

# Out of School Hours Care Family Information Handbook

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## **Pole Depot Community Centre Incorporated .....**

is a government-subsidised community centre located at 23 St. Georges Road, Penshurst. The Centre is managed by a community-based Board of Management, who are responsible for the management of the programs and team employed at the Centre. The Board is elected annually and comprises users of services at Pole Depot, together with other interested persons in the community.

## **Our Children Services meet legislative requirements**

by abiding by and complying with :

- Association Incorporation Act 1984
- Family Assistance Act by offering Child Care Benefit
- Child Protection (Prohibited Employment) Act 1998 – training and updating Childcare staff as required
- Children Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 – all PDCC employees undertake Working With Children Check or Police Check on recruitment - Industrial Relations Act 1996
- NSW Food Act 2003 – safe food handling, preparation and storage, Childcare undertake training as required
- Occupational Safety Act 2000 – all employees are given orientation on their responsibilities in relation to OHS, compliance is monitored/reported against. OHS committee established – all members undertaken OHS Consultation training, Childcare undertake relevant training as required
- Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (NSW) 1998 – policy and documents stating intention of use of information in place and followed, all PDCC employees sign commitment to follow confidentiality
- National Standards for OSHC – voluntary compliance to agreed standards
- Out of School Hours Care Quality Assurance – all services registered and follow set processes for accreditation

The Children services team members are qualified (or studying) and/or experienced in either children services or teaching. Our team aims to make your child's stay with us an enjoyable and satisfying experience.

Our philosophy is reinforced by set policies and procedures for the care offered. The philosophy is displayed at all centres. Should you be interested in perusing policies, they are always available at the centres.

## **Children Services Philosophy**

At Pole Depot, we strive to provide a nurturing and inclusive environment for children in their middle school years, in which they feel secure, welcomed and supported.

We provide opportunities where children can develop life skills in a healthy and hygienic setting. We encourage children to participate in stimulating, recreational-based activities where tolerance, independence and self concept are fostered to develop the whole child.

We recognise, respect and value all families' diversity by implementing a program which reflects our community cultures.

## Goal

To provide high quality care for school aged children in middle childhood, in a safe, stimulating and supportive play-focused learning environment enabling parents/carers to pursue work or study/training or other activities.

## Objectives

- Foster independence, confidence and resilience in all children
- Provide opportunities for children to develop life skills, using their initiative and problem solving, building confidence, competence, self-esteem, self-concept and autonomy.
- Encourage positive behaviour, tolerance and acceptance through praise, recognition and modeling to foster the development of every child's social self
- Recognise and respect difference amongst families. Value and celebrate the diversity within our services and community
- Work together with schools, local community and other stakeholders to reach our goal
- Be professional in all areas regarding families, team and organisational expectations.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Before School Care

Before School Care is a great program for children who need care before school hours. Children will enjoy structured and unstructured play within a stimulating program which creates readiness for the day ahead.

## After School Care

Our After School Care programs offer a wide range of flexible experiences and activities. Children have play options across a variety of materials and resources including arts, crafts, music, cooking and sports. Children select and plan their own activities and experiences, with the support of qualified, experienced team members. Space and time is offered for homework and team members can assist if requested.

## Vacation Care

Vacation Care provides care to middle school-aged children during the School Holiday periods. In the January Vacation Care program each year, care is not available to those children not yet started school. Our dynamic and flexible Vacation Care programs offer great fun and diversity through activity theme days, excursions and in centre options as well as specialty clinics and workshops.

## Ages for Children Using Our Services

Care is available only for children who have already begun their school life. For further information regarding which centre your child will attend, please refer to the general information section of 1. Registration.

## Family Assistance

Pole Depot is an Approved provider and therefore can offer Child Care Benefit (CCB).

To register for Family Assistance and CCB visit [www.familyassistance.gov.au](http://www.familyassistance.gov.au) or please phone 132 413.. All families wishing to use our services must register beforehand. See 1.3 page 4.

## Signing Children In and Signing Children Out

Parents MUST sign their children in and out of the centre at the time of arrival and departure. This procedure is a legal requirement of the funding body as it is linked to your childcare benefit payments. See 1.3e) page 4.

***IN EMERGENCIES ONLY CAN A PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF 18 BE PERMITTED TO COLLECT A CHILD AND SIGN THEM OUT***

## Accreditation

Pole Depot Out of School Hours Care services all comply with the Principles embedded within the 8 Quality Areas of the Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance System as outlined by the National Child Care Accreditation Council. The Accreditation process ensures that centres across Australia continually strive to maintain and improve all aspects of the program. Our team is committed to improving the standards of quality care.

## The Children Services team

We recognise that the care of large groups of school-aged children for significant periods of time requires team members to have specialist knowledge, skills and experience. Qualifications in Out of School Hours Care, Early Childhood care and/or teaching, primary teaching and recreation are considered to be valuable qualifications for OOSH.

Staff:child ratios will be adhered to at all times and are as follows:

- There shall be a maximum of 15 children to 1 team member in centre.
- There shall be a maximum of 10 children to 1 team member for excursions.
- There shall be a maximum of 5 children to 1 team member for excursions near/in water.

There is a minimum of 2 team members present at any one time. All are deemed to be fit and proper persons to provide a care for children. This evaluation is made through such things as Working With Children Checks, contacting referees, 100 point identification check, establishing the persons good character and assessing their capabilities to provide an adequate standard of care.

## Australian Government Priority of Access

The demand for care sometimes exceeds supply. The Australian Government has determined guidelines for allocating places in such circumstances. These guidelines apply to OOSH services.

Pole Depot follows the guidelines which are :

- Priority 1:** a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- Priority 2:** a child of a parent (or both parents if there is a partner) who satisfies the Government's work, training, study test.
- Priority 3:** any other child

Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following :

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- Children in families which include a disabled person
- Children in families on lower incomes
- Children in families with a non-English speaking background
- Children in socially isolated families
- Children of single parents

The guidelines also state "...Any service that has no vacant places and is providing care for a Priority 3 child may require that child to leave the service in order for the service to provide a place for a higher priority child....." However, discretion will be used to evaluate every case on an individual basis. Full details can be found in the "Child Care Services Handbook" [www.facs.gov.au](http://www.facs.gov.au)

## Inclusion Support Program

The Inclusion Support Program aims to build the capacity of eligible children services to include children who require additional support to access mainstream services. In this area the Kindergarten Union (KU) is currently the support agency and is funded by the Commonwealth Government. Please contact the Children's Services' Manager or Assistant Manager to discuss this further if you have a child with special needs.

