



## **Belford Oaks**

### ***Statement of Philosophy***

#### **Acknowledgement to Country**

*“We acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we live and learn. We pay our respects to them for their care of the land over countless generations. We hope they will walk with us on our journey as we share friendship together”.*

*“Going Bush”.*

Nadia Wheatley & Ken Searle

#### OUR PLACE

Belford Oaks prides itself on being a place of belonging; a modest and welcoming community-based children’s centre, established in 1988 with 34 prosperous years under its belt. We are central to the Boroondara community and surrounded by many beautiful oak trees, fundamental to our name.

We offer government funded 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten programs built into a long-day care setting proudly maintaining a rating of Exceeding the National Quality Standards. We educate children ranging in age from 6 months to school aged.

The Belford Oaks community is comprised of a passionate team of qualified early childhood educators, who are professional, dedicated, experienced, knowledgeable and deliberate in their teachings.

Belford Oaks is overseen by a committee of parents who serve to empower and strengthen our team, supporting our educators to provide the best learning opportunities for all.

#### OUR BELIEFS

At Belford Oaks we strive to provide a positive culture for all children and educators, encouraging and supporting them to reach their full potential. We view the child as protagonist in their education and development, strongly believing they learn best through hands-on play in a rich and meaningful, inquiry-based model of learning. At Belford Oaks we create and facilitate a stimulating learning environment; one that promotes happiness and a desire to play and learn while nurturing children’s creative intelligence, language, literacy and numeracy development through multi-sensory experiences and environments, simultaneously supporting their wellbeing through a plethora of physical play spaces and programs.

We believe children are independent in their decision making and strive to encourage their autonomy by providing for choice in all aspects of the program. We believe children are expressive communicators, collaborative learners, creative, capable and inquisitive. For this reason, we have created a learning environment that caters to and builds on these wonderful qualities.

The educators at Belford Oaks believe children prosper in a safe, nurturing, healthy, communicative, respectful, inclusive and fun environment. Providing learning spaces with potential for holistic development (physical, cognitive, emotional, social and spiritual), our main goal at Belford Oaks is to assist children to develop and grow into responsible, confident, creative, empathetic active citizens of their world. We strive to contribute to this daily, through recognition and celebration of the children’s achievements, encouragement and constant support.

We draw inspiration from the Reggio Emilia approach to learning, and through this way of teaching we understand that each child and family bring with them a unique set of values, beliefs, experiences, thoughts and ideas. We view our role as educators, as collaborative learners and co-researchers. Through this approach we are responsible for observing and listening to the children, educating ourselves about their interests and planning and providing them with a meaningful curriculum in which they have ample opportunities to construct their own understandings and explore their interests further, while contributing to the learning and development of not only themselves but those around them. We achieve this with care, compassion and attention to each child's individual needs.

Drawing inspiration from the Reggio Emilia philosophy of learning also means that we respect the kitchen as an integral part of the program and the heart of the centre. We stay informed regarding healthy eating practices and research to ensure we provide 3 nutritionally balanced meals a day, while educating the children around healthy choices.

The educators at Belford Oaks recognise the environment as the 3<sup>rd</sup> teacher, Family and home being the 1<sup>st</sup> and us as educators the 2<sup>nd</sup> and therefore place great emphasis on exploring the natural environment. We strongly believe in not over stimulating the children and instead, we offer inspiring experiences and learning opportunities. These experiences offer endless opportunities for learning, growth, discovery and development. The educators and the environment they create respect the children as strong, resilient and capable beings, providing them with authentic materials and tools within a beautifully rich environment. Such materials are carefully selected by educators for their potential to enhance learning and discovery.

We recognise the importance of community and developing strong connections within. Our rich and meaningful curriculum is complemented by our engagement within the community. At Belford oaks we endeavour to venture out into the broader community as often as possible, fostering and scaffolding such relationships.

Our practices and programs are strongly influenced by the Victorian Early Years Learning & Development Framework (VEYLDF), Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), National Quality Framework (NQF) and the Early Childhood Australian Code of ethics as well as a number of theoretical perspectives and current research.

#### OUR COMMITMENTS

We prioritise child safety, actively embedding it in our culture at Belford oaks. We are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all children as well as continually educating children about their rights. Educators aim to empower children through active listening and assisting them to develop a sense of belonging and a feeling of safety and security within their environment.

We acknowledge the diverse backgrounds of all children families and educators. Believing in equality for all we strive to instil the powerful message of acceptance, regardless of gender, race, ability, social or family structure or language spoken.

We respect and understand the unique place the Indigenous Australian and Torres Strait Islander cultures hold in Australia and we are committed to creating and fostering a valued connection with these cultures.

We are committed to helping the children understand the importance of looking after their natural world. We promote sustainable practices by encouraging responsibility for their classroom, the outdoor spaces and in turn the world in which they live.

We are committed to educating the children about road safety; keeping them safe while travelling as pedestrians, cyclists and passengers in a vehicle and providing them with the opportunity to participate in road safety education to assist them in being and becoming safe and responsible road users.

We are committed to engaging in regular and ongoing critical reflection. We use professional development combined with in house mentoring to enhance our skills and knowledge consistent with any and all change in the early childhood sector. Through this we ensure continuous improvement, best practice and quality outcomes for all.