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Maranatha Christian School

Welcome to Early Learning

“Every child deserves to have someone’s eyes light up when they enter the room.”

School Vision

“Maranatha is a Christian learning community in partnership with home and Church where students are inspired to discover and develop their God given gifts, abilities and character for a life of service to the Lord in contemporary society.”

School Values

- Christ Centredness
- Integrity
- Discipleship
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Learning Community
- Service

School Attributes

- Respect Others
- Enquiring
- Self-controlled
- Passionate
- Empathetic
- Committed
- Thoughtful

ELC Mission Statement

Maranatha Early Learning Centres aim to provide a holistic, biblically faithful kindergarten experience that, in partnership with parents, nurtures the education, wellbeing and development of every child.

We seek to foster each child’s lifelong journey of acquiring skills, concepts, values and dispositions for life, learning and service to our Lord within a secure and loving environment.
Our Philosophy

We believe in Christ-centred education, acknowledging that Jesus is Lord over every aspect of our lives. We delight in giving ‘OUR UTMOST FOR HIS GLORY’

At Maranatha Early Learning Centres, we believe in **strong foundations**.

- We joyfully promote an atmosphere that cultivates authentic, caring relationships and connections among and between educators, parents and children. Meaningful relationships and collaborative partnerships are the cornerstone of our success.

- We understand that children are wonderfully unique and created by God. We notice and respond to individual needs; we learn from each other and demonstrate our knowledge by translating what we know, into what we do.

- We acknowledge that the children’s learning space is a tool to explore, provoke and learn from. We take care to ensure that the environment is thoughtfully constructed to facilitate exploration, play and inquiry.

- We recognize the importance of pedagogical documentation, collaborative inquiry and reflection to facilitate children’s development, challenge thinking, and extend learning.

In the ELC we value:

- opportunities to rejoice in God’s goodness and the beauty of His creation
- learning environments where children feel safe, secure, supported and connected
- supporting children as active, involved and capable learners and have high expectations for every child’s learning
- opportunities for children to explore, solve problems, communicate, think, create, construct and contribute
- partnering with parents in the education, well-being and development of their children
- community and establishing meaningful, authentic relationships with others
- the uniqueness of each child and intentionally supporting individual children
- the significant role of educators to model, facilitate and guide children’s behaviour and thinking in a biblically faithful way
- learning experiences that are joyful and engaging and promote a positive disposition toward learning
- the significance of play and inquiry as a critical platform in which children learn and construct meaning
- the collaborative nature of learning, the importance of intentional teaching and teacher guided explorations
- natural learning environments that reflect and respect children’s interests and ideas and provide inspiration and motivation
- educating children about sustainable practices and embedding these practices into our program
- reflective practice, professional enquiry and development.
Curriculum Framework

Integral to our ELC curriculum are the National Curriculum (Belonging, Being and Becoming) and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF).

**BELONGING** - refers to a sense of connectedness to others, an individual’s experiences being valued, of forming relationships with others and making contributions as part of a group or community. At Maranatha, we believe in strong partnerships with families to support each child’s sense of belonging and connectedness.

**BEING** - recognises the significance of the here and now in children’s lives. Childhood is a time for children to just ‘be’. This is the time for play and discovery and not to be rushed. It is also about celebrating the God given uniqueness of each child. It includes supporting and nurturing the spiritual, physical, social, emotional and cognitive wellbeing of every child. Biblically faithful relationships and interactions with others, which model and nurture Christ likeness, are an integral part of our learning community.

**BECOMING** - reflects the process of rapid and significant change that occurs in the early years as children learn and grow. It describes the everyday experiences that come together to construct a child’s sense of identity and that ultimately shapes their view of themselves and of the world.

The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) identifies 5 core outcomes for children which underpin our curriculum development.

- Children have a strong sense of identity - **IDENTITY**
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world - **COMMUNITY**
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - **WELLBEING**
- Children are confident and involved learners - **LEARNING**
- Children are effective communicators - **COMMUNICATION**

Our Teaching and Learning Approach

We implement an integrated teaching and learning approach to enable each child to reach their full potential. Our programs allow for times of guided play and learning, adult led learning and child directed play and learning. Our curriculum is characterised by collaborative, effective and reflective practice. We recognise that each child will learn at different rates, in different ways and at different times and as such our Early Learning programs reflect the varied learning styles of individual children.