Children with additional needs include:

- Children with a disability
- Children from a non-English speaking background
- Children from an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background
- Children from an Australian South Sea Islander background

## Program and Activities

Program plans are in place for each individual service, they are written plans which have been collaboratively developed by each team using several tools and strategies. We encourage the children and parents/guardians to be involved by providing input and feedback, this then ensures children's needs (e.g. age, cultural diversity, developmental stages and interests) are met. They are evaluated and developed regularly and displayed in a prominent position. A range of equipment is provided to meet the outside school hours developmental needs of the children. The equipment and other resources are suitable, safe and well maintained. We aim to offer play choices which foster children's social competence, building on life skills and self esteem. In Vacation Care, as some children spend a substantial amount of time in our care, activities will include excursions, incursions and other recreational and creative experiences.

## Child Protection and Protective Behaviour

Pole Depot is, as all Children services, a mandatory reporter in cases where a child is suspected of being at risk of harm. A structured process under the new Keep Them Safe government initiative is followed to determine the course of action to be taken. All team members have undergone training and are aware of issues relating to child protection. The Board of Pole Depot expects all team members to uphold a high Duty of Care, children's safety is the priority, team members are responsible to keep all children SAFE AT ALL TIMES.

## Food and Nutrition

We offer a healthy nutritious snack/afternoon tea at all centres, based on the five food groups. Children are given the opportunity to develop their self help skills through food preparation, service and encouraged to use best practise in regards to food safety measures. Team members aim to create a calm atmosphere which incorporates the fostering of social skills. In Vacation Care parents should send sufficient food and drink for the entire day. See clause 10.3 and page 14.

**Nut Free Zone** - to reduce the risk of anaphylactic reactions.

**PLEASE NOTE WE ARE A NUT FREE SERVICE.**

**NO NUT PRODUCTS ARE TO BE SENT OR CONSUMED WITHIN THE CENTRES**

**ALL** parents are asked not send **any** food containing Nut or Nut related products with their child, in response to the increase in children's nut allergies. This includes peanut butter, 'Nutella', cookies, muesli bars or chocolate.

## Illness

If your child becomes ill while at the Centre, you will be notified as soon as possible to discuss treatment and collection. In spite of implementing infection control measures at the centres, infection spreads rapidly among children. Therefore, to help maintain a healthy and happy environment, please

**KEEP SICK CHILDREN HOME FROM BEFORE AND/OR AFTER SCHOOL CARE AND SCHOOL**

**Children will be excluded** from all services if suffering from an infectious/contagious disease or condition eg. chicken pox, head lice, etc. (see policy for more information and exclusion periods)

Contagious/Infectious Disease Policy :

Parents will be notified immediately, the child will be kept isolated when identified as suffering from a contagious illness/condition until collected by the parent, The child will not be permitted to return until a certificate of clearance is produced indicating the condition is no longer contagious/infectious.

## Accidents

In cases of emergency or accident, medical attention will be sought for your child, however, these expenses must be borne by the parent.

Accident Policy :

In the event of an accident which is unable to be treated by First Aid administered by a trained team member, or if there is a change in consciousness, head, back or neck injuries, extensive bleeding, eye injury or convulsions - an ambulance will be called. Staff or Board members are not to transport injured children in their own car, ambulance expenses must be borne by the parent.

**Parents need to be aware that First Aid guidelines are followed, water will be the only means of cleaning a wound and no topical solution/cream is kept in the First Aid kit.**

## Emergency Procedures

To ensure the safety of the children, Emergency Exit and Lockdown procedures will be practised on a regular basis – once per Term for BASC and once per week in Vacation Care.

## Changes to Care – personal details/sessions/termination/etc

**All changes** to information provided on original Registration Forms are to be formalised in writing (see 5 (e)) on Pole Depots forms. These forms can be obtained by asking the Children Services Coordinator, from the Office during business hours or downloaded from our website [www.poledepot.org](http://www.poledepot.org). When completed, these are to be handed to the relevant Children's Services' Coordinator for processing. Changes to Care forms need to be submitted at least one week prior to the change occurring, Termination of Care forms also need to be submitted at least one week prior to care ceasing (4.1 (b)). *Changes to care will be implemented from the day indicated, unless otherwise notified.*

## Confidentiality

Pole Depot acknowledges and follows confidentiality guidelines as outlined in legislative requirements.

## Medication

Pole Depot understands that from time to time children in care may require medication.

Medication policy : "...Medication will only be administered with the explicit written permission and instructions of the parents/guardians or in the case of an emergency, a medical practitioner will be contacted/attended. Specific consideration will be given to children who carry asthma medication in their school bags...." This policy is due for review and a draft will be made available for feedback.

Forms for both regular and incidental administration of medication are available from Children Services Coordinators. Parents need to be aware that non prescription medication such as Panadol cannot be administered to children whilst in our care unless accompanied by an appropriate Medical Plan and a medical authorisation. See 8.3 (d) page 12

## Smoke Free Zone

Smoking is not allowed in the Centre or its surrounding buildings, grounds or facilities.

## Your compliance and agreement

At the conclusion of the Registration Form are sections to read and sign in regard to acknowledging and agreeing to be bound by information and instructions given to you in this Booklet and the Registration Form. It is imperative that all information is read and understood prior to signing. Confidentiality is included in this section. These signatures are taken as your full agreement to comply.

# 1. REGISTRATION

Parents must ensure that all forms are filled in correctly, legibly and completely only by a parent/carer who has lawful authority in relation to the child/ren on the form. If you are unsure of anything on the Registration Form, please speak to a team member to clarify. If your child/ren has special circumstances, this is of the utmost importance and is required to be included on the Registration Form e.g. a diagnosed illness/condition; a court order is in place; behaviour management issues, etc. If you tick yes in the 'Child's Medical History and Family Information' section, ensure sufficient information is given to enable the children services team to meet their needs in an informed and appropriate manner. Also, supply a copy of management plans currently in place.

