office.

## **GENERAL ADMINISTRATION**

### **Personal Information**

By law we are required to have on record for each child the phone numbers and addresses for home, business, family doctor and emergency contact nominees. If any changes occur you are required to notify us immediately. Illegible or incomplete paperwork will be returned and your child may be unable to attend until completed correctly.

### **Class Lists**

Class lists are distributed by email at the start of the year and thereafter upon request. If your details change, please let us know so we can update the list and advise families. Details published are as per the Class List Authority in your enrolment form.

### **Notification of Absences**

Please let our office know by phone, email or in person if your child will be absent for any reason. This ensures that we do not worry, allows us to adjust class activities if necessary, and enables us to help part timers who need extra casual days. Each child has an allocated number of holiday days according to their permanent booking and 4 week's notice is required to be eligible for the discounted holiday fee. This notice must be provided in writing.

### **Fee Statement Queries**

Fee Statements are distributed in parent pockets on the first working day of the month and you have until the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to follow up any queries with our office and make payment. Late fees apply for payments made after that date (levied per week), unless a query has been lodged with the office and is still under review. The centre does not issue individual reminders to pay. Note that if using direct debit, payment must be made before the 15<sup>th</sup> in order for it to be received on time.

### **Fee Payments**

Our preferred payment method is direct debit into our bank account; details are in our Fees Policy. If paying by cheque or cash, please complete our Payment Slip and deposit in the locked foyer letterbox. Staff cannot accept payments directly. If you know that you will be away when fees fall due, please contact our office to arrange for a statement to be issued enabling you to make payment in advance. As our billing months do alternate between 4 or 5 weeks, we do not recommend setting up an automatic payment system.

### **Re-Enrolment**

Existing families are contacted in July to confirm their booking for the upcoming year. All children returning to the centre are required to complete new enrolment paperwork and additional bond payments may be required if bookings have changed.

### **January Holiday Care**

Seniors who are graduating in December may book casual care during January before school starts, subject to space availability. Bookings for January holiday care are finalised in November/ December each year.

### **Lost Property**

Unnamed clothing or belongings found in the centre after closing are put in the Lost Property basket in the foyer. You will be notified with plenty of advance warning via the Weekly Bulletin before unclaimed items are donated to charity.

### **Parent Feedback**

We appreciate your feedback on all aspects of our program and service. Formal surveys are distributed during the year and at any other time we welcome your constructive input. To enable us to relay your comments "in your own words" to the whole team, we ask that you to provide your feedback in writing wherever possible.

### **Complaints**

If you have grievances about the care, education and safety of your child, or the management of the centre, we ask that you raise your concern with your Class Teacher or the Centre Director. Attempts will be made to resolve the problem cooperatively and quickly, and if necessary, a time will be made to meet in the privacy of our office. All complaints are managed with discretion, and confidentiality is observed. At the Director's discretion, or upon your own request, the matter may be referred directly to the Centre Owner. If after discussions with us you feel that your complaint has not been adequately addressed, you may wish to contact a Children's Services Adviser at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development on 9213 2111

---

Thank you for taking the time to read through our Parents' Handbook. If at any time you want to find out more about any of our policies, ask questions or suggest changes, please don't hesitate to let us know. Parents are our partners and we welcome your involvement! We hope that your association with Buddies Early Learning Centre is a long and happy one, full of big belly laughs, lots of art for the fridge and the warmest and fuzziest of memories!

## Appendix

# INDEX OF POLICIES

All policies are located in the centre office. Policies may not be taken off-site.

### **Staff Relationships with Children & Peers**

Staff / child interaction  
 Child arrivals & departures  
 Behaviour Guidance  
 Time Out  
 Staff/Child communication  
 Cultural Diversity  
 Equity & Inclusion  
 Staff interaction

### **Partnership with Families**

Daily parent communication  
 Parent communication regarding programs  
 Parent newsletter and bulletin  
 Parent pockets  
 Phone calls  
 Photography  
 Parent Involvement  
 Birthday Celebrations  
 Orientation  
 Transition to the Senior Room  
 Settling-In

### **Programming & Evaluation**

Centre Philosophy  
 Documenting children's development  
 Educational Programs  
 Daily Routine  
 Planning for the individual  
 Planning for the group

### **Children's Experiences & Learning**

Learning Environment  
 Outdoor Play  
 Environmental Awareness & Sustainability  
 Promoting relationship skills  
 Promoting language skills  
 Hebrew language  
 Promoting problem solving skills  
 Promoting creative expression skills  
 Children's Artwork  
 Music  
 Shabbat  
 Promoting physical skills

### **Protective Care & Safety**

Child Protection  
 Supervision  
 Accident Prevention  
 Child Collection  
 Collection in an Unfit State  
 Custody Arrangements