Young children learn best through activities that are relevant to their lives and varied enough to be challenging and engaging. We support children's efforts to construct meaning from the world around them by drawing on their prior knowledge, providing inspiration through new experiences and providing time and opportunity for reflection and consolidation. The environment is an important part of the learning experience. We provide interesting and stimulating experiences that cater for the individual, small and whole group.

Educators respond to children’s ideas and play, and use intentional teaching to scaffold and extend each child’s learning, which is then recorded in individual learning plans. An ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating is undertaken to inform our program.
Programs

Our ELC programs offer the youngest members of our community an environment that aims to instil a sense of joy, wonder and enthusiasm in learning. Programs are facilitated through rich play-based experiences as well as adult-guided units of inquiry which invite and inspire curiosity, investigation, creativity, imagination and a love of learning.

Early Learning Programs - Officer

Joeys - 3/4 Year Old Early Learning

We are delighted to offer a 3 year old early learning program at our Officer Early Learning Centre.

Our Joeys will enjoy a safe, secure and loving environment that reflects God’s love and the beauty of His creation. Learning will be promoted through language rich exploratory play opportunities designed to inspire and delight. It will be a time of discovery; a time for new friends and a time to investigate new surroundings and possibilities.

Children in our 3/4 year old early learning program are given priority of place into our 4/5 year old program.

Children must turn 3 before 1 February 2017 to be admitted into the 3/4 year old program.

Wallabies, Possums, Koalas and Kookaburras - 4/5 Year Old Early Learning

Our 4 year old early learning program consists of 4 smaller groups; Wallabies, Possums, Koalas and Kookaburras. Each group attends 3 days per week.

Building on the strong foundations established in the 3 year old program our 4 year old early learning program continues to support children as active and involved learners who each have a special contribution to make. Opportunities for learning are rich and diverse as children practise and master skills, investigate, ask questions, create and construct, work collaboratively with others and experience the joy of shared experiences. Children in our 4 year old program start to uncover their God given gifts and attend a combination of specialist classes throughout the week as well as participating in special assemblies and school events.
Officer Site Timetable - 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.30am-3.00pm (4/5 year olds)</td>
<td>8.30am-3.00pm (4/5 year olds)</td>
<td>8.30am-3.00pm (4/5 year olds)</td>
<td>8.30am-3.00pm (4/5 year olds)</td>
<td>8.30am-3.00pm (3/4 year olds)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallabies</td>
<td>Kookaburras</td>
<td>Wallabies</td>
<td>Wallabies</td>
<td>Joeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koalas</td>
<td>Koalas</td>
<td>Kookaburras</td>
<td>Koalas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possums</td>
<td>Possums</td>
<td>Possums</td>
<td>Kookaburras</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class Sizes
3 Year Old Early Learning – 20 children, 2 educators

4 Year Old Early Learning – 22 children per day, 2 educators (29 children over 4 days)

After School Care at Officer - 3C Kidz Care
After school care is available for our early learning children from 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm each day. Childcare benefits are available. For all enquiries or to enrol please call 8790 3921 or email 3CKIDZCARE@CASEYCC.ORG.AU Information packs can also be collected from Mrs Cathie Waters at reception.

Early Learning Program - Doveton
Our Doveton 4 year old program fosters a safe, all-inclusive, inspiring environment where children are free to create, wonder and develop their God given gifts. We support children as active involved, capable learners and we uphold genuine joyful relationships among educators, children and families. Our four year olds attend three specialist classes per week, P.E, music and library.

4/5 Year Old Early Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.45am-3.00pm</td>
<td>8.45am-3.00pm</td>
<td>8.45am-12.45pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maranatha Early Learning Centres
Family Handbook 2017
A year in the Early Learning Centre

**One possible story...**

Reuben is beginning his first day in the Early Learning Centre. He has been anticipating this day for many months. He remembers meeting his teachers at an orientation visit the previous November and is looking forward to meeting them again. Reuben can already sense how special he is to his new teachers, especially since he received a letter in the mail from them just after Christmas. As Reuben gets ready for his first day he excitedly dresses in his first ever school uniform – a uniform he has been trying on regularly throughout the holidays just to see how it looks. He looks terrific.

When Reuben arrives, his teacher is waiting in the foyer to greet him – she is excited too. There are smiling faces everywhere. Reuben meets half of his new friends on this visit and will meet the rest of his class in the days to follow. During this first visit, Reuben’s Mum is having morning tea in the staff room, not far away, getting to know other ELC parents. This is reassuring to Reuben, as it is the first time he has been cared for outside of his family and friends. Reuben quickly learns that the Early Learning Centre is a place where he feels safe, loved and supported.