If a Registration Form is submitted and not completed correctly, with information omitted, it **will not be processed** until clarification is obtained and this may result in a delay in processing the form and delays may impact on the availability of care. Dates of birth and CRNs for parent/s and children MUST be given for CCB. Ensure that all areas requiring signatures are completed, that correct days and sessions are shown, 'Emergency Contacts' MUST be people OTHER than the parents of the child/ren. If 'People other than parents that may collect child/ren' are the same people indicated as 'Emergency Contacts', please show this on the form. If there is not a second parent for contact purposes, please indicate this on the form by crossing this section and initialling it. All areas are to have some form of written response from the parent/carer.

Pole Depot currently has four After School Care Centres -

1. If your child/ren attend(s) Hurstville Grove Infants or Mortdale Public, they will attend **Mortdale After School Care** located in the hall of Mortdale Public School in Colebourne Avenue, Mortdale.
2. If your child/ren attend(s) Penshurst West Public they will attend **Penshurst West After School Care** located in the hall of Penshurst West Public School, corner of Forest Rd and Scott St Mortdale (opposite Olds Park).
3. If your child/ren attend(s) Penshurst Public or St Declans Catholic (Penshurst) Schools, they will attend **Pole Depot After School Care Centre** located at 23 St Georges Rd Penshurst.
4. If your child/ren attend(s) Narwee Public School they will attend **Narwee After School Care** located on the school grounds, Broad Arrow Road, Narwee.

There are two Before School Care centres – one at Narwee Public School and the other held at Pole Depot Community Centre located at 23 St Georges Rd Penshurst.

Vacation Care (unless otherwise notified) is also at Pole Depot community Centre.

### 1.1 Annual Before and After School Care (BASC) Registration & Enrolment

Enrolments for the following year are conducted during November each year. **It is necessary to re-enrol your child/ren each year.**

Parents must fulfil the following procedure in order to ensure their child/ren are registered for the following year :

- a) **Legibly complete in full** a Registration Form (ask for assistance if needed); and
- b) pay the annual Equipment Levy, which includes Injury Insurance. Please note that this levy is not refundable and covers Before School, After School and Vacation Care for the current calendar year.

### 1.2 **Annual Vacation Care (V/C) Only - Registration & Enrolment Only**

- a) **Legibly complete in full** a registration form (ask for assistance if needed); and
- b) pay the annual Equipment Levy, which includes Injury Insurance. This fee is not refundable.
- c) Booking priority is as follows:-  
All forms received on enrolment day will be numbered in order of receipt at the centre. We currently use the following priority system to assess each registration form, it is aligned with the Australian Government 'Priority of Access Guidelines' . The forms are sorted as follows :
  - Priority 1:** a child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
  - Priority 2:** a child of a parent (or both parents if there is a partner) who satisfies the Government's work, training, study test living inside the St. George area and/or are current Pole Depot Before and After Care Users.
  - Priority 3:** a child of a parent (or both parents if there is a partner) who satisfies the Government's work, training, study test living outside the St George Area.
  - Priority 4:** a child of a parent/s or guardian (non-working), living in the St George area.

*Please note: All forms received after enrolment day will not be prioritised, but will be accepted in order of receipt and subject to vacancies.*
- d) Each V/C, a Booking Fee will be required at the time of booking (regardless if prior to, or during the V/C program) this will be detailed in the V/C Package. This amount is not refundable.
- e) Confirmation of V/C Bookings is the parents' responsibility and details will be outlined in the V/C package for each holiday period.
- f) Vacation Care will only be offered at Pole Depot, 23 St Georges Road, Penshurst, unless otherwise specified.

### 1.3 **Child Care Benefit (CCB)**

- a) **It is essential for you to register with the Family Assistance Office - All children** attending BASC and/or V/C need to have a CRN (Customer Registration Number) regardless of whether you are claiming CCB. Families will be charged full fees until they have contacted the FAO to obtain CRN's for themselves and their child/ren, then passed this information onto Pole Depot to be entered into CCMS.
- b) Ensure all details are correct and valid. You no longer need to provide documentation to Pole Depot if you have more than one child in care, as this will be ascertained by DEEWR.
- c) Families need to contact the FAO in writing, by visiting any Centrelink office, or by phoning **13 61 50** when any changes occur in your family circumstances.
- d) All Pole Depot's Children services are Approved providers of BASC and V/C and therefore CCB is available
- e) Families are to contact the Family Assistance Office (FAO) re eligibility to receive the Child Care Benefit.
- f) Eligible families will be able to receive the CCB through Pole Depot, or, alternatively, receive the CCB as an end-of-financial-year lump sum payment through FAO.
- g) Initial CCB may be backdated for up to twenty eight days, but ask FAO when you register.
- h) CCB will only be granted to families when they comply with government guidelines, i.e. children **MUST** be signed into the centre - Before School Care and Vacation Care; and out of the centre – After School Care and Vacation Care. Initials and correct times are to be shown on appropriate documents. This is audited both internally and externally, non-compliance will result in NO CCB.
- i) CCB is now dealt with online through the national Child Care Management System (CCMS). Pole Depot records child, enrolment and attendance information and reports to Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) via the internet. This allows the calculation and payment of CCB on behalf of all the children enrolled. CCMS enables the government to better track supply and usage of child care places and ensures that CCB fee reductions are calculated on each child's actual use of care. DEEWR will utilise participation and other details for all enrolled children to gather statistics e.g. Census, vacancies, etc.
- j) Details of care usage for ALL children is submitted to DEEWR weekly
- k) If your family is undergoing short-term financial hardship due to exceptional circumstances, you may be eligible to receive **Special Child Care Benefit** for up to 13 weeks to cover the cost of your fees. Please discuss your circumstances with the Manager as there are specific eligibility criteria.

### 1.4 **Casual Care Bookings**

Casual care will only be offered if vacancies exist at the service in which you require care. Following registration, parents need to call the office to speak to the Children's Services' Manager or Assistant Manager to enquire if there is indeed vacancies on required day/s. There is an additional cost for using care casually; this is \$2.00 per child per session.