### **Protective Care & Safety, cont.**

Uncollected Children  
 Storage of Dangerous Products  
 Building Equipment & Maintenance  
 Traffic & Road Safety  
 Occupational Health & Safety  
 Administration of Medicine  
 Allergies  
 Ambulance  
 Asthma  
 Emergency Evacuation Drills  
 Head Lice Management  
 Managing Accidents  
 Illness  
 Safe Lifting  
 Stress Management  
 Anaphylaxis  
 Physical Safety  
 Personal Appearance  
 Knives, Matches & Scissors  
 Telephones

### **Health, Nutrition & Wellbeing**

Nutrition & Healthy Eating  
 Special Diets  
 Meal Times  
 Food Safety  
 Centre Hygiene  
 Staff Prepared Meals  
 Dental Care  
 Personal Hygiene  
 Toileting  
 Rest Time  
 Settling children for sleep  
 Children's clothing  
 Sun Protection  
 Immunisation  
 Communicable Diseases  
 H1N1 Swine Flu

### **Managing for Quality**

Parent complaints and grievances  
 Parent communication regarding policy  
 Induction for new staff  
 Induction for relief staff & students  
 Staff complaints & grievances  
 Staff communication  
 Staffing and rosters  
 Enrolled children of staff  
 Visiting children of staff  
 Professional development  
 Centre Property

## Appendix

# FEES POLICY 2010

1. **Daily Fee:** Our Daily Fee is published each November for the upcoming calendar year. The daily fee for the 2010 calendar year is \$88 per day.
  2. **Inclusions in the Daily Fee:**
    - Long day care from 7.30am until 6pm.
    - All meals served whilst a child is in attendance, including breakfast, morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea and supper.
    - General Studies and Jewish Studies educational programs for 51 weeks of the year.
    - Enrichment sessions in music and movement.
    - Literacy Program (Senior Room only).
    - All incursions.
    - All cultural celebrations.
    - Individual sunhat and supply of sunscreen.
    - Complimentary birthday cake.
    - Complimentary DVD compile of photo highlights from the year.
    - Variety of parent services including digital photo albums, weekly bulletin, quarterly newsletter, and mid-year parent teacher interviews.
  3. **CCB & Child Care Rebate:** Buddies is an approved child care service so the Child Care Benefit (CCB) and the 50% Child Care Rebate are both available to assist with the cost of fees. The centre's provider number is 407235047X. It is the responsibility of parents to provide the centre with Family & Child Customer Reference Numbers (CRNs) to enable CCB and Rebate entitlements to be processed.
  4. **Administration Levy:** Upon acceptance of a place at the centre, payment is required of a non-refundable Administration Levy. The Levy is set at \$400 per child for new families and \$300 per child for any subsequent sibling enrolments. The Levy is fixed irrespective of days booked.
  5. **Refundable Bond:** Upon acceptance of a place at the centre, payment is required of a refundable bond. The bond is equivalent to two week's full fees based on the child's booking and is refunded when the child leaves the centre, provided the required notice is given.
  6. **Withdrawal from the Centre:** Children can be withdrawn from the centre at any time. The bond will be refunded against the child's final monthly statement provided four week's written notice is given. Where a family enrolled for the upcoming year cancels their enrolment, the bond will be refunded in full if notice is given up to the end of November. No bond refund will be made for enrolment cancellations made after this date.
  7. **Dropping Days:** When a family chooses to drop days from a child's permanent booking, the bond for the dropped days will be refunded against the child's next monthly statement provided four week's notice in writing has been given. For reinstatement of booking, waiting list priority will apply.
  8. **Adding Days:** If enrolling part time, parents are urged to choose days carefully as it may not be possible to change or add days at a later date. When a family does add days to a child's permanent booking, a bond is required equivalent to two week's full fees based on the extra days booked.
  9. **Occasional Care:** Children enrolled part time may book occasional extra days subject to availability. Unless a room has a permanent vacancy on a particular day, places will only be available when other children are absent, and as these absences are often unplanned (eg. due to illness), parents are encouraged to check on the day that they are in need as to whether there are any openings.
  10. **Swapping Days:** As Buddies is nearly always fully booked, and so that all families are treated equitably, the centre is unable to accommodate any swapping of days or provide make-up days for unplanned absences or public holidays.
- ### ATTENDANCE & ABSENCES
11. **Annual Closure:** The centre closes for public holidays and from December 25 to January 1 (inclusive) each year. No fees are payable during the period of annual closure. A holiday care program may be offered during the period of Annual Closure, subject to demand, and will be invoiced separately.
  12. **Public Holidays:** Full fees are payable for all public holidays as per standard industry practice, with the exception of the three

public holidays falling within the period of Annual Closure (Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day).