Reuben’s family is also welcomed into the learning community. Reuben’s teachers love partnering with them to provide the best possible opportunities and outcomes for Reuben. Reuben’s parents are invited to attend many special events with their son throughout the year. Everyone feels a strong sense of belonging. Reuben also notices how his teachers and parents get together for special meetings and enjoy chatting about all the wonderful things he is doing. Sometimes Reuben joins these conversations too. He realises relationships and ways of being are important.

Each day, Reuben enjoys the benefit of routines. These routines assist Reuben to become independent through consistency and predictability. His confidence as a learner is growing. He loves trying new things and exploring all that his learning environment has to offer. The environment reflects Reuben’s ideas and interests. It inspires and motivates him to explore, discover and engage. Reuben relishes opportunities to practice and master skills, investigate, ask questions, create and construct, reach out to others and interact in ways that extend his thinking. Reuben’s teachers love to support his curiosity and resourcefulness as a learner.

Within the Early Learning Centre, Reuben looks forward to many opportunities. Today is his turn to be ‘Star of the Day’. Reuben is very excited. Reuben is an involved and capable member of our class. As ‘Star of the Day’ Reuben knows his contribution is valued. The first job of the day is to take the class role. He picks up his clipboard and pencil and begins, “Alex, are you here today?” “Yes Reuben, I am here!” Well done Reuben, you remembered all your friends’ names. This is a wonderful step for Reuben. Learning the names of his classmates will assist Reuben to build friendships and initiate conversations with others.

Reuben’s teachers intentionally look for ways to facilitate friendships and guide biblically faithful interactions. One day, Reuben is feeling a little lost. Everyone looks busy and he just doesn’t know what to do next. Then Reuben remembers the friendship tree. That is the place
He can go to when he doesn’t have anyone to play with or just feels the need for a little support. He knows his classmates will be kind and thoughtful and ask him to play if he sits there. Reuben’s teachers talk a lot about being a good friend. Having friends and encouraging one another is important.

There are many opportunities and celebrations for Reuben to enjoy during his time in the ELC. Taking ‘Bop the Bunny’ home for a sleepover is one of those special moments. Reuben learns how important it is to care for Bop and how to be responsible for his belongings. Reuben also looks forward to celebrating his birthday in the ELC. Birthday celebrations are a time of feeling loved and expressing joy. Reuben also happily participates in many class projects, in both small and larger groups. He delights in opportunities to collaborate, play games, explore concepts, sing, communicate, create and learn with others.

As the year progresses, Reuben experiences the satisfaction of being purposeful and persistent. He learns that when he tackles challenges, solves problems and applies determination to his tasks he can experience success. He also realises that he has a special contribution to make. He can help others with the skills or concepts he has mastered or understood. Reuben often hears words of encouragement from his teachers and friends.

Reuben experiences many opportunities to participate in the larger community life of the school. He enjoys participating in weekly Physical Education, Gardening, Music and Library classes as well as joining in Junior School events. Reuben’s transition into Prep is facilitated through our Transition program. He will take on the role of an ‘explorer’ with his other ELC friends whilst the Prep students take on the role of ‘reporters’.

After a wonderful year in the Early Learning Centre, Reuben is now ready for Prep. He feels confident, capable and motivated to learn. Reuben has developed the skills and concepts necessary for success and will embrace his Prep year with enthusiasm. Reuben embarks on the next stage of his school journey …..
Early Learning Centre Teaching Team

Our warm and responsive educators have a passion for the success of the learners in their care and a deep respect for children’s individual differences. Educators recognize that their own learning is a continuous and reciprocal process – they learn from each other, and from the children and their families.

Officer Site
Director – Mrs Claire Robins

4 Year Old Early Learning Teachers – Mrs Claire Robins & Mrs Annette Gordon

3 Year Old Early Learning Teacher – Mrs Monica Capusso

3 & 4 Year Old Co-Educator – Mrs Kellie Tankard

Contact Details – Phone 9709 7345 or email enquiries to crobins@maranatha.vic.edu.au

Doveton Site
Director/Teacher - Mrs Rebecca Starchenko

Co-Educator – Mrs Yvonne De Krester

Contact Details – Phone 9709 7375 or email enquiries to rstarchenko@maranatha.vic.edu.au

Specialist Classes

Children attending our 4/5 Year Old Early Learning Programs will enjoy the benefits of attending a combination of weekly specialist classes. Our Officer children will also enjoy spending time in our Discovery Garden each week.