### 1.5 Immunisation is linked to CCB

The FAO will check the immunisation status of children when families apply for CCB, you do not need to provide evidence to Pole Depot. However, if your child/ren is not immunised, this is to be shown on Registration Form.

### 1.6 Absences from care

- a) Under Child Care Management System (CCMS), CCB is paid for up to 42 days absences (including public holidays) for each child per financial year without the need to provide documentation such as medical certificates. An absence from both Before and After School Care counts as two (2) absences from care.
- b) All absences beyond the first 42 days will only be paid for as 'additional absences' if evidence is provided that the absence occurred under permitted circumstances i.e. illness (with medical certificate), child's non-immunisation when there is an outbreak of infectious disease, school closure (not strikes), pupil-free days where care cannot be offered, local emergencies, sickness of parent/sibling (with medical certificate) and exceptional circumstances.
- c) 'Additional absences' do not include public holidays
- d) Ensure that the days you book for V/C are the days your child will attending. Non attendance of V/C, also counts towards your child/ren's total absences.

## 2. HOURS OF OPERATION

Before School Care Pole Depot	6.30am – 9.30am
Before School Care Narwee	7.00am – 9.20am
After School Care Mortdale and Pole Depot	3.00pm – 6.00pm
After School Care Penshurst West and Narwee	3.25pm – 6.00pm
Public School Pupil Free days	7.00am – 6.00pm (extension of Vacation Care – Term 2 and 3)
Vacation Care	7.00am – 6.00pm

## 3. FEES & CHARGES

### 3.1 BASC Fees

- a) The following rates apply:
 

Annual Registration Fee	\$50/chd (maximum \$100/family)
Before School Care (care only)	\$15.00 per session
After School Care (care only)	\$18.00 per session
Transport for BASC	\$3.00 per trip per child
Casual Care (Before or After School Care)	\$2.00 additional per session
Breakfast (if used)	\$2.00 per meal
- b) Fee payments are to be made on a regular basis, weekly/fortnightly or monthly, but need to remain up to date or in advance throughout the year.
- c) Pole Depot cannot provide change for overpayment of fees, therefore, where overpayment is made, any excess will be credited to your account (shown in brackets on receipts and statements).
- d) Transport charges must be maintained.
- e) Pole Depot does not receive funding for Before and After School Care programs and therefore cannot carry outstanding fees. Board of Management policy will be strictly followed in regard to fee payment and debt collection.
- f) Fees (care and transport) are still payable in the event of public holidays, non-attendance by your child due to sickness, family holidays and teachers' strikes when they fall on your child's permanently booked care days. This follows DEEWR policy and CCB is calculated for these days. Documentation is required for absences past 42, see Clause 1.5.
- g) Personal fee payments may be made at the Office between 9.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday, or via the locked fee box located in the Pole Depot kitchen, during Before School or After School Care hours Monday to Friday. No fees will be accepted by any Children service team members at centres.
- h) Cheques and BPAY are the preferred forms of payment, cheques are to be made payable to *Pole Depot*. Payment of fees by cheque may be posted to Pole Depot.
- i) If paying by cash, please assist by paying the exact amount (see 3.1(a)).
- j) When paying in person, please mark a provided envelope clearly with your child's full name, service paying for, date paid, amount enclosed and if it is a cash or a cheque payment.
- k) BPAY facility is available to all families. On registration, each family is allotted a reference number and this number is printed on invoices and receipts. BPAY payments can be scheduled in advance, see your internet banking procedures.

- l) Receipts are to be collected from receipt box located near Sign On/Off Book in the hall at each centre.

### 3.2 Vacation Care Fees

- a) The following rates apply:

Annual Vacation Care Registration Fee	\$25/child (max. of \$50.00/family). <i>This fee is payable for Vacation Care service <b>ONLY</b> users. This fee is not deducted from the full amount due and is not refundable.</i>
Vacation Care Booking Fee	\$20.00 per family, paid on Booking for each Vacation Care program. This amount is not refundable.
Vacation Care Daily Care fee	\$32.00
Excursions/workshops charges	additional cost - specific to each item on Program

- b) The correct cash or cheque amount of \$20.00 for the VC Booking Fee only is to be paid on the day of booking.
- c) Current BASC users **DO NOT** combine payments for BASC with your V/C Booking Fee **OR** V/C balance of payment. If you need to pay outstanding BASC fees place your payments into a separate envelope with your child/ren's name, service being used, amount and date of payment and pay to the office or via the fees chute in the kitchen at the Pole Depot centre.
- d) V/C fees will be payable on receipt of an invoice which will be distributed each week following participation details being forwarded to DEEWR .
- e) Registration (Equipment Levy) and Booking fees are non-refundable.
- f) Computer-generated receipts for V/C payments will be available following payments.
- g) BASC fees are to be paid in full prior to commencement of V/C. As all fees are to be kept up to date or in advance, BASC fees should not be in arrears at the completion of any school term. Failure to comply, will jeopardise your child/ren's place in V/C. This policy will be strictly observed.

### 3.3 Pupil Free Days (Staff Development Days)

- a) Care is offered on two State Public School **Pupil Free Days** each year – they are, Monday at the commencement of Term 2 and Term 3.
- b) Care can only be provided if ten (10) or more children require care.
- c) These days are an extension of Vacation Care and will be included in the Booking form for April and July programs and charged as Vacation Care.
- d) If your child is permanently booked into Before and/or After School Care on that day and they attend care, BASC fees do not apply, it is charged as Vacation Care
- e) Pupil Free Days for St Declan's are not scheduled as for public schools and care may not be able to be offered. Each PFD for St Declan's will be examined individually and notification will be given if care will be available.