13. **Holidays:** A reduced holiday rate is available for four weeks per calendar year per child. For part timers, multiply the number of days of care by four weeks to calculate holiday days available. The reduced fee is available provided four week's written notice of the holiday is given, otherwise full fees are payable. The holiday rate is equivalent to 75% of the Daily Fee.
14. **Allowable Absences:** Under the Family Assistance Office guidelines, each child is allocated 45 days of allowable absences per financial year, after which CCB will be paid only when a doctor's certificate is supplied.
15. **Absences due to illness:** The centre follows standard industry practice in that full fees are payable for any absences due to illness.
16. **Absences due to Infectious Disease:** Children diagnosed with an infectious disease will be excluded from care for the minimum period set by the Victorian Health Department. Full fees are payable and CCB applies.
17. **Absences due to Non-Immunisation:** Children must supply a recent immunisation history statement with their enrolment forms to confirm immunisation status. If a child's immunisations are not up to date, the child can attend the centre, but may be deemed ineligible for CCB by the Family Assistance Office and will be excluded from care during outbreaks of Measles and Whooping Cough as per the Victorian Health Department guidelines. Full fees are payable and CCB applies.

#### MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES

18. **Late Collections:** Penalty fees are charged for any collections made after the centre closes at 6.00pm. This charge is to cover the cost of keeping two staff members on site at overtime rates. Parents will be asked to countersign the attendance record and the late fee will be added to the child's next monthly statement. The late collection penalty is calculated at \$25.00 for every 10 minutes or part thereof.
19. **Nappies:** Children who are toilet training in the Junior Room and using nappies are required to provide their own supply. Staff will issue reminders when the supply is running low. If nappies need to be provided by the centre, a fee of \$2.00 per nappy will be charged.
20. **Bedlinen:** Children are required to supply their own fitted and flat sheet for use during rest time. Bed linen will be sent home at the end of every month for washing. If bed linen needs to be provided by the centre, a fee of \$5.00 per day will be charged to cover the cost of laundering the sheets.
21. **Loss, breakage or damage:** Parents are liable for any avoidable breakage or damage to centre property, or for the loss of centre property, or for loss to another child's or persons' property, caused by their child or other family member.
22. **Hats:** Legionnaire hats are supplied by the centre. If removed from the centre or lost by a child, a replacement fee of \$10 will apply.
23. **Bags:** Bedlinen bags are supplied by the centre. If permanently removed from the centre or lost by a child, a replacement fee of \$10 will apply.
24. **Medical:** In the event of an accident or illness when it is impracticable to communicate with a parent, the centre may authorise medical, surgical or other treatment considered necessary by a qualified medical practitioner and parents will be responsible for all medical, ambulance and associated expenses incurred.

#### PAYMENT OF FEES

25. **Accounts:** Accounts are issued at the start of each month and payment in full is due no later than the 15<sup>th</sup>. Monthly accounts are based on the number of days booked, regardless of hours attended on those days. Child care usage and absences are listed on the monthly account and parents are asked to check their account carefully and contact management with any queries. Where a new month begins mid-week, the entire week is billed in the month in which the Monday falls. As a result statements comprise either four or five weeks.
26. **Receipts:** Receipts for fee payments are issued in the first week of the following month, together with that month's account.
27. **Overdue Accounts:** Fees not paid in full by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month will incur a \$25.00 non-claimable charge for every week (or

part thereof) that the account is overdue, unless an arrangement has been made with management. Care may be withheld if the account is not settled within 4 weeks of payment being due. Legal action may be taken for outstanding fees if suitable arrangements are not made with management. No child or sibling will be permitted to commence care at the beginning of the year while any part of the previous year's fees are in arrears. The centre is entitled to obtain all costs (including solicitor/ client costs), damages and outgoings incurred by it as a direct or indirect result of any failure by a parent to pay any fees within the centre's terms for payment.

28. **Payment Options:** Payment of centre fees can be made by cash, cheque or electronic banking. The centre does not have facilities to accept payment by EFTPOS/Credit Card.

(a) **Electronic Banking:** Direct deposit using internet banking is the centre's preferred payment method. If paying online, parents are required to include their child's surname in the "description" to enable their deposit to be identified. Payments should be made by the 13<sup>th</sup> to allow at least 48 hours for processing. The centre's bank account details are:

Bank: ANZ  
Account name: Buddies  
BSB: 013 220  
Account number: 4981 460 49

For international transfers:  
Swift ANZBAU3M

(b) **Cheque:** If paying by cheque, cheques should be made payable to "Buddies Early Learning Centre" and the child's name written on the reverse. Any bank charges incurred for dishonored cheques will be added to the next monthly account. Cheques may be mailed to the centre at 143 Jasper Road Bentleigh 3204 or deposited into the locked letterbox in the foyer.

(c) **Cash:** Payment by cash is generally discouraged. If paying by cash, parents are required to complete a Buddies deposit slip as a record of payment. This information will be referenced when processing the banking. Cash payments should be deposited directly into the locked letterbox in the foyer. The centre cannot give change so any

overpayment will be credited against the next monthly statement.

29. **Notice of Change:** The centre may change the terms and conditions of this Fees Policy at any time without notice. An updated Fees Policy will be given to all parents if changes occur and parents acknowledge that they agree to be bound by any such change.

"Parents" means parent/s and/or guardians.