Officer Specialist Classes

Music with Mrs Lyn Lawson
Physical Education with Mrs Sarah Inman
Library with Mrs Robyn McFadzean (library bag required)

Doveton Specialist Classes

Music with Mrs Kay Cai
Physical Education with Mrs Sarah Inman
Library with Mrs Lynne Mitchell (library bag required)
Operational Information

2017 Term Dates

Officer Site

Term One: Tuesday 31st January - Friday 31st March
Term Two: Tuesday 18th April – Friday 30th June
Term Three: Thursday 20th July – Friday 22nd September
Term Four: Monday 9th October - Mon 4th December

Doveton Site

Term One: Tuesday 31st January - Friday 31st March
Term Two: Tuesday 18th April – Friday 30th June
Term Three: Thursday 20th July – Friday 22nd September
Term Four: Tuesday 10th October – Tuesday 5th December

Enrolment Process

Families wishing to enrol at one of the Maranatha Early Learning Centres should contact our school registrar, Mrs. Janet de Jong on 9709 7217 for an enrolment application form. A school tour (if required) and an interview will then be scheduled for you to attend. You may return your enrolment application form on the day of your tour and/or interview or alternatively you can forward this to your preferred site or to Janet de Jong at our Endeavour Hills Administration Office. Once you have attended your enrolment interview a financial interview will also be arranged. A formal offer of place will be communicated to you in writing if a place is available.

Payment of Fees

The Maranatha Early Learning Centre fee schedule is kept as low as possible so that parents seeking a Christian faith-based partnership education for their children are optimally able to achieve this at Maranatha.

For more information please contact Mrs. Gloria Bennett on 9709 7214.

2017 Early Learning Fee Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Hours per Week</th>
<th>Term Fee</th>
<th>Annual Fee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3/4 Year Old (Officer)</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>$514 x 4</td>
<td>$2,056</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5 Year Old (Officer)</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>$1095 x 4</td>
<td>$4,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/5 Year Old (Doveton)</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>$857 x 4</td>
<td>$3,428</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Enrolment Fee $200 per family, membership fee $82.50 per parent, and capital levy of $100 per family also applies to non-current families.
Orientation Program

Information Evening/Dessert Night

In November, Information Nights are held on each Campus for our new parents. The evenings are designed for you to get to know your child’s teachers, other parents and learn more about your child’s program for the 2017 school year. Interview times are also designated on the evening for you to attend with your child’s teacher.

We do ask that children remain home as we are not set up to cater for children during this event. Children will enjoy a special visit in the days following....

Orientation Visits & Interview Days

In late November, orientation visits and interview days have been scheduled for you and your child to attend together. The orientation visit is an opportunity for your child to meet their new classmates and teachers as well as become familiar with their new learning environment. The interviews are vital to ensure that we have an informed understanding of your child and their needs as well as all necessary paperwork in readiness to welcome your child in 2017. Please ensure that you return all forms at your child’s interview. If your child has a medical condition, asthma, allergy or anaphylaxis you are required to bring an up-to-date action plan signed by your doctor to the interview. Once action plans are received, a time to meet and complete a risk minimisation plan will be arranged before your child commences in 2017. A checklist of forms/items to be returned is included in your information pack.

Staggered Start

As part of our Early Learning Program we commence the year with what we call a “staggered start” for our Early Learning children. This consists of smaller class sizes and shorter sessions for the first few weeks to ensure that all children are individually supported as they transition into their Early Learning Programs. Staggered entry supports your child as they begin to develop trusting relationships with their teachers and to develop coping mechanisms to successfully part with their loved ones. It also allows children to feel more comfortable meeting new friends and becoming confident and independent in their new learning environment. The purpose of the staggered start is to:

- Allow children to make a smooth transition and become familiar with their new surroundings, expectations, and new friends.
- Provide the opportunity for teachers to begin to get to know the children and their needs more quickly.
- Allow teachers to explain and practise the Early Learning Centre routines and safety considerations more effectively.

Your child’s staggered start program can be found in your information pack.
**Arrivals and Departures**

Our Early Learning Programs commence at 8.30am at our Officer site and at 8.45am at our Doveton site. If you arrive before this time we ask that you please wait with your child in the foyer area. When our Early Learning Teachers open the door to the children’s room, please enter with your child, and sign the sign in book. The sign in book is our record of who is in attendance each day and is a legal requirement. We ask that you accurately record the arrival time of your child, sign your name, as well as record who will be collecting your child on that day. This person needs to be listed on your student details form as AUTHORISED to collect your child. Please see a staff member if you need to add someone to your list at any stage throughout the year. Should the occasion arise that you are unable to collect your child and you have arranged for somebody who is not listed as authorised to collect them, please ring the ELC and speak to your child’s teacher. Over the phone authorisation may be given provided you speak directly with your child’s teacher.

