Alawa Preschool Handbook

2021

Alawa Preschool
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School Principal: Ms Sandy Cartwright
Teacher-in-Charge: Ms Alice Milne
Teacher: Ms Emma Churchman
Teacher Assistants: Ms Maryjane Kwon & Ms Flor Hodgson

ALAWA PRESCHOOL PHILOSOPHY

At Alawa Preschool we value all children as unique individuals.

We encourage a strong sense of wellbeing and respect each child's cultural background, family, lifestyle and traditional beliefs.

We provide a caring and nurturing environment that enhances each child's autonomy, creativity and self-worth. This enables children to have an appreciation of their own identity and in turn a sense of **BELONGING** to the wider community.

BEING recognises the significance of the here and now. We follow individual interests and allow children the time and experiences to know and learn about themselves and the world around them.

We encourage children to discuss ideas that challenge thinking through play. Children are encouraged to reflect upon their own actions **BECOMING** mindful and compassionate participants in our community.

We recognise and incorporate our whole school values:

RESPECT -for each other, their teachers, parents and people in the community.

PRIDE - in themselves, in their efforts and accomplishments and in their heritage.

ENCOURAGMENT - and appreciation of their own and others efforts.

PERSONAL BEST - to always do the very best they can do.

We believe that children learn from their surrounding environment, from parents, teachers, peers and families. *Play is the heartbeat of our program.* Through play we provide a wide variety of developmentally appropriate "hands on" experiences and activities that encourage children to have a go, take risks and assume responsibility for their own learning.

The preschool is a very important part of the whole school. We encourage and support children through:

- building relationships with everyone within the preschool, whole school and beyond
- being a positive role model at all times
- providing each individual with the opportunity to explore and interact with the outdoor environment as a natural environment
- providing links and connectedness to the whole school
- focusing on individual interests, needs and their learning journey

Dear Parents / Carers

Welcome to Alawa Preschool.
We hope you and your child enjoy your time with us and take the opportunity to become a part of our school community.

Our preschool program aims to represent quality care as set by the National Quality Standards and reflects the principles, practices and outcomes of the Early Years Learning Framework, which provides a guide for us to promote children's learning using researched best practice strategies.

The preschool program aims to provide a warm and secure environment for you and your child. Learning through play is integral to our preschool program and children are encouraged to develop as individuals within our community of learners. Social skills, independence and oral language skills are viewed as being critical aspects of their development as a learner and we hope that through supporting your child's individual developmental needs, we will be able to provide a happy and successful start to their school life.

We encourage parents and carers to contact us at any time to meet with us and spend time at the preschool so that you also feel supported and secure in the preschool environment. We look forward to meeting you and your child.

Group Organisation

There are two preschool groups as outlined below.

Red Group – weekly cycle

Monday full day 8:30 am – 2.50 pm	Tuesday full day 8:30 am - 2.50 pm	Wednesday half day 8:30 am – 11:30 am

Blue Group – weekly cycle

Wednesday half day 8.30am – 11.30am	Thursday full day 8:30 am - 2.50 pm	Friday full day 8:30 am - 2.50 pm

Your child may enrol at the preschool for the beginning of Term 1 if they are turning 4 years of age **before June 30th, 2021. There will be no exceptions to this minimum age for enrolment.*

Easing Children into preschool routines

Some children take time to settle into the preschool routine, especially if this is the first time they have been separated from a parent or carer. Some children settle more quickly if parents don't stay and others need your presence for security. Every child is different and it is best to discuss this with your child's teacher. At times children will take longer than others and this is normal.

ALWAYS tell your child that you are going and you **WILL** be back. Please feel free to phone us at any time to check on your child's progress

First week of school

Going to school can be tiring for new children especially during the first week. As a way of easing children into school we will begin the first WEEK of preschool with optional half day sessions [8.30-12.30]. From the second week of school and onwards children will attend full sessions.

What your child needs to bring to preschool everyday

- **Bag or Back Pack** – large enough to easily fit all their belongings, lunchbox and the art and craft work that they might be taking home.

