



Belford Oaks

Community
Children's Centre

PARENT HANDBOOK 2026

Welcome

This handbook has been prepared by the educators and parents of Belford Oaks Community Children's Centre (Belford Oaks) as a guide for families, particularly new families joining the service. We encourage you to read it carefully to understand how our centre operates and how you can be involved.

At Belford Oaks we pride ourselves on creating a welcoming atmosphere and supporting families from all cultural backgrounds. If you need assistance to understand this handbook, please contact the Centre Management.

Phone: 9859 7148

Email: info@belfordoaks.org.au

Acknowledgement of 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".

Nadia Wheatley & Ken Searle – Going Bush



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Our Place

Established in 1988, Belford Oaks is a 35-place, community-based centre located in Kew. We are surrounded by the oak trees that inspired our name. We offer government-funded 3- and 4-year-old kindergarten programs in a long-day care setting, maintaining a rating of “Exceeding” across all seven National Quality Standards.

We have three rooms:

- Babies Room (6 months – 2 years), catering for 10 children daily
- Toddler Room (2 – 3 years), catering for 10 children daily
- Kinder Room (3 – 5 years), catering for 15 children daily

Our Beliefs

At Belford Oaks we strive to create a positive culture for children and educators alike, encouraging and supporting everyone to reach their full potential. We see the child as the protagonist in their own learning and development, and believe children learn best through hands-on play within a rich, inquiry-based curriculum.

We facilitate a stimulating environment that promotes happiness, curiosity, and a love of learning. This environment nurtures children’s creative intelligence and builds strong foundations in language, literacy, and numeracy through multi-sensory experiences, while also supporting wellbeing through abundant opportunities for physical play.

We believe children are:

- Independent decision-makers, capable of making choices in their daily experiences
- Expressive communicators, able to share ideas in many ways
- Collaborative learners, creative, capable, and inquisitive

For this reason, we design learning spaces and programs that cater to and extend these qualities.



Our educators see their role as co-learners and co-researchers, inspired by the Reggio Emilia approach. We observe and listen to children, learn from their interests, and plan meaningful experiences that allow them to construct knowledge and contribute to the learning of others. We do this with care, compassion, and attention to individual needs.

The kitchen is the heart of our centre. It is central to the program and supports healthy eating practices. We provide three nutritionally balanced meals daily while helping children develop lifelong healthy habits.

We also recognise the environment as the third teacher. Family and home are the first, educators are the second, and the learning environment itself is the third. We carefully design spaces that respect children as strong, resilient, and capable beings. Authentic materials and thoughtfully chosen resources are used to inspire learning, growth, and discovery, without overstimulation.

Community is also fundamental to our curriculum. We build strong connections both within Belford Oaks and beyond, engaging with the wider Boroondara community whenever possible. These connections enrich children's experiences and foster a strong sense of belonging.

Programming and Planning

Educators plan and program based on children's interests, family input, and observations, guided by the VEYLDF, EYLF, NQF, and current research. Every child has a portfolio documenting their learning journey, which families are welcome to view at any time.

Assessment and Rating

We are proud of our Exceeding Quality Standards rating. Continuous improvement is central to our work, achieved through critical reflection, professional development, and strong family involvement.



Our Commitments

We are committed to ensuring the safety and protection of all children including those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

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.

Hours of Operation

The centre is open Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 6:00pm.

Parents must collect children by 6:00pm; late fees apply (\$1 per minute for the first 10 minutes, then \$5 per minute thereafter). Please contact the centre if you anticipate being late.

Fees

\$192 per day

Fees are invoiced on a rolling basis through Xplor. Once your account is set up and you have downloaded the Xplor Home app, you can view your financial statements at any time.

Families are expected to pay the amount owing each Friday, either via Direct Debit or manually via direct transfer, credit card or BPAY (the details of which are shared with families when they set up their Xplor account).

Fees payable and notice periods

Sick days	Full fee is payable
Family holidays	Full fee is payable
Public holidays	Full fee is payable
Educator Professional Development Day	Non payable
Dec/Jan closure (approx. 2-3 weeks)	Non payable
Reducing days within the service	2 weeks' notice
Termination of care from service	4 weeks' notice
Swapping days of care	Not permitted
Casual days	Subject to availability

Absences (for holidays and illness) and requests for casual days are all made via Xplor.