Children must be signed out before leaving. Once again, a signature and an accurate record of the departure time must be completed. This is done while children are seated on the mat. Once the teacher has seen you sign your child out on the sign in book, your child will be dismissed. Please assist the teachers by encouraging your child to wait on the mat until their name is called.

**Please ensure you arrive promptly at the end of each day. It can be very unsettling to young children when they are left waiting after their friends have been dismissed. If you are unavoidably detained please ensure you ring the Early Learning Centre to advise them.**

**Visitors Register**

If you are arriving to spend some time with us throughout the day please ensure that you fill in our visitors register and wear the visitors badge provided to you. These are located in the ELC foyer area. You will also be required to register any additional children that are in your care whilst you are visiting.
Uniform

All children attending our Early Learning Centres are required to wear the ELC uniform.

All uniform items can be purchased at Noone Imagewear in Beaconsfield.

Noone Imagewear
Beaconsfield Hub
Shop 4, 52-62 Old Princes Hwy
Beaconsfield, 3807

Please find enclosed in your information pack a price list and fitting time for your child. If you are unable to attend your fitting time please ring Noone Imagewear to arrange an alternative appointment.

In regard to footwear, we request that all shoes are velcro fastening. Leather sports shoes are the most appropriate option as the children will be participating in climbing, physical education and running games throughout the week. Velcro fastening footwear enables children to be independent with managing their own shoes, particularly during sand play and rest time routines.

What to Bring

A Bag - Please send along your child’s belongings in a large, easy to manage bag. The Maranatha School Bag is optional. Any bag is fine – as long as it is large and strong enough to contain a lunchbox, drink bottle, extra clothing, artwork and your child’s sharing journal.

Please ensure your child’s bag is named and easily recognisable to your child.

Lunch/Snacks - Please send along the following meals/snacks for your child on their days of attendance.

- Fresh fruit or vegetables to contribute to our shared snack table and preferably cut into manageable pieces. (every day – this is to be placed on our fruit tree in the foyer each morning) Shared
- Lunch
- Snack

Please send your child’s snack and lunch in a named, standard lunchbox – one that your child can independently manage. Healthy food only please (refer to nutrition policy). Cut up fruit, dried fruit, vegetable sticks, cheese, yoghurt and sandwiches are some great examples. Please do not send lollies, chocolate, chips etc as these items will be returned home with your child.

Drink Bottle - Please ensure your child brings a clearly named drink bottle, with fresh water ONLY. This will be accessible to your child throughout the day.
Spare Clothing: Please send along a full set of spare clothing for your child in a large named zip lock bag. These items will remain in the Early Learning Centre throughout the year (although changing these items over as the weather cools is recommended). These items do not need to be uniform items.

In winter, children will need a named jacket and warm hat for outside play.

In summer, as part of our Sun Smart policy, children are required to wear a Maranatha ELC hat. Hats will be worn from 1st September to 1st May. Please ensure your child’s hat is named. Hats will also remain at the Early Learning Centre throughout warmer months.

Please apply sunscreen to your child at the beginning of each day. We will reapply sunscreen as the day goes on.

Rest time

Children will be allocated time to have a rest during our longer days. When children have a big day filled with many activities and experiences we feel it is very important for them to relax and have some time to unwind. At rest time, children will be allocated a small mattress along with their bedding from home, which staff will make up with the children. Some children may wish to close their eyes and nap, others may wish to read a book or do a quiet activity on their mats. Rest time will occur in the afternoon period for approximately 30mins. If you have any questions about rest time please speak with your teacher.

Rest Time Items - Our Early Learning centres have small fold out mattresses for the children to rest on each day.

Each child is required to bring the following items for rest time

1. a cot sized sheet (to fit ELC mattresses)
2. a small cushion/pillow
3. a cot sized blanket
4. a cloth bag for the above items (a cloth supermarket bag is perfect as they have large openings – just right for pre-schoolers to manage independently).

The children’s rest bags will be housed in their bag lockers so it is recommended that you provide non bulky items.
Toileting

It is an expectation that all children attending our Early Learning programs are toilet trained. If you are concerned about your child’s progress in this regard please speak to our ELC Directors.