- **Hat -** In keeping with the school's sun safe policy children are required to wear a hat during outdoor play at preschool. Children without a hat will be required to stay under the veranda. THIS MUST BE A BROAD BRIMMED OR BUCKET HAT-the school has hats available to purchase.

- **Morning Tea/Lunch** – Because we have a full day program children need to bring healthy food for morning tea and lunch. We encourage healthy eating habits. Please ensure your child's food is easy for them to manage and open. No lollies, chocolates and sugary or very salty foods should come to school, as the school has a policy of healthy eating. Vegetable sticks, cut fruit, crackers, dried fruit, yoghurt, cheese and sandwiches are the best options. We also have an apple slinky machine available at snack times.

- **Water Bottle** - Please fill it with **water only.** We encourage children to stay hydrated throughout the day. Water bottles can be refilled from our cold water bubblers. These bottles should be taken home each day for a wash.

- **Shoes/sandals -** Children are required to wear footwear to Preschool for safety reasons. We recommend sandals or runners that the children are able to take off or put on independently. Please <u>NO</u> thongs or shoes with high heels.

- **Change of clothes** – Please send **at least** one labelled change of clothes (including underwear) with your child everyday day as children can get wet and messy (and accidents do happen)!

Please label all belongings with your child's name

Dropping off your child at Preschool

An adult **must** accompany your child into the preschool classroom and sign them in before handing them over to a staff member. Children are NOT to be dropped off and left at the door. If you arrive early, please wait with your child until we open the doors at 8.20am for our "soft start" where you are able to help your child settle and do a puzzle together. **Preschool starts at 8.30am** so we ask that you **stay with your child until 8.30am.**

We have a 'sign in' procedure each day. **You need to sign the designated book** notifying us that your child is at preschool and assign someone to collect your child at the end of the day.

We encourage children to become independent in their morning routine. When you and your child enter preschool your child can place their bag in their assigned tray, place their water bottle on the designated table and lunchbox on the bench top divider of the kitchen, ready to be placed in the fridge.

If you are able to stay and play with your child, then fabulous! Parents, guardians, carers or friends are welcome to stay, you just need to sign our visitor's register. There are always many little jobs that your child's teacher would love a hand with. If you want to chat about your child, or if you have any concerns, please let the teacher know and they will organise a suitable time to catch up as pick up and drop off times can be quite busy.

Picking up your child from Preschool

Parents are requested to collect their children on time.
In case of an emergency or unforeseen delay, please ring the school on 8997 7666. This can help avoid children becoming upset if they are not picked up on time. It is necessary for the staff to be notified, either in person or by phone, if someone other than yourself will be collecting your child. If they are unknown to staff, they will be required to have photo ID for us to identify them. We are unable to release your child to someone without your consent. Please make sure that we know you have collected your child. Each child needs to be signed out at the end of the day by the person/s collecting your child.
Older children from **Alawa Primary** may collect a preschool child [only Year 6 students] and walk them to the front of the school where there is adult supervision. Parents must sign a permission form prior to this occurring.
Please ensure you have filled in the appropriate form if your child is being picked up by another Service provider. Eg Brat Pack.

School values

We encourage everyone attending to follow our school values:

- *Respect*
- *Encouragement*
- *Pride*
- *Personal best*

Voluntary Parent Contribution

Parent contributions are integral to maintaining a quality preschool program for your child's education. We do ask for $100 per year, which is only $2.50 per week. Contributions are used to purchase a wide range of equipment and consumables; including art and craft supplies, food for cooking, books and puzzles. Please see staff in the front office to make a contribution.

Back to School Voucher

You are entitled to receive $150 of educational goods and services for each child enrolled in a government or non-government Territory school or preschool. If your child is in Transition to Year 6 you will receive your allocation in Term 1 each year and the entitlement must be used in Term 1. If your child is in preschool the entitlement is available throughout the year, but is only valid to the end of the first term in which they first enroll. Back to School entitlement is only redeemable at the school where your child attends.

