



## PARENT INFORMATION BOOKLET TAKE-A-BREAK OCCASIONAL CHILD CARE

Dromana Community House provides a flexible Occasional Childcare service, known as Take-A-Break, which provides respite for parents/guardians of children between the ages of 18 months and pre-primary, allowing you to participate in a range of activities, including recreational classes and activities, shopping, social events and voluntary community activities. Take-A-Break at Dromana Community House is classified under the Children's Services Regulations 2009 as a Limited hours Type 2 service. This means we are a registered centre at which no child may be cared for, educated or minded for more than 5 hours per day and no more than 15 hours per week.

Dromana Community House Occasional Childcare are proud of their caring, supportive and creative staff who always ensure a warm, friendly and secure environment for your child/ren. All staff hold the required qualifications, including First Aid, Anaphylaxis and Asthma Management. Throughout the year staff attend a variety of in-services, courses and workshops to enhance their professional development, maintain compliance under the Children's Services Regulations and to keep up to date with new initiatives. Your child/ren are cared for by our Team Leader – Claddgha Nicholls and Wednesday Room Leader Tara Borthwick, alongside with our fabulous assistants Emily Johannson, Erin Stelling and Gayle Collery. This service is licensed for a maximum of 16 children per session, however as we operate on 1:5 staff/child ratio – the maximum number of children we can accommodate is 15.

Our program (which is displayed in the T.A.B room) is aimed at specific developmental stages and during a session your child/ren will take part in age-appropriate craft activities, enjoy songs, stories, puzzles and games. Outside activities include sand and water play, bike riding and ball games.

We believe that play is a critical part of a child's development. Play allows children to learn, practice and perfect new skills as well as acting as an indicator of how their development is progressing.

Children learn through exploring, experimenting and discovering new challenges each day.

Play is the mean through which children come to learn about themselves and their environment. Through the medium of play, children make observations, imitate actions and sounds, explore and memorise, and recall new experiences. Children gather information through their senses, therefore we need to provide an environment that is sensitive to children's need, and that is challenging and developmentally appropriate, allowing opportunities for children to play and learn.

### FOR ENQUIRIES CONTACT:

**Take-A-Break Team Leader Claddgha Nicholls or House Co-Ordinator.**

**T.A.B. BOOKINGS/CANCELLATIONS: 5987 2631 (24/7 voicemail)**

**15 Gibson Street, Dromana VIC 3930**

**Ph: 03 5987 2631**

**Email: [info@dromanacommunityhouse.org.au](mailto:info@dromanacommunityhouse.org.au)**

**[www.dromanacommunityhouse.org.au](http://www.dromanacommunityhouse.org.au)**



## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

It is essential that parents/guardians sign their child/children in and out of the Centre on arrival and departure in the Attendance Book. It is a State Government requirement that this is done. Please note that a signature is required for each child.

Children will only be permitted to leave the Centre with a person who is **authorised**, over the age of 15 and who is listed on the enrolment form. A parent/guardian's authorisation is required before a child is released into another person's care.

When picking up your child/children, ensure all belongings are collected and staff are advised of your departure. Please also ensure that you have signed out and recorded the time of departure in the Attendance Book provided. Please ensure that children are picked up on time. If you know you are going to be unavoidably delayed, please contact us. Late pick up charges may apply.

Please be mindful of noise and the behavior of your child/children at drop off and pick-up times as the House may have other classes and services running during these times. Thank-you for your co-operation.

## CHILDREN SETTLING IN

It is advisable for children when attending care for the first time, to start with a short separation time. This allows children the chance they need to settle into a new situation. Your child will also feel more at ease if the parent appears relaxed, confident and reassuring.

It can be distressing for a child if he or she does not understand where the parent has gone and when the parent will return, therefore the process of saying **'goodbye'** to a child is very important. Parents who are uncertain when to separate from their child, can ask staff for assistance. Staff will contact you if your child has difficulties settling in. Staff are happy to meet with parents at a convenient time to discuss any issues/concerns regarding their child.