Parent Participation

We love having you spend time with us throughout the year. Parents, guardians, siblings and extended family are all considered an important part of the Maranatha Early Learning community. Families are welcomed into the ELC at any time and are encouraged to participate in the learning program.

A parent participation roster will be made available at the beginning of each term. Younger children are welcome to attend while you are on duty; however they are your responsibility. Your assistance helps the Early Learning Centre to run smoothly. Your presence is appreciated by your child, and helps the other children to get to know you.

On your rostered day, please help the children where necessary, although allow children to try something before offering help. Always ask if a child would like help, before assisting them. Please join us for our songs and story. At other times, there may be dishes to do, or paints to clean up. Play with the children. Enjoy a cup of tea and a chat. A list of helpful suggestions, and specific ways you can assist us is available – just ask!

Please feel free to bring whatever skills you have into the group; gardening, woodwork, cooking, singing, sewing, reading stories. There is no need to arrange a special teaching time or activity with the children (although you can if you like). Just allow the children to see you doing something that you enjoy.

We will also plan to spend time together at the end of each term to celebrate the learning that has taken place. During these visits, the children will share with you their portfolio, which documents their learning, as well as share songs and activities they have enjoyed. There will also be many opportunities for you to participate with your child in the numerous school events planned for 2017.
Laundry Roster

There will be a weekly laundry roster which we ask you to please assist us with once or twice a year. We would appreciate the assistance of all families to enable the load to be shared. Washing will be sent home on a Wednesday or Thursday and needs to be returned at the start of the following week.

Parent Library

In the Early Learning Centre foyer, you will find a collection of reference books available for borrowing. The titles include developmental reference books as well as parenting titles you may enjoy and find useful. We would also love to hear from you if you have read a valuable parenting book or similar that you believe would be appreciated by others. If you would like to borrow a book from our parent library we ask that you speak with one of the ELC teachers to loan the book through our school borrowing system.

Communication

Please check the parent notice box each day for any notices. If your child’s name is highlighted in the sign in book when you are collecting your child this will mean that the teacher wishes to speak with you before you leave. This is done to ensure important messages are always relayed at the end of each day. Please be aware that dismissal time can be quite hectic and you may have to wait a few moments until the teacher is available.

Please feel free to speak to the teacher at any time. If the matter is more involved, please try to make an appointment, so the matter can be discussed privately.

The Early Learning program plan will be on display in the ELC foyer for your interest. A digital photo frame will also be playing for you to see actual images of the children’s engagement in the program.

Storypark

Storypark is a private, secure and encrypted eportfolio and communication platform that our early learning centres use. Storypark allows teachers and families to partner together by effectively sharing meaningful information about children’s experiences, learning and perspectives.

Teachers share information about children’s learning within the ELC through observations, images, videos and reflections. Individual goals are also devised and recorded for each child. Parents are invited and encouraged to respond to the information shared by teachers as well as contribute their own stories based on children’s experiences at home. Parents may also like to provide information about new areas of interest their children are enjoying. This sharing of information enables teachers to continue each child’s learning journey by drawing together meaningful feedback from parents and children, incorporating their perspectives into the planning process.

Information regarding how to navigate Storypark will be shared during our information evenings in November. On the night, families will be able to learn about Storyparks many features and how to make the most of this communication tool.

Storypark is also used to share all newsletters, notices and information relevant to the early learning programs.
Donations

We would appreciate it if parents and children could collect items that will be useful in many aspects of the program. If you have something you’re not sure we will use please ask a staff member.

Here’s a list to help you:

- Buttons
- Old telephones, computer keyboards, cameras etc
- Cotton reels
- Fabric – including scarves and ribbons
- Natural materials such as shells, acorns, seed pods etc
- Wood (soft wood for woodwork)
- Wool
- Paper/Cardboard/Tubes
- Small boxes eg. tooth paste boxes, tissue boxes etc.
- Cards
- Foil
- Wrapping paper
- Tissue paper
- Plastic containers/lids of all sorts

Please note: We are unable to use items such as toilet rolls, egg cartons and boxes that may have contained traces of nuts.

Birthdays

A birthday celebration is always an exciting event. Your child will be treated to a special day either on or close to their birthday. You are welcome to provide a non-food item ie balloons, stickers to mark this special occasion, although this is not a requirement. A week prior to your child’s birthday, please arrange with the teacher which day you would like to nominate as your child’s celebration day.

