

Alawa Preschool Handbook

2024



Alawa Preschool

27 Pett Street Alawa

PO Box 40446 Casuarina NT 0811

Phone 8997 7666

Email alawa.school@education.nt.gov.au

School Principal: Ms Sandy Cartwright

Teacher-in-Charge: Ms Angela Henschke

Teacher: Ms Emma Churchman

Teacher Assistants: Ms Kelly Crawford & 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 for 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.

ENCOURAGEMENT - 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:

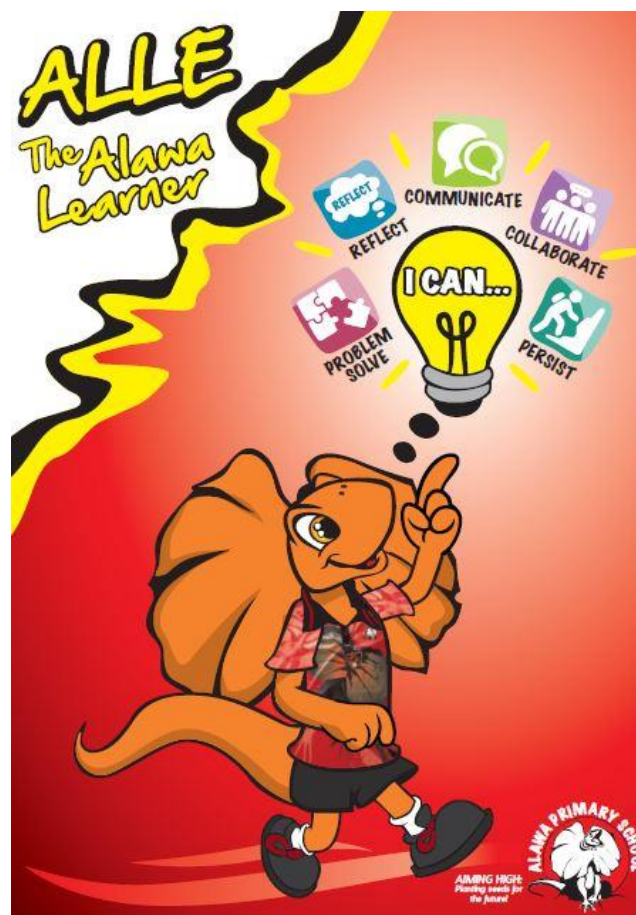
- 🌈 building relationships with everyone within the preschool, whole school and beyond



- ✚ 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 culture, families, the whole school and the wider community
- ✚ focusing on individual interests, needs and their learning journey through documentation, observations and open communication with families

ALLE The Alawa Learner

Alawa Primary school seeks to create students who are ready for the 21st Century as learners. ALLE is our school mascot who has 5 tools for learning. Over their time at Alawa, children will explicitly learn the tools of Problem Solve, Persist, Reflect and Communicate and Collaborate. In Preschool children will be introduced to ALLE as our class mascot and begin to learn about the tool problem solve. In Preschool children will be presented with open ended questions, allowed to follow their interests, assisted to identify their feelings and attempt to resolve small problems that assise in the classroom.



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 and spend time at the preschool so that you feel supported and secure in the preschool environment. We look forward to meeting you and your child.



Group Organisation

We currently have 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
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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
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Your child may enrol at the preschool for the beginning of Term 1 if they are turning 4 years of age **before June 30th, 2024. 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 [8:30-2:50].



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, cordials, flavoured milks and other high in salt, sugary food or drinks 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 **NO** thongs or shoes with high heels.



- **Change of clothes** - Please send **at least** one labelled change of clothes (including underwear) with your child everyday 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. 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 and their water bottle on the designated table. Their lunchbox can then be placed on the bench top divider of the kitchen, ready to be placed in the fridge.

If you are able to stay and complete a puzzle or read a book 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 at 2.50 [Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday] and 11.30 [Wednesdays].

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. If you require someone else who is not listed as an emergency contact to collect your child, you will need to fill out a specific permission form for this. These can be collected from the preschool. If they are unknown to staff, they will be required to have photo ID as proof of identity. We are unable to release your child to someone without your consent. Each child needs to be signed out at the end of the day by the person/s collecting your child.



Older siblings 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 \$160 per year, which is only \$4.00 per week and significantly cheaper than other preschools. 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 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 parents must notify the preschool or school by phone on 8997 7666 or email the school on alawa.school@education.nt.gov.au.

Preschool Policies and Procedures

Alawa Preschool is guided by the Department of Education's policies and procedures. We also have some of our own procedures that are specific to our context. These are all kept electronically in the preschool. If you would like to see

a policy or procedure, they can be viewed in the preschool or particular policies can be sent directly to your email address.

Portfolios

Your child's portfolio is an ongoing record of their learning journey at preschool. No two children's portfolios are the same. Portfolios contain samples of your child's learning and development, including individual learning stories that document how the Early Years Learning Framework is used to extend your child's individual needs. Your child's portfolio will be on the school's online communication tool of Dojo, here individual and class stories will be shared. We encourage you to sit down and share these with your child.