### 3.4 Outstanding Fees

When fees fall two weeks or two hundred dollars into arrears the following process will immediately and automatically be undertaken:

- Letters and invoices will be forwarded giving specific timeframes to correct the issue.
- If communication regarding the matter or payment is not received by the due date in the initial letter, the matter will be passed to debt collection for further dealing.
- If families continue the pattern of allowing fees to fall into arrears of two weeks or two hundred dollars, care will be permanently cancelled when :
  - the matter requires to be forwarded to debt collection a second time
  - care is cancelled due to non-payment of fees a second time

### 3.5 Fines – After School Care and/or Vacation Care

- Late fine – arriving after 6pm \$15.00 for every fifteen minutes or part there-of.  
e.g arrival at 6.08pm = \$15.00 arrival at 6.22pm = \$30.00
- A Non-Notification of Absence \$8.00 - See 5(e)

### 3.6 Account Enquiries

Please direct enquiries regarding your account to the bookkeeper, Monday-Friday, 9am to 3pm - **NOT** Children services team members or the Children Services Manager.

## 4. CANCELLATION

### 4.1 BASC Cancellation

- a) In the event of your child/ren not commencing care with Pole Depot after having enrolled for the year

- and the Equipment Levy has been paid, plus an advance payment of fees, only the fee amount will be refunded after deducting the Equipment Levy (see 1.1b).
- b) In the event of your child/ren commencing care and terminating at any time during the year, **one full weeks' notice in writing** is required – using the appropriate 'Termination of Care' form available from the Office, the centres or the website. There will be no refund of the Equipment Levy.
  - c) In the event that a 'Termination of Care' form is not received one week prior to care ending:
    - CCB will only be calculated until the last day of child's attendance,
    - Fees will be generated for a full week from the date of the form's receipt.
    - Full fees (no CCB) will be allocated to the sessions following the child's departure, until the week specified above has ended.
    - The full amount is payable by parent/carer
    - If payment is not received, the matter will be passed to debt collection.
  - d) **Care will not be cancelled without written notice** to the centre by the parent/carer and *fees will continue to be generated until documentation is received.*
  - e) In the event that care is again required in the same calendar year following termination, a minimum exclusion period of eight weeks will be required from the initial termination date.
  - f) Please indicate on 'Termination' form the reason for ending care and we would appreciate your comments on the quality of care that has been provided to your family

#### 4.2 V/C Cancellation

- a) If care is cancelled completely (in writing) one week or more before Vacation Care is to commence, care fees will not be charged (i.e. on or before Friday of second last week of Term - date will be indicated on the V/C letter). The Booking Fee will be forfeited. However, if care is cancelled completely less than one week prior to the V/C program or during, all care fees are payable on receipt of the invoice. However, if on days where care is now not required and excursions have been booked, charges for these excursions will not be payable only if another child can replace your child/ren on the excursion/s.
- b) If your child/ren are booked into care, but do not attend, 'absences' will be recorded toward the 42 day limit.

## 5. PARENT PROCEDURES

- a) Before School Care: **Parents MUST accompany their child/ren onto the premises** and sign the 'PARENT SIGN-IN SHEET' located in the hall, indicating the correct time of arrival.
- b) After School Care: **Parents MUST come into the Centre to collect** their child/ren and sign the 'PARENT SIGN-OFF SHEET' located in the hall, also indicating the correct time of collection.
- c) Vacation Care:
  - **Parents must accompany their child/ren onto the premises by 9.00am** and sign the 'PARENT SIGN-IN SHEET' located in the hall, indicating the correct time of arrival
  - **Parents must come into the Centre to collect** their child/ren and sign the 'PARENT SIGN-OFF SHEET' by 6.00pm. Indicating the correct time of collection
  - Signing in and out are on the same sheet.

***Please note: It is a legal requirement for families to follow this procedure, failure to do so will jeopardise receipt of CCB and risk your child's safety.***

- d) Parents must notify the Centre in writing of any change to the information on the Registration Form (telephone numbers, address, permanent change in days, etc.). A form for this purpose can be obtained from Children services team members at centres, acquired from office during business hours (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday) or downloaded from website [www.poledepot.org](http://www.poledepot.org).
- e) Parents must notify Pole Depot of their child/ren's absence from After School Care and Vacation Care, giving a reason for the absence. If for After School Care, it is to be before 2pm by telephoning 9580 0688, if for Vacation Care the call is to be made to 0451 518 429 before 9am (if booked on excursion – at least 15 minutes prior to departure time). This will prevent a fine being incurred. If the absence is beyond the 42 days (see 1.6), follow the information shown. If the child/ren are absent due to an infectious/contagious condition or illness, this information is to be passed to team members, so notices can be displayed.
- f) Children services team members will not permit people other than those nominated on the Registration Form to collect children unless a **signed authorisation form** has been received prior to children leaving the Centre. This may be obtained from a team member. In an emergency situation, a parent/carer may contact the office/a team member to inform them of a different person collecting on that day. This person is to provide photographic identification as evidence that they are indeed the

- person nominated by the parent.
- g) Parents wishing to contact the teams after 4.30pm or during Vacation Care need to phone:
- |                       |                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Pole Depot</b>     | <b>0451 518 429</b>                   |
| <b>Mortdale</b>       | <b>0451 518 425</b>                   |
| <b>Penshurst West</b> | <b>0411 405 226</b>                   |
| <b>Narwee</b>         | <b>0422 389 986</b>                   |
| <b>Vacation Care</b>  | <b>ONLY 0451 518 429 or 9580 0688</b> |

## 6. COMPLAINTS & FEEDBACK

**6.1** Feedback is important in ensuring that services are continuing to meet the needs of families and for services' continuing improvement planning purposes. An important source of feedback is through complaints/ suggestions; these are welcomed and encouraged by Pole Depot. This is also a tangible way to praise the work of Children services team members. The form and book are located next to the sign in and out sheets. We greatly value your input and rely on your feedback to continue to improve the high quality of our service. Another way of providing feedback is by completing the Annual Service Evaluation survey and/or the Vacation Care surveys.

Parents have the right to complain and to suggest changes to the services they receive without fear of retribution and can expect complaints to be dealt with fairly and promptly. All complaints will be taken seriously and treated confidentially. The Children services Coordinators take steps to ensure that clients feel comfortable to continue accessing the service after making a complaint.

Parents are welcome to:

- complain by telephone or in person
- use the written suggestions/complaint form (available from team member) or by letter
- use an advocate to help procure a change in service.