Please note: There may be children attending the ELC who are allergic and/or at risk of an anaphylactic reaction to various foods.
Incursions, Excursions and Events

Incursions, excursions and special events are a wonderful part of our early learning programs. They are provided to extend the children’s current interests and educational program. Parents are always welcome on excursions. You will be notified in writing of any planned excursions outside of the school premises. You will also be required to give permission in writing for your child to attend. A risk minimisation form will be undertaken before any planned excursion. Regular outings within the school premises will take place on a weekly basis.

Complaints Policy

If you have a concern, please speak to your child’s teacher. Please make an appointment so your discussion can be confidential and not within a child’s hearing. Once you have discussed the matter, please allow a day or two for staff to make a considered response. If the matter concerns the day to day running of the Early Childhood Program, and the teacher feels it is appropriate, the matter will be discussed with the Deputy Principal. The results of these discussions will be discussed with you by the appropriate staff member. If agreement cannot be reached, or you feel it is more appropriate, please make an appointment to discuss the matter with the Deputy Principal. To make an appointment please phone the school office at the appropriate school campus.

Officer Reception: 03 9709 7310 or Doveton Reception: 03 9709 7350

Again if an agreement cannot be reached, the matter can then be taken to the School Principal/CEO. To bring a matter to the School Principal, please address your letter to ‘Mr William Jackson’ Principal/CEO Maranatha Christian School and post it to 104-108 Reema Blvd Endeavour Hills, Vic 3802 or leave it at the school office. Please ensure your contact details are included.

You may contact the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, South Eastern Region on (03) 8765 5787.

All complaints will be treated confidentially.
Procedure for Dealing with Illness

If your child is unwell, please keep them at home. A busy day with others is not the best place for anyone when they are unwell. During the year it is quite probable that your child may contract any of the usual children’s illnesses—colds, flu, gastric problems, etc. It is a good idea to give your child another 24 hours at home to recover after feeling unwell.

For Gastroenteritis (vomiting and/or diarrhoea) please allow 48 hours after the last episode before returning to the Early Learning Centre and only then if your child has sufficiently recovered to manage well.

A list of childhood communicable diseases and the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development recommendations of length of time the child is to be excluded from kinder is included in your information pack. Please read this and keep it for your reference. Please remember to ring us to let us know if your child will be away.

If your child becomes unwell whilst at the Early Learning Centre you or your emergency contact will be contacted to come and collect your child. Your child will be cared for and offered a quiet place to lie down in the Early Learning Centre until your arrival.

Procedure for Dealing with Infectious Disease

Please notify the teacher as soon as possible if your child contracts an infectious disease. Parents will be notified of the illness (but not of your child’s name) so they can keep an eye out for similar symptoms in their child.

Emergency Procedures

In an emergency, we will seek treatment by a medical practitioner, hospital or ambulance service, or other emergency personnel, as authorized on your child’s student details form. This may involve your child leaving the premises with emergency personnel or staff. You or one of your emergency contacts as listed on your child’s student details form will be contacted as soon as possible.

Procedures for specific emergencies are contained within the Early Learning Centres POLICIES. If you would like to see a copy, please speak to the teachers.
Medication

Please see staff if your child requires medication while at the Early Learning Centre. Our teachers are only permitted to administer medication when you have provided written consent for them to do so. By signing our medication book and providing the following information you are giving your consent.

Information to be recorded -

- the name of your child
- authorisation to administer medication signed by a parent/guardian or a person named in the child's student details record as authorised to consent to administration of medication
- the name of the medication to be administered
- the time and date the medication was last administered
- the time and date or the circumstances under which the medication should be next administered
- the dosage of the medication to be administered
- the manner in which the medication is to be administered

Medication must be in its original container displaying the expiry date and instructions, and have your child’s name on it.

A risk minimisation form will need to be completed at the beginning of the year for children with Asthma, Epilepsy and or Anaphylaxis.

SunSmart

1st September - 5 things to remember.
1st May - Hats off day

1. **Shade** - Try to use shade whenever possible.

2. **Sun protective clothing** - SunSmart recommends loose fitting, close weave clothing that covers as much skin as possible during outside activities. All Maranatha uniforms comply with the SunSmart information.

3. **Hats** - The Maranatha hat is an essential uniform item for outside play during the summer months. These will be kept at the ELC to ensure children have constant access to them.