We have a suggested list at the office of how you may wish to use your entitlement that has been endorsed by our School Council. However it is up to you as a parent to decide how you wish to spend the entitlement at the school. Feel free to come into the school office for more information or look up the Department of Education website.

Change of details

When your child is sick or in the case of an emergency it is vital that all your details are up to date so we are easily able to contact you.

If your details change, such as your phone number, address, emergency contact details or living arrangements, please ensure that the preschool and front office staff are notified, to ensure our records are up to date.

Absences

Once enrolled at preschool, children are **required to attend all sessions**. If your child is unable to attend a preschool session (for whatever reason) parents must notify the preschool or school by phone on 8997 7666 or in person or via the Skoolbag App.

Portfolios

Your child's portfolio is an ongoing record of their learning journey at preschool. No two children's portfolios are the same. The portfolio goes home at the end of the year and can be viewed at preschool by parents and children throughout the year. Portfolios contain samples of your child's work e.g. cutting, writing, drawing, photos and activity samples.

The Learning Program for Alawa Preschool

Alawa Preschool's Learning Program is play-based. Play is the way children organise and make sense of their world. Play experiences are both planned and spontaneous and all designed to foster children's learning and development. At Alawa Preschool we aim to provide a rich learning environment in which children can develop knowledge and skills to become emotionally, socially and physically confident. Our preschool program takes place in both the indoor and outdoor learning environments and is made up of intentional teaching moments, programmed and spontaneous learning experiences, all based on the interests and needs of individual children in the setting.

We develop our program by working with families and observing each child. The information gathered from focusing on specific children each fortnight, forms the basis of our fortnightly cycle planning document, as well as ongoing programming. Social, emotional, numeracy and literacy foci are planned for based on the needs of the children and the Early Years Learning Framework.

Alawa Preschool follows the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) which is a national educational document. The Early Years Learning Framework is made up of five learning outcomes:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing

Our staff also use the NT Preschool Curriculum to support and guide their planning. *If you have any questions regarding our preschool program or any aspect of early childhood development please come and have a chat to the preschool teachers.*

Catering for individual needs

Preschool children are able to rest during the day when they need to. This is optional throughout the school day by the provision of quiet spaces and an informal rest time. Families are welcome to discuss their children's individual needs with staff.

Books

Children are able to borrow books from the preschool library. Sharing books and reading to children fosters a love of books, provides an excellent foundation for learning to read and encourages **language development**. Your child needs a library bag for their preschool book to be stored in so they learn to care and respect the borrowed books. If a library book is lost or damaged, you will be expected to pay the replacement cost of the book.

Toys and Jewellery

We discourage children from bringing toys or jewellery to school. We do not want your child to be upset if a special item gets lost or broken.

Birthdays

When your child has a birthday, you are most welcome to bring a cake to share with the preschool group. If your child has any food allergies or is not allowed cake, then staff ask you to please supply us with an alternative that we can freeze and use when needed. We are a **Nut Aware** school, which means we will notify you if there are any nut allergies within our preschool groups.

Parent Participation

Alawa School and Preschool have an open door policy where parents/carers are encouraged to participate in the program. A child's parents are a child's first and most important teachers. Starting school is an opportunity to share the next stage with your child. It is always helpful to have an extra pair of hands, especially for Farm visits and swimming lessons, or helping behind the scenes. You may prefer to help in other ways e.g. sewing, gardening, making playdough, washing, or repairing books. Another option may be to share your special skills with the children e.g. music, cooking, gardening, wood work. We would love to hear from you.

All visitors to the preschool must sign in at the school front office.

We request that any parent / carer volunteering regularly in the preschool obtain a Working with Children Clearance Card. Details can be provided through the front office.

Preschool Parent Committee

Alawa Preschool has a parent meeting twice per term. All parents are encouraged to be members of the Preschool Parent Committee. The preschool teacher will inform parents and carers of upcoming meetings via the Alawa School Newsletter and through the preschool communication tool. The preschool committee is a forum to share ideas and to come up with fundraising plans and activities. Every parent or carer is welcome and encouraged to attend parent committee meetings.