Rooms and ratios

	Babies	Toddler	Kinder
Age Range	6 months to 2 years	2-3 years	3-5 years
Staffing	3 full-time equivalent educators (Certificate or Diploma Qualified)	3 full-time equivalent educators (Certificate or Diploma Qualified)	2 Early Childhood Teachers & 1 Diploma Qualified Educator
Capacity	10 children	10 children	15 children

Incursions, Excursions & Extra-Curricular Programs

Weekly Extra-Curricular Programs

Each week, all rooms participate in specialist programs, including:

- Mini Monstars - a sports and movement program that supports gross motor skills, confidence, coordination and teamwork
- Hey Dee Ho Music - a music and movement program that builds rhythm, language, and creativity

These programs run during the regular learning day and are included in your fees. Session days rotate each term so children attending on different days all have the chance to participate throughout the year.

Incursions & Excursions

Throughout the year we take part in additional learning experiences, which may include:

- Mobile animal farms
- Puppet shows and theatre performances
- Zoo or Museum visits
- Music and cultural productions
- Community walks and local excursions

Most sessions are provided at no additional cost. On the rare occasion an activity has an associated fee, this will be billed to your account.

For all excursions, families must sign a permission form prior to the experience. Educators will share details ahead of time, including the purpose of the experience, staffing ratios, and travel arrangements. Our priority in every experience is the safety, engagement, and wellbeing of the children.

Funded Kindergarten

- Our combined 3-year-old and 4-year-old kindergarten program is embedded within our long-day care service.
 - The funded kinder programs are delivered by two qualified Early Childhood Teachers and Kinder Assistant from 9:00am–3:00pm each day.
 - Extended care is available 7:30–9:00am and 3:00–6:00pm, led by our kinder team and educators (families may arrive or depart within operational hours to suit their needs).

How the Funding Works

- Our kinder program participates in the Free Kinder program, which offsets part of the cost for families.
- Although families initially pay the full daily fee, the Free Kinder funding is applied as a credit to your account, reducing your out-of-pocket costs. Credits are processed monthly or termly, depending on enrolment.
- This means you still receive full care (quality education, meals, rest periods, and long-day care flexibility) while benefiting from the government subsidy.

Who is eligible

To qualify for the funded kinder program, your child must:

- Be eligible for the 3-year-old or 4-year-old stream under the Free Kinder rules (i.e. meet the age criteria as set by the Victorian Government)
- Attend at least the minimum number of days required for the funded program (as per Belford Oaks enrolment requirements)
- Nominate Belford Oaks as your child's Free Kinder service. You cannot receive the subsidy at more than one service simultaneously.

In-Nature Play Excursions

Once a month, our Kinder group takes part in In-Nature Play excursions at Glass Creek Wetlands in Kew East. These experiences allow children to explore, investigate, and play in a natural environment beyond the Centre's outdoor space. The excursions occur on different days of the week each month so all children are able to participate, regardless of their enrolled days.

Nature play gives children opportunities to:

- Build confidence and independence through open-ended, child-led play
- Strengthen relationships, teamwork, and problem-solving skills
- Develop physical coordination, balance, and strength
- Experience calm and wellbeing in natural spaces
- Learn about sustainability, caring for Country, and respecting living things

Through our In-Nature Play excursions, we aim to nurture confident, capable learners who respect the land and feel a strong connection to the community and Country around them.

The excursions are run at no cost to families.



Governance and Management

Committee of Management

Belford Oaks is a not-for-profit, community-managed service. It is operated by a volunteer Committee of Management (CoM), made up of parents whose children attend the Centre. The CoM is the approved provider and holds overall responsibility for governance, financial management, and compliance with the Education and Care Services National Law and Regulations.

The Committee is responsible for:

- Ensuring compliance with all legal, financial, and reporting requirements
- Overseeing risk management, financial sustainability, and quality improvement
- Embedding child safety into all governance processes
- Reporting serious incidents and staff changes to the Department of Education

Families will be notified at least 14 days before any significant changes to policies or fees. Families have the right to:

- View all policies and procedures
- Access the Centre's Quality Improvement Plan (QIP)
- Request copies of records in line with the National Law

You are warmly encouraged to participate in governance by joining the Committee, sub-committees, or working groups.

Staffing

Our educators are qualified, experienced, and professional. Belford Oaks always meets or exceeds the staff-to-child ratios set under the National Regulations. Staff rotate between morning and afternoon shifts weekly to ensure balanced workloads and continuity for families.

Professional development is ongoing. All staff participate in:

- First Aid training (every 3 years)
- Annual CPR refreshers
- Anaphylaxis training (every 3 years, with annual refreshers)
- Food safety training
- Two professional development days each year (the Centre closes for these days) to build shared skills and strengthen practice
- Individual training through organisations such as Gowrie Victoria and ELAA, with staff sharing their learning with colleagues

This ensures staff are equipped to provide high-quality education and care.