### 6.2 **Complaints procedure**

- You can complain to a team member or the Centre Director.
- You can complain in person, by phone or ask your advocate to negotiate for you.
- Written complaints will receive an acknowledgement of receipt letter within 24 hours of receipt
- Within five working days, both you and the team member concerned (if complaint involved a team member) will be informed by letter of the action being taken in regard to the complaint. This letter will assure you that no retribution will follow the complaint and that confidentiality is guaranteed.
- Verbal and written complaints will be recorded on the PDCC complaints register
- If you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint, you can ask the Board of Management to rule on the complaint
- Once a written complaint has been received by the Board of Management, the Board will convene a meeting with the client, or an advocate (if preferred) at a mutually convenient time, and attempt to resolve the problem in a way that is acceptable to both parties.
- If you need to take your complaint further, contact:  
 The Commissioner for Community Services  
 Level 3, 128 Chalmers Street  
 Surry Hills NSW 2010

## 7. CODE OF BEHAVIOUR and CODE OF CONDUCT

Please advise Pole Depot on the Registration Form of any potential behaviour from your child/ren that is liable to impede the guidelines set down for appropriate and safe play or the provision of care. If a Behaviour Management Plan is in place for your child/ren, please discuss further with team members and provide a copy of the plan. Please ensure that the Code of Behaviour (outlined below) is read to/with your child/ren so they understand it and the consequence of not abiding by it. There is also several Codes of Conduct for each specific component of the Childcare Program e.g. Climbing Equipment, Walking to and from School, Physical Play, Areas that are not for play. A full set of these are displayed at each centre with a copy found in a folder at each centre.

*Everyone at our Centres has the right to feel safe and secure both emotionally and physically. They have the right to have their personal space and property respected.*

*Everyone has responsibility to care for ourselves, other children, parents and children services team members.*

*Everyone must take care of people's belongings, our centres' equipment and the centre environment.*

A positive approach to behaviour is desirable to foster a climate within which personal responsibility and self discipline will be encouraged and developed. The 'Code' governs our daily actions at the centre, at school, out in the community and at home. Families are asked to sign the Registration Form as acknowledgement and agreement to support the Code of Behaviour.

### 7.1 Pole Depot Acceptable Behaviour Guidelines:

We show Care, Consideration and Safety through Respect, Responsibility and Rights. We all need to :

- (a) respect and support others - speak with respect to others; use appropriate language; listen to others; use appropriate body language; be on time; use good manners; make amends by positive action; value each other;
- (b) co-operate so that everyone can enjoy and learn - include others; co operate; take turns; accept losing; look after each other; encourage others; be honest; think of the feelings of others; try to understand others
- (c) act in a manner that is safe for ourselves and others – walk with care and safety; put things away carefully and where they 'live'; assemble where we should with care and consideration; use equipment correctly and safely; follow procedures when walking and travelling by vehicle,
- (d) respect property and the centre environment - care and use games/toys and equipment as intended; care for the property of others and their work; care for the centre and the environment
- (e) sort out our problems considerately - find solutions which do not involve physical contact; try to work out our problems ourselves; ask a carer or someone else; solve problems in a fair and reasonable manner; negotiate; listen to others; recognise that the problem could look different from another perspective; use 'stop and think' time
- (f) keep ourselves and others safe – play in designated areas of the centre or grounds that are supervised and safe; play on equipment only under supervision and follow rules; play safe games; play in a safe manner – balls only are to be thrown (supervised) – natural things from the ground stay on the ground; use games and sports equipment safely – as intended or instructed; use toilets appropriately – they are not a place to play; dangerous items to be left at home; expensive/valuable items to be left at home (or in the safe keeping of the Coordinator until collected by parent/carers) - walkmans, computer games, mobile telephones, jewellery etc.

### 7.2 Specific Rules:

- (a) Bullying will not be tolerated under any circumstances, either threatened, verbal or physical.
- (b) Violence will be treated very seriously.
- (c) Contact sports/games are not permitted unless in a highly structured/supervised sport/game.
- (d) Children use the main front door only when requested by a carer (to play outside) and when arriving or departing with a parent/carers
- (e) Children are to remain in view of at least one carer at all times
- (f) No one is to leave the grounds - parents will be contacted, and the Police – this relates to the safety of children and carers.
- (g) Dangerous items such as knives, bottles, war toys, matches, crackers etc. must not be brought to centre. If observed by carers these items will be confiscated.
- (h) We all must be responsible and report when rules or guidelines are broken and when dangerous items are observed.

### 7.3 Consequences:

- (a) **WE** take responsibility for our own behaviour. The **consequences for choosing** inappropriate/unacceptable or aggressive behaviour:-
  - are predictable
  - are consistently applied
  - occur following a behaviour choice - i.e. unacceptable behaviour/breaking the guidelines or rules of the centre are understood by the children, they are related to the behaviour and are just
  - are made clear and expressed as a part of the behaviour 'choice' that children are presented with at the time when unacceptable behaviour occurs. Sometimes this is understood, for example when the behaviour has been ongoing and the choices have been previously outlined.
- (b) Consequences will be dependant on the severity and repetitiveness of the behaviour. Pole Depot Childcare team members will use set strategies when guidelines are not followed or centre rules are broken

### 7.4 Positive strategies for Minor Incidents:

Utilised when minor incidents occur:

- (a) Treat every incident as new. Previous episodes are not to be used as 'ammunition' toward the present behaviour. All are to be documented fully, to identify a trend or trigger.
- (b) Statements and/or questions that may be used :
  - "...(name).... You are not 'in trouble'. Let's talk about it now and we can sort it out together"

- “...(name)... if you stay angry, then you may do something that you shouldn’t. Then there will be consequences for you doing the wrong thing”
  - “...(name)... walk away and we will talk about it calmly when you are ready”
  - “...(name)...would you like to settle down while playing with ...(special game)... for ten minutes ? We will talk about it calmly after that, OK?”
  - “...(name)... would you like to sit in a special place while you settle down? Then we can talk about it when you are ready.”
- (c) If child does not take any of the options suggested, Children services team member will explain the consequences that may occur. These will be dependent on gravity of resultant behaviour.
- (d) Suspension :
- will occur if behaviour is consistently aggressive or physical and/or strategies are unsuccessful.
  - from care will not result in refund of fees.
  - Initial suspension will be applied following contact with the parent/carer and will be for a period of two (2) days with a probationary period of one (1) week when attendance recommences.
  - If, in this one week period, similar behaviour occurs that resulted in the suspension, the parent/carer will be contacted immediately. A further suspension of five (5) days will take place. On return to care, another probationary period will be undertaken, this time for two (2) weeks.
  - If, in this period, it is necessary for consequences to be followed due to behaviour, care will no longer be offered. This will occur from the day following the behavioural incident, as parents/carers will again be informed immediately, on the day of the behaviour.