School Council

A preschool parent represents preschool families at school council meetings. If you would be interested in becoming the preschool representative for the school council please let the preschool teacher know. Alawa Primary School Council holds meetings once a month throughout our school terms.

Fundraising

The preschool relies heavily on fundraising to purchase new resources such as new playground equipment or educational resources. We would love your ideas, help and support for fundraising events.

Communication

We believe strongly in positive, open communication. The preschool teacher is the first person to see if you have any concerns regarding your child's progress or the preschool program. Please see the teacher at the beginning or end of each day for a quick chat or to make an appointment. Our preschool offers an online communication tool, Class DoJo, which you will receive more information about in the first term.

Newsletter Communication

Alawa's Primary School newsletter is written every Tuesday and a digital copy is sent to all families, made available via the Skoolbag App and is on the Alawa Primary School website. If you would prefer to receive a paper copy please let the front office staff know. This newsletter will keep you in touch with what is happening in and around the school, including preschool.

Alawa Skoolbag App

Go to the App store and download our Alawa School App. It is a wonderful way to receive newsletters, information on current events [in and around the school], parent information and much, much more. The App can be downloaded for free.

Farm Visits

Once our pre-schoolers have settled in, both groups will begin visits to the farm in the cooler months. The children enjoy feeding the animals, collecting eggs for cooking and harvesting produce. We take our preschool scraps to the farm to feed to the chickens and worm farms. The visits fit with the Early Years Learning Framework sustainability focus and are an important and unique part of our preschool program.

Recycled goods/ junk material

We are always in need of empty containers and boxes at Preschool for use in children's construction, collage and dramatic play. If you have any clean/ empty yogurt/ take away containers, shoeboxes, egg cartons, ice cream cartons, plastic lids etc. please bring your clean items in to preschool.

End of year orientation

We have a focus on preparing children to move to Transition in the latter half of the year. We begin with visits to the main school yard and showing children where the important facilities are, such as toilets, front office and drinking stations. Children will also learn the bell/music signals of the school and their meaning such as eating and play bells.

Each group will visit Transition as part of their Investigation lessons in Term 3 and 4. This is to assist children to become familiar with what happens in Transition and meet the Transition teachers and children. We will also eat a snack with classes, attend Muster and go to assemblies and as this is an important routine for children.

More information will be provided to you in Term 3.

Sick Children

Please do not send sick children to school. It helps to protect others from getting sick and saves your child the discomfort of being away from you when they are not well. It is YOUR decision, not your child's, whether they are sick or not. If they are well enough to return but still need prescribed medication, please see your child's teacher for a form to complete to allow us to administer this medication. Preschool do not keep Panadol/Nurofen in stock.

Please inform the school *if your child is absent due to being unwell or has a*

contagious illness. ***Please make sure your contact details are up to date*** *so the school can contact you quickly if your child is hurt or sick at school.*

Health Matters

Allergies/ Asthma/ Health Plans/ Intolerances

Please inform the preschool of any allergies or intolerances your child may have. All children with Asthma or Anaphylaxis should have an up to date Health Plan completed by your GP and given to your child's teacher.

Head Lice

All families will be notified if head lice/nits are a problem in their child's preschool group. This is the time to check your child's hair and treat if necessary. Please return your child's form to school to show that they have been checked and treated. Regular checking of your child's hair and having long hair tied up each day help to prevent lice infestation.

Contagious Diseases

Children with **Impetigo [school sores] or Conjunctivitis** must have treatment before returning to school. All impetigo must be dry and covered if your child is at preschool.

Mosquito protection and sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen and mosquito protection to your child **before** they come to Preschool. Staff are not permitted to apply sun and insect protection to your child without signed permission. If you would like staff to apply sunscreen or repellent please supply your own and ask us for a permission form to sign.

Please contact the preschool staff if there are any concerns regarding your child and/or preschool. We hope you and your child have a wonderful year and enjoy being part of the Alawa Preschool Community.