Confidentiality and Privacy

We collect information about children and families to provide safe, high-quality care. This includes enrolment details, health and medical information, and emergency contacts.

Your information is handled securely in line with Victorian and Commonwealth privacy laws, and is only accessed by authorised staff who need it to support your child.

We only share information when required by law to support a child's safety and wellbeing (CISS and FVISS), or when you have provided consent.

You can request access to or update your information at any time. If your details or your child's needs change, please let us know as soon as possible.

We take your privacy seriously because your child's safety and your family's trust matter most.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct applies to staff, families, volunteers, and visitors. Everyone is expected to act with respect, honesty, and fairness. Where inappropriate behaviour occurs, the Centre may restrict access or take further action.

Inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated. This includes:

- Offensive or abusive language or gestures
- Intimidation, threats, or aggression (verbal, physical, or online)
- Gossiping or spreading misinformation about staff, children, or families
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Disrespecting cultural values, identities, or boundaries
- Harassment, discrimination, or bullying of any kind

All parents/guardians, staff, and volunteers are required to sign an acknowledgement of the Code of Conduct upon enrolment and annually thereafter, or when significant updates are made to the policy.

Complaints and Feedback

We value open communication and encourage families to raise concerns constructively.

- *First point of contact:* the Centre Director or Assistant Director
- *If unresolved:* contact the [Committee Vice President](#) or the [Committee](#)
- *Formal complaints:* may be addressed at a Committee of Management meeting if requested

Please find the [Compliments and Complaints Policy](#), [Code of Conduct](#), and [Confidentiality and Privacy Policy](#) on our website.

How families contribute and stay connected

Parent Involvement

As a community-based centre, Belford Oaks relies on family participation to help maintain a high-quality environment and keep fees manageable. Families are asked to nominate how they will contribute when they join the Centre and each year via a Parent Commitment Form.

Ways to get involved include:

- Joining the Committee of Management
- Attending Working Bees
- Joining the Fundraising Committee
- Supporting fundraising activities throughout the year

Committee of Management

Parents and guardians are encouraged to self-nominate for the Committee of Management ahead of the October Annual General Meeting. A minimum one-year commitment applies, and a range of portfolio roles are available.

If you are interested in learning more, please look out for communication from August each year or email: committee@belfordoaks.org.au.

Working Bees

Working Bees are a great way to meet other families, support our educators, and help maintain and improve our learning spaces. There are six Working Bees each year on Saturdays and Sundays; families who choose this option commit to attending three sessions (9:00am–12:00pm). Dates are allocated in advance as places per session are limited.

Families may choose instead to pay a \$400 annual levy, which will be added to their account via Xplor.

Fundraising Committee

The Fundraising Committee supports the financial sustainability of Belford Oaks by coordinating two major fundraising events each year and occasional smaller activities. Workload is shared and meeting schedules are flexible. The committee collaborates with the Committee of Management to ensure funds are used effectively and aligned to Centre priorities. Joining the Fundraising Committee is a great way to build community while helping provide valuable resources and experiences for children.

Fundraising

Fundraising is an important part of how we enhance the learning environment at Belford Oaks. It allows us to purchase additional resources, upgrade facilities, and provide enriching experiences that are not covered by fees or government funding. It also brings our community together in a fun and meaningful way.

Families are invited to get involved by attending events, purchasing tickets, donating items or services, and helping to promote activities within their own networks. We hold two major fundraising events each year, supported by smaller opportunities across the year.

A calendar of events is shared with families each December for the following year, and updates and opportunities are communicated through email and notices at the Centre. Every contribution, big or small, helps make a difference.

Volunteers

Volunteer involvement is encouraged, provided it enhances the program and supports the safety and wellbeing of children.

To keep children safe:

- Volunteers are always supervised by qualified educators and never left alone with children.
- Volunteers must follow the Code of Conduct and keep information about children, families, and staff confidential.
- A short induction is provided so volunteers understand their responsibilities and our child safe practices.

Communication

We maintain regular contact with families through:

- **Email** – newsletters, updates, policies, events
- **Xplor** – for invoices and fee statements, attendance, recording absences, and requesting casual days
- **Notices in the foyer** – key reminders and announcements
- **Face-to-face conversations** – with educators or Centre Management

We also keep you closely connected to your child's day:

- Daily reflections and photos are shared by each room via email, highlighting learning, routines, and moments of joy
- Learning documentation such as summative assessments and learning stories are shared with parents/guardians on a regular cycle to show each child's progress, strengths, and interests

Child Safety & Wellbeing

At Belford Oaks Community Children's Centre, we are committed to providing a safe, respectful and professional environment for every child, family and staff member. Our practices are guided by the National Quality Framework, Child Safe Standards, and our suite of Centre policies.