## WHAT DO I NEED TO BRING?

We recommend that each child brings a named back-pack with the following named items, depending on the weather – sunhat/beanie; warm jacket; change of underwear, socks and pants; spare nappies and/or Pull-Ups (if required). Teddy bears, dummies and other 'security' items are welcome at Take-A-Break.

It is important to be mindful of the harsh effects of the sun. We encourage parents to apply SPF 30+ sunscreen to their child prior to the session, provide a hat (named please), and cover exposed areas (e.g a shirt to cover shoulders) during the warmer months.

## SNACK TIME

Morning-tea and lunch is to be provided by parents, please ensure that your child's lunch box and drink bottle are **clearly named**. We encourage healthy food choices at Take-A-Break – so fruit, crackers and cheese, yoghurt, sandwiches, water etc. are all good options. Please make sure your child has something for morning tea AND something for lunch. Some families find it easiest to pack two containers – one marked snack, the other marked lunch.

Snack time is a time of ensuring the nutritional needs and dietary requirements of the children are appropriately catered for. It is a time to encourage social interaction with your child and others within the group, and allows for the children to practice their independence, develop friendships

and for us all to develop healthy eating habits. Lollies, chips, and chocolate will be put back in the backpack to be enjoyed at home.

## NUT AND EGG FREE POLICY

A Nut and Egg Free Policy applies at Dromana Community House within our Occasional Childcare program. Our major concern is the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and families within our Centre and community.

We aim to provide a nut and egg free environment for the safety of children who have anaphylactic allergies which are triggered by nuts or eggs in any form.

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction. It is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response.

The key to preventing an anaphylactic reaction is to avoid exposure to the trigger. To minimize the risk factors, please **do not** send any nuts or eggs in your child's lunch box or any foods containing nuts or peanut products, eggs or egg products. In particular:

- Peanut butter sandwiches, dips or crackers
- Egg sandwiches or hard boiled eggs
- Hazelnut spread (nutella), sandwiches or dips
- Biscuits and cakes containing nuts/eggs
- Muesli bars with nuts
- Dried fruit and nut mix snack packs



Please ensure that your child's hands and face are thoroughly washed if they have eaten these foods for breakfast before coming to childcare, as peanut and egg residue can also trigger a reaction. As anaphylaxis is a treatable condition, all staff have regular training that includes the use of an EpiPen in the event that emergency treatment is required. Parents of children who have a known allergy to nuts/peanuts/eggs must notify all staff about the severity of the child's allergy before attending Take a Break.

## ASTHMA, ALLERGIES AND ANAPHYLAXIS

- On enrolment it is vital to let childcare staff know if your child suffers from any life threatening illness.
- Parents of children who suffer from these are to provide the Centre with their child's Management Plan which has been updated within the last 12 months.
- Communication between staff and parents regarding changes/concerns to the child's health is vital.
- Medications supplied must be in the original container, with a written plan, for staff to follow.
- Parents must ensure that their child has adequate supply of appropriate medication at all times, such as relievers, tablets or if required, an EpiPen.

## HYGIENE

Please ensure children have washed their hands prior to their arrival. Children are encouraged to wash their hands before and after eating as well as before and after going to the toilet. This is a great way to encourage independence of our children.

*Please be aware that we may have children with life threatening allergies and your assistance is greatly appreciated.*

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES AND HEAD LICE:

Children with infectious or communicable diseases MUST NOT attend the centre. Such conditions include measles, mumps, conjunctivitis, gastroenteritis, chickenpox and school sores. Please notify us if you discover your child has head lice. We are required to exclude children from the service until treatment has commenced.

### **Please use common sense when assessing whether your child is well enough to attend the session.**

Coughs, colds and tummy bugs spread easily in a childcare environment, both to other children and to staff. We ask that a child who has experienced vomiting or diarrhea in the past 48 hours be kept at home.

In the event that your child is deemed too ill to be at Take-A-Break by the childcare Team Leader or your child(ren) become unwell during a session, we will call you immediately. Please note that we are unable to refund fees if a child needs to be sent home.