### 7.5 Strategies for Major Incidents

Major incidents of inappropriate behaviour will result in **immediate termination of care**. Violent physical assaults on team members and/or children or wilful destruction of large pieces of equipment/resources will be seen as major incidents.

## 8. GENERAL INFORMATION

### 8.1 Communication - Hints for maintaining a successful partnership

- (a) Open and honest communication is essential in maintaining a successful and ongoing relationship.
- (b) Discuss any concerns you have with team members quickly to minimise stress and misunderstanding. The Children Services’ Co-ordinator will assist both parent and team member if required.
- (c) Children are very perceptive so avoid discussing them or concerns where they can hear you. It is a good idea to make an appointment to discuss issues which may take time to resolve.
- (d) Feedback on your child is continual throughout the year with verbal feedback exchanged daily, individual parent meetings can be arranged at anytime.
- (e) Parents/carers should read the information displayed on the white/cork/notice boards at each centre. This is often the fastest way we can broadcast information to families.
- (f) Team members are interested in **your** suggestions and opinions, so please do not hesitate to contact them for any reason. Feedback on the program content, the menu, certain activities, etc. can be written on the actual program plan or in the suggestion book.
- (g) ‘e-news’ will be distributed fortnightly, with some ad-hoc issues with specific information or reminders. These will be sent via email with some hard copies at centres. Important information about the service and other programs within the organisation is included in this document, as well as community updates, etc. There may also be other documents included with the newsletter.

### 8.2 Service Delivery

- (a) Birthdays are very special to a child. Please feel free to discuss with team members if you wish to celebrate this occasion with other children at the centre.
- (b) Afternoon tea for After School Care is served at approximately 4pm and this cost is included in the fees.
- (c) A program of activities and menu is displayed at each centre for Before and After School Care.
- (d) Assistance and/or participation from parents is always welcome. If you have a special skill and you are able to come and teach the children, please talk to the Children Services Coordinator so this can be arranged. Your help in supplying us with a variety of new resources and scrap materials, recycled goods, etc. will be utilised in our programs, specific items are indicated on our ‘wish list’.
- (e) Parents/carers are now required to give consent on the Registration Form for their child/ren to participate in face painting and use of coloured hairspray.
- (f) In the interest of continual improvement, please assist team members with all requests, especially in regard to surveys and Service Evaluations.
- (g) Children walking to &/or from schools are escorted by Children Services team members (ratio is 1:10

- children).
- (h) Mark all of your child/ren's belongings clearly with their name(s) to avoid losing them. Lost property will be kept for two weeks only. Children are discouraged from bringing toys/games and valuables to the centre. If a child does bring 'precious' items to the centre Pole Depot bears no responsibility if it is lost or damaged.
- (i) If your child has any special needs, please indicate this on the Registration Form and consult with the Children Services Coordinator.

### 8.3 Health, Hygiene and Safety

- (a) Provide healthy lunches and snacks for children at school and Vacation Care (see information included)
- (b) Persons other than the parent/carer that may collect children from care, are to be nominated on the Registration Form. Forms to add more authorised persons, are available from the office or on Pole Depot website [www.poledepot.org](http://www.poledepot.org)
- (c) If parents/carers have not collected their child/ren by 6.00pm, no one has called, team members are not able to contact them, specified emergency contact person/s are not contactable THEN Police, Community Services and Board of Management representatives will be contacted.
- (d) Medication :
- will only be administered when it is accompanied by appropriately completed authorisation forms.
  - will be stored in a secure location
  - will be administered as per indications on form and packaging
  - will only be administered when received in its original packaging – especially prescription medication bearing the child's name, dosage, Doctor's name, time required and with a current use-by date. Prescription medication also needs to be accompanied by specific current written instructions from medical practitioner prescribing the medication.
  - will only be administered by authorised team members and witnessed by another team member
- (e) Children need to have a hat to wear for outside play, following Sun Safe policy
- (f) Please ensure that your child/ren has adequate clothing for their time at Pole Depot. All children are required to put jumpers on in the cooler months, when requested by carers. Children not wearing protective clothing and footwear may be disappointed when they are not permitted to participate in outdoor activities. Thongs or loose footwear (strapped sandals with no back) are not permitted as the risk of harm is too great. In the promotion of sun safety and to minimise risk, shoestring tops with low backs are not suitable and should not be worn.
- (g) Apply sunscreen, where/when necessary, to your child before attending the centre.
- (h) Although every care will be taken with each child whilst at the Centre or travelling to the Centre with our escorts, the Centre cannot be held responsible for any accidents that may occur.
- (i) Persons collecting children from care are to be over 18 years of age.
- (j) Parent/carers of **children travelling unattended to and from the Centre** are required to write a consent letter stating the expected time of arrival at the Centre and/or departure from the Centre. These children will only be considered in our care when physically in attendance.
- (k) Emergency Evacuation Procedure is practiced each Term at all centres during Term and weekly in Vacation Care.
- (l) On occasion, your child may have an accident that requires them to change their clothing. We ask that any clothing (not underwear) used by your child be cleaned and returned to the centre. In the event of your child requiring a change of underwear, the centre will supply them with brand new underwear. If this occurs more than twice, a charge will be added to the account. Pole Depot is a charity organisation that cares for the community and any additional costs hamper the efforts of the centre.
- (m) Pole Depot Board of Management has the right to exclude any child who causes continual disruption or causes harm to others, or any child who is not following the policies and/or Code of Behaviour of the Centre.
- (n) Pole Depot Board of Management has the right to exclude any parent/carer who is aggressive, physical or antagonistic toward a team member or any child attending the services. All incidents occurring within the centres are dealt with by team members and information is passed on to families if warranted. All incidents are discussed within teams and addressed appropriately, in a timely manner.