4. **Sunglasses** - Eyes, like skin, can be damaged by exposure to UV radiation. SunSmart suggests, where practical, wearing close fitting, wraparound sunglasses that cover as much of the eye area as possible. The sunglasses should meet Australian Standard 1067 (Sunglasses: Category 2, 3 or 4) and preferably be marked EPF (eye protection factor). These are optional.

5. **Sunscreen** - Sunscreen screens out UV radiation but does not completely block it out so some UV radiation still reaches our skin. Sunscreen should never be the only method of sun protection nor should it be used to stay out in the sun longer. Always check the expiry date. SunSmart recommends using SPF 30+.

Children learn by example. Please wear a hat when you spend time with us outdoors.
Safety and Protection from Hazards

In an emergency;

To call for emergency services from a school phone dial ‘0’, then ‘000’.
Please alert the teachers and office of any emergency.

Fences, gates and doors, playground

Please ensure that you always shut gates and doors, watching out for children’s fingers. Children may not play or open gates and doors; these are for adults only. Please ensure the only children who exit the Early Learning Centre with you are the ones who you are responsible for.

First Aid Incidents

If your child is injured, staff will apply first aid. All EARLY LEARNING CENTRE staff hold a Level 2 first aid certificate qualifications as well as Asthma management and Anaphylaxis training. Should an incident occur that requires first aid, staff will notify you, and then ask you to sign the incident form explaining the first aid that has been given. (Your child’s name being highlighted in the sign in book will alert you to speak with your child’s teacher before leaving). If the incident is of a more serious nature you will receive a phone call.

Hazards

If you see a hazard to children, please notify staff immediately. Broken or damaged equipment should be reported to staff immediately.

Kitchen and Hot Drinks

Please help yourself to tea and coffee when you are visiting. However, do not allow children into the kitchen with you as it is a child free zone. You are welcome to stay and have a hot drink in the foyer once the children have entered the children’s room. Having a cuppa with members of other families is a great way to connect and get to know one another – but do please be mindful of any younger siblings in the building.

Smoking

Maranatha is a smoke free zone. Please do not smoke on the school/ Early Learning Centre property.

Code Red Days

The Early Learning Centres, along with Maranatha as a whole, are closed on days identified by the CFA as Code Red. Please refer to the letter on the school website.
Emergency Evacuation Drills

Each term the children will participate in at least one evacuation drill. If you are on the school grounds on these days you will be required to participate. Evacuation procedures are located on each exit door within the ELC building as well as displayed in a prominent location in the children’s room. Please familiarise yourself with these when you are on duty.

Toys from Home

Please leave toys at home. If your child would like to bring something to show, we do love to receive special nature treasures: flowers, seed pods, stones, feathers, fleece, or photos of special events. There will be many opportunities planned within the program for children to bring special items from home which your child’s teacher will communicate with you about throughout the year.

Withdrawal from the Program

We understand that for various reasons you may wish to withdraw your child from the program. In this instance, it is imperative to notify the school office in writing. One school term’s notice is required, or one term’s fees will be charged in lieu.

Children do miss a child when he or she leaves. Please inform the teacher of your child’s last day so that with your agreement we can arrange a time to say goodbye, and pray for God’s blessing for your child in any new endeavours.

Policy Information

Copies of all centre policies are located in our ELC foyer. The following policies are available for you to view. Policies are regularly updated and your feedback is welcomed. Please email your feedback to crobins@maranatha.vic.edu.au rstarchenko@maranatha.vic.edu.au

- ADMINISTRATION OF FIRST AID POLICY
- ACCEPTANCE AND REFUSAL OF AUTHORISATION POLICY
- ADMINISTRATION OF MEDICATION POLICY
- ANAPHYLAXIS POLICY
- ASThma POLICY
- CHILD SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY
- CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY
- COMPLAINTS AND GRIEVANCES POLICY
- CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT POLICY
- DEALING WITH INFECTIOUS DISEASES POLICY
- DEALING WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS POLICY
- DELIVERY AND COLLECTION OF CHILDREN POLICY
- DETERMINING RESPONSIBLE PERSONS POLICY
- DIABETES POLICY
We hope you have found the information in our Family Handbook helpful. If you have any questions regarding our Early Learning Centres please contact your teacher who will be more than happy to assist you.
Early Learning Centre (Doveton)
4/5 Year old
123-127 Kidds Road
Doveton  3177
Tel:  (03) 9709 7375

Early Learning Centre (Officer)
3/4 Year old and 4/5 Year old
62 Rix Road
Officer  3809
Tel: (03) 9709 7345

www.maranatha.vic.edu.au