**BUSHFIRES AND EXTREME HEAT:** Please note that Take-A-Break will not operate on days declared **code red (catastrophic)**. Please monitor weather reports during the bushfire season as we do not phone individual families to advise them of the weather in this situation.

There may be additional days when we are directed to close by Government departments due to the risk of bushfire in the Arthurs Seat/Dromana area, we will endeavor to contact families as soon as possible should this occur.

*It is likely that the Mornington Peninsula will experience a growing number of extremely hot days during the summer months. On days with a forecast temperature above 40 degrees we may elect to run shortened sessions for the comfort of children and staff alike. Parents will be advised in the morning if a session will be closing early due to extreme heat*

can have a big impact on small children in terms of their behavior and emotions. Please let us know (just basics if you like), so we can fully support your child during this time

## STUDENT VOLUNTEERS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.

Throughout the year you will see various new 'faces'. These are our volunteers and students from various local organizations e.g. TAFE, Nursing, University, Work Experience and Job Training schemes, who gain practical experience in child care.

Parents are encouraged to participate in the running of our centre, regardless of how large or small. Some of the ways you could volunteer your time;

- Attend the Annual General Meeting (held in October)
- Attend Committee Meetings or become a Committee member
- Assist in fund raising activities
- Assist in centre maintenance and repairs
- Become a volunteer at the centre



## FUNDRAISING.

As all Take-A-Break Occasional Childcare centre's statewide DO NOT receive any funding whatsoever, we are in the position where we will need to run a fundraising initiative each Term in order to help subsidise our sensational Take-A-Break service and keep the service going for your child(ren). We know that fundraising is always difficult but we hope that as a valued member of our T.A.B family that you will do your best to support us over the course of the year with our exciting & interesting fundraising activities.

## FEES AND BOOKINGS

We have 15 permanent places available on each daily session and take up to five names on each days' waiting list. Once you are offered a permanent place, this is your child's spot for the entire year or until you inform us otherwise (we require 2weeks notice min. if your circumstances change and you no longer require the permanent spot). Placing your name on a waiting list spot means you are contacted if someone is sick/away and means you are first on the list if you are wanting a permanent spot.

**Our session times are 9.30am-1.30pm, Monday to Friday.**

**If space allows**, children not attending a 3 or 4 year old kinder program elsewhere may be in a position to attend two sessions each week (dependant on place availability), however we ask that children attending a 4-year old kinder program only attend one session per week. Those child(ren) attending 3-year old kinder may be eligible to attend two sessions (dependant on place availability). All children are eligible to be placed on our daily waiting list (dependant on place available)

Please be ensured that our fees are based on the lowest rate possible to have 'Take a Break' sessions 4 hours a day, 5 days a week for 15 children. Dromana Community House and the 'Take a Break' team pride ourselves on being able to offer the community the cheapest Occasional Childcare on the Peninsula. The standard fee across the state for a licensed Occasional Childcare is \$10 per child, per hour, and we have managed to stay well under that standard figure whilst maintaining the highest of standards.

Below is a list of our prices. You will be emailed an invoice once you have enrolled and we ask that your Term fees are paid before or within the first two weeks of the Term commencing. You will receive a discount price if paid in or before the first week of Term. Payments may be made by Electronic Funds Transfer or either Cash or Cheque in the office. When paying via EFT please ensure your child's last name with TAB is written in the description so we can trace who has paid, for example: SMITHTAB.

### FEES:

#### Full price fees:

1 session a week; \$325 per Term | ***\*\$310 if paid in or before the first week of term***  
2 sessions a week; \$595 per Term | ***\*\$580 if paid in or before the first week of term***

#### Healthcare Card Fees:

\*Please note: if you have a healthcare card we must obtain a copy before your payment to receive the concession price.

1 session a week; \$295 per Term | ***\*\$280 if paid in or before the first week of term***  
2 sessions a week; \$535 per Term | ***\*\$520 if paid in or before the first week of term***

#### Waiting list Fees

\*Please note: Waiting list fees must be paid on the day your child attends.