### 8.4 Board of Management:

The Annual General Meeting of Pole Depot Community Centre Inc. is held in October/November each year. Parents are strongly encouraged to become members of Pole Depot and the Board of Management to assist with decisions and direction of services provided by Pole Depot at a management level. If you are interested in joining the Board, please contact the Centre Director.

## 9. INFORMATION SPECIFIC TO VACATION CARE

### 9.1 General V/C information

- (a) Children are to be signed into V/C **by 9.00am** on their days of attendance.
- (b) Children that have not arrived by 10.00am will be considered absent and marked as such. The \$8.00 Non notification fine will be incurred.
- (c) Children are required to bring their own nutritious morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea daily. The centre does not provide these during V/C. Children should not bring food that requires heating either by oven, microwave or hot water. The reason for this is the significant risk of harm to the child.
- (d) Excursions/Incursions marked "Everyone" means that all children are required to participate if attending care on that day. No alternate care will be provided by the centre, as this is compulsory, CCB will be calculated on this day's fee.
- (e) Apply sunscreen to your child/ren in the morning before attendance at V/C. Additional sunscreen will be provided by the centre and this will be administered by the children at morning tea and lunch time. If your child/ren has sensitive skin and/or requires more regular application, please provide your own sunscreen and educate your child when reapplication is required.
- (f) Please do not send money with your child/ren during V/C unless an excursion specifies the need. There is nowhere to spend it and the centre takes no responsibility for its safe keeping.

### 9.2 Excursions and Incursions (In-Centre performances/professional organised activities)

- (a) Excursions and Incursions are organised for V/C to help break up the weeks for children, especially those who attend the centre for long hours and every day of their break. First priority when placing children on excursions, is given to those children who attend the V/C program full-time or a minimum of 3 days in the week of the nominated excursion.
- (b) Please remember if you choose a particular excursion, it is not guaranteed that your child/ren will be attending that excursion. Never assume that your child/ren will be participating in the excursions chosen due to limited places or late receipt of bookings. Remember to **ring Pole Depot** to confirm care and excursion for your child/ren. Please take note of confirmed care and excursions for your reference.
- (c) If children are booked into an excursion, please ensure they arrive by the time shown on the program if it is prior to 9.00am. Excursions will leave as shown on program. Children will be considered absent if not here on time and their place will be given to children on the Waiting List.
- (d) Age and/or capability restrictions may apply to some excursions being offered in our program and it is your responsibility to check if the excursion is suitable. This is especially important in regards to swimming excursions, that is, your child/ren need to be able to swim in deep water. Restrictions apply to ensure the children's and team member's safety. Professionals at swimming centres rate children's ability and will not risk safety if a child is not competent. Children who attend and are unable to swim in deep water will be excluded and need to sit aside. Duty of Care is reduced significantly as carers need to split their areas of responsibility.
- (e) All consent statements pertaining to excursions contained in the OOSH Registration Form must be completed for your child/ren to be able to attend the excursions that are external to the Pole Depot Community Centre's facilities.
- (f) Children's inappropriate, aggressive and/or dangerous behaviour prior to or during an excursion will be considered and may exclude further participation, both on excursions and In-Centre care provided. Please see Code of Behaviour.
- (g) Please remember that children need to bring plenty of nutritious food and drinks each day. The centre does not supply these during Vacation Care. This includes extras for excursions your child/ren are attending.
- (h) Children attending any of the excursions that include swimming activities need to bring along swimming costumes, a towel and plastic bag in which to place wet items.
- (i) Please note that some excursions may require the children to go by train and/or bus and/or ferry. If your child is attending one of these excursions please ensure that the consent in the V/C package is completed to allow your child/ren's attendance. If your child/ren have difficulty in walking distances, please consider this when booking them into an excursion that involves walking (to train/at venue).



### **Healthy lunches for children in Vacation Care and school**



Good nutrition is especially important for children as they need additional nutrients for growth and development. Along with these requirements, children's small stomachs mean small amounts of food are to be consumed at any one time. This means children need to be provided with frequent nutritious snacks to meet their needs. Healthy lunches and snacks are also important as they help with concentration and learning. Set a good example with the lunches made for school and Vacation Care. Encourage children to be involved in their own lunch preparation and the choices they make about foods to include. Congratulate your child when they choose well.

**Six items to put in a lunch box**

- Fresh fruit (this does not include juice)
- Crunchy vegetables
- Water
- A protein food - slice of lean meat, hardboiled egg, fish etc
- Starchy food - bread, flat bread, fruit bread, rice cakes etc
- A dairy food - cheese, milk, yoghurt, soya milk, tofu,

**Best left out:**

- Muesli and chocolate bars
- Sweet drinks
- Lollies, honey and jams
- Potato crisps and oven baked savoury biscuits
- Donuts and cakes
- Fatty meats such as salami and Strasbourg

**FOOD SAFETY FOR CHILDREN AT SCHOOL**

As around 2 million Australians are afflicted by food related illnesses each year, it is extremely important to be vigilant in regard to food safety when preparing children's lunches and snacks for school. Food poisoning occurs when bacteria in food have the right conditions to grow. Bacteria grow best when the temperature is between 5-60°C. To keep food in the lunchbox safe it is important that food is kept cool.

**So remember :**

- \* 'Keep it Clean' - clean preparation of food is essential – hands, surfaces and utensils.
- \* Provided food is stored at correct temperatures. Keep cold foods COLD – pack perishables in insulated lunch boxes and/or pack with ice bricks/frozen drinks. Freeze suitable foods eg. Sandwiches, yoghurt. Store lunch in a cool area out of the sun
- \* Make sure chicken and minced products are cooked thoroughly.

Children 'pick up' so many other things from school, we must endeavour to avoid food-borne illnesses.

References : "NSW Health" and "Nutrition Australia"