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 are designed to foster children's learning and development. We aim to provide a rich learning environment where children can develop knowledge and skills to become emotionally, socially and physically confident. Our preschool program has intentional teaching moments as well as spontaneous learning experiences. These experiences are all based on the interests and needs of individual children and occur in both the indoor and outdoor setting.

We develop our program by working with families and observing each child. The information gathered from focusing on specific children every two weeks, 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.

Wellbeing

The Zones of Regulation® is a Social and Emotional Program which is being used in the Early Years classes. This program incorporates social thinking concepts and numerous visuals to teach students to identify their feelings and understand how their behaviour impacts those around them. It allows us to have a common language to refer to when describing levels of alertness and different tools and strategies to manage behaviours.

The ZONES of Regulation™

			
BLUE ZONE	GREEN ZONE	YELLOW ZONE	RED ZONE
Sad Sick Tired Bored Moving Slowly	Happy Calm Feeling Okay Focused Relaxed	Frustrated Worried Silly/Wiggly Excited Loss of Some Control	Mad/Angry Terrified Elated/Ecstatic Devastated Out of Control

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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 can borrow books from the school 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. Borrowing begins in term 2 once the children have settled into the routines of school.

Toys and Jewellery

Please do not bring toys or jewellery to school.

We do not want your child to be upset if a special item gets lost or broken. When children come to Alawa Preschool there is a shared understanding that all the

resources and spaces belong to us all equally. When a toy comes from a child's home this becomes confusing for the children. The teachers make careful decisions around the resources that are used to ensure children's learning is targeted. When toys come from home it can distract children from the planned experiences.

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 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 or on the school website at <https://www.alawaprimary.nt.edu.au/parent-information> under Volunteers.

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 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.

Class Dojo

Our preschool offers an online communication tool, Class Dojo. This is an app that can be downloaded for free, you will be given information of how to download this when you come into the office to spend your back to school voucher. Class Dojo is used for 'class' communication, not whole school communication. We share the children's portfolios, snap shots of what has happened in the preschool day and information that is specific to preschool events. It is a really valuable resource and helps you connect to the school and be aware of what your child gets up to each day.



ClassDojo

Newsletter Communication

Alawa's Primary School newsletter is written every Wednesday and a digital copy is sent to all families via email, made available via the Xuno Parent Portal and is on the Alawa Primary School website. This newsletter will keep you in touch with what is happening in and around the school, look out for our weekly preschool article.

XUNO

It is another communication app, however this one is focused on 'whole school' information. It is important to make sure you are connected to Xuno as this is where you will receive newsletters, information on current whole school events [in and around the school], parent information, the school calendar, be able to make bookings for student led conferences and access reports. The App can be downloaded for free. Details will be sent home.



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. We welcome children to bring in their scraps from home to feed to the farm animals too. 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. We also appreciate donations of old disused toys, for example lego, blocks, dress ups ect.



Swimming

Students will be offered the opportunity to engage in a swimming program run by the Royal Life Saving Society. These sessions will consist of lessons on water safety and survival. You will be given more information closer to the time in Term 4.

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.

Each group will participate in Investigation lessons. 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 and go to school assemblies and musters.

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.

Please inform the school if your child is absent due to being unwell or has a contagious illness. Ensure 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.

We are a **Nut Aware** school, which means we will notify you if there are any nut allergies within our preschool groups. The policy is available on our school website at <https://www.alwaprimary.nt.edu.au/parent-information> under Policies.

Head Lice

As per school policy, all families will be notified if head lice/nits are a problem in their child's preschool group via the Xuno app. This is the time to check your child's hair and treat if necessary. Regular checking of your child's hair and having long hair tied up each day help to prevent lice infestation.

Contagious Diseases

Children who are identified as having an infectious disease must adhere to the ... Time Out Chart as per Department of Education. Please notify your teacher of any infectious diseases and they will advise you on the time out periods. If there is an instance of an infectious disease at the preschool, families will be notified of this so they can keep watch for symptoms in their own children. More information can be found in the foyer of the preschool.

Mosquito protection and sunscreen

Please apply sunscreen and mosquito protection to your child **before** they come to Preschool. As per our school Sun Smart Policy, all children are encouraged to reapply sunscreen before going into the yard at lunch time. The preschool has their own sunscreen that they support children to apply on themselves before lunch. If your child has skin intolerances or requires a specific sunscreen, you will need to supply this yourself. At certain times of the year, mosquitoes can become a problem. Preschool staff will monitor the situation and provide advice to families when this becomes an issue. In times when mosquitos are particularly prevalent, you may wish to send in mosquito repellent that your child can be supported to reapply before going outside at lunch time.

We hope you and your child have a wonderful year and enjoy being part of the Alawa Preschool Community.