\$33 – Full price  
\$29 – Healthcare Card



\*Under certain circumstances some families may struggle financially throughout the year. If this is ever the case, or you simply have concerns paying the flat term fee, please come into the Office and speak to the House Co-Ordinator, Erin Gordon, who may be able to offer a part payment option.

If you do not pay your fees within the first two weeks of the term commencing you may incur late fees.

## LETTING US KNOW:

In the event that you do not require your booked spot on a particular day due to illness, please phone **5987 2631** no later than 8.30am (you can phone any time day or night and leave a message on the answering machine).

**PLEASE NOTE:-** To secure your permanent spot within our service, there are NO REFUNDS but if you inform us prior to the session that you will not require the spot we will do our best to accommodate you with a make-up session within 10 days of your child being sick. If you DO NOT contact us to inform us that your child(ren) will not be attending TAB and you do not show up on a booked day three times, your child(ren) permanent spot will be released. With some negotiation your child(ren) name may be placed on our waiting list.

If your family is planning a holiday or you know you will be away at any point during a Term, please ensure you inform both the T.A.B team and the House Office staff prior to this time so arrangements can be made to fill the spot with a child from our waiting list & you will not be charged if we are able to fill this spot. For extended holiday periods to secure your child(ren) permanent place there is a \$5 per session holding fee.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Due to our staff/child ratio of 1:5, in the event that we are unable to meet the ratio (i.e a staff member or volunteer is ill and unable to be replaced on the day), we can only offer 10 places on that day. In this situation we feel the fairest option is to contact those families who have already had (or will have) a session that week and ask them to keep their child home that day. A refund will be provided to those families who unfortunately miss out on that day. This scenario is very rare.



## POLICY/FEES FOR LATE PICK UP:

PLEASE phone us if you are running late.

1. If a child is not picked up by 1.45pm, we will ring the contact number on the daily sign-in sheet.
2. If a child is not picked up by 2pm and parent/guardian is unreachable, we will call emergency contacts.
3. If we are unable to contact either a parent/guardian or emergency contact by 2.15pm we will contact Dromana or Rosebud police. One childcare worker will remain with the child until police arrive.

**A late pick-up fee of \$10 per 15 minutes (or part-thereof)  
will apply from 1.45pm.**

## BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT:

Behaviour is learned. At Take-A-Break, problem behaviour is addressed with the rights of the child, and other children in the service, foremost in mind. Our first and most useful tool is the recognition and encouragement of positive behaviour. Other strategies may include redirecting a child to another activity and positive reminders about good manners, sharing and showing respect for others. Any significant or concerning behaviour problems will be promptly brought to parents' attention. A full copy of our childcare policy is available in the childcare room, please ask a staff member if you wish to read it, copies can be provided on request.

## ACCIDENTS AND INJURIES:

The safety and wellbeing of your child is of paramount importance to us. We will make every effort to ensure that potential hazards are limited to those incidents that are beyond our control. All minor accidents and injuries are recorded in our accident and injury book and will be brought to parents' attention at pick-up time. Parents must sign and date all entries in this book.

In the event of a serious accident or sudden extreme illness we will phone an ambulance (at parent's expense) and parents immediately.

## PHOTOGRAPHS:

Throughout the year, staff may take a number of photos of your child participating in the program. These photos are used for display purposes, as individual records of the child, for special presents for their family, and may be included in Dromana Community House publications and advertising materials.

If you agree to photos being taken of your child, you will be required to sign a Photo Permission Form at the beginning of the year.

## PROBLEMS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

As a parent of young children, you may have issues that you wish to raise or difficulties that you need to discuss. The following guidelines have been developed to assist you to deal openly with any conflict/issues that may arise.

If the problem centers on your child or their daily routine, then the primary care givers in the room are your first point of call and should be approached. All discussions will be confidential and dealt with in a professional manner. In the event you are unsatisfied with the outcome of this discussion, please speak to the House Co-Ordinator in the Dromana Community House office.

Complaints of a more serious nature should be directed to the **Department of Human Services on 9213 2020**. Ask to speak to a **Children's Services Adviser**.