- We have zero tolerance for child abuse and act immediately on all safety concerns.
- All staff are mandatory reporters, legally required to report reasonable concerns of harm or risk.
- We proactively identify and manage risks to keep children safe, supported and empowered.
- We promote inclusion, cultural safety and full participation for all children, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, children with disabilities, and children from diverse backgrounds.

Professional and Respectful Relationships

Staff maintain professional interactions with families at all times.

- To keep boundaries clear and roles well-defined, staff and families do not connect on personal social media.
- For child safety reasons, staff cannot babysit or provide private care to children currently enrolled at Belford Oaks.
- Gifts to educators should be modest and infrequent, with significant gifts disclosed to the Director.

Behaviour Guidance and Inclusion

- We promote positive behaviour through respectful guidance that supports children's agency, self-regulation and sense of belonging.
- We are committed to equity and inclusive practices that ensure every child can participate meaningfully.

Relevant Policies

*Child Safe Environment & Wellbeing
Code of Conduct
Privacy and Confidentiality
Behaviour Support
Interactions with Children*



Security

At Belford Oaks, the safety and security of children and staff are paramount.

To maintain secure access:

- The front gate is self-closing and the front door is locked at all times.
- Families are given a keypad code for entry during operational hours, updated approximately every 12 months.
- Please do not share the code with occasional pick-ups; they should ring the doorbell for staff to admit them.
- Children and siblings should not use or know the code.
- Do not allow anyone to “tailgate” into the building. All visitors, delivery personnel, and unfamiliar adults must use the doorbell so staff can confirm who is entering.

Photographs and videos

We use digital technology to document children’s learning, but keeping children safe and protecting their privacy is our top priority.

Photo and video consent

- We will only take photos or videos of your child if you have given written permission at enrolment.
- Images are used only for Centre purposes (e.g. learning stories, reflections).
- You can update your consent at any time.

Use of devices at the Centre

To comply with the National Model Code of Practice:

- Only Centre-issued devices can be used to photograph or record children.
- Parents and visitors must not use personal phones or devices to take photos or videos inside the Centre.
- If you would like a photo of your child, please ask an educator and we will happily help.

These measures protect children’s privacy, safety, and identity. Failure to follow the National Model Code can incur significant penalties (up to \$57,400 for the service).

Thank you for helping us keep all children safe and respected while using digital technologies.



Please speak with the Centre Director or Committee of Management if you have a question, or need to raise a concern. All matters are handled sensitively, confidentially and in line with our Child Safe Standards.

Health Procedures

We are committed to providing a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment where children can learn and grow. This includes preventing illness and injury, responding quickly when children need care, and supporting their physical, emotional, and medical needs.

Families play an important role by:

- Keeping children home when they are unwell
- Updating medical information as soon as changes occur
- Notifying the Centre promptly of health concerns
- Following exclusion advice to prevent the spread of illness

As part of enrolment, families are required to provide medical and health information and consents/authorisations for (but not limited to) head lice checks, application of sunscreen, and administration of medication and emergency plans (if required).

This ensures we have the information and approvals needed to keep your child safe and well.

Relevant Policies

- *Administration of First Aid*
- *Administration of Medication*
- *Anaphylaxis and Allergic Reactions*
- *Asthma Management*
- *Dealing with Infectious Diseases*
- *Dealing with Medical Conditions*
- *Diabetes*
- *Incident, Injury, Trauma & Illness*
- *Nutrition, Oral Health & Active Play*
- *Sun Protection*

Illness and Exclusion

Children in care are more likely to experience common illnesses as part of their developing immune system. To reduce the spread of infection and ensure children's comfort and safety, unwell children must stay home.

What families need to do:

- Keep children home if they are sick, distressed, or unable to participate comfortably in the program
- Refrain from giving your child paracetamol or ibuprofen at home in order to mask the symptoms of illness or a fever prior to attendance
- Ensure someone is always available to collect your child promptly if they become unwell at the Centre
- Follow exclusion advice from the [Victorian Department of Health](#)
- Children may only return once fully recovered and able to join indoor and outdoor play

Regarding gastroenteritis: Children must remain home for 48 hours after their last episode of vomiting or diarrhoea.

Responding to sickness or injury at the Centre

Educators respond promptly if a child becomes unwell or injured while in care.

Families will be contacted to collect children if they:

- Have a fever of 38°C or higher
- Are vomiting or have diarrhoea
- Show symptoms of infectious illness
- Are too unwell or distressed to engage safely in the program

If a child requires urgent medical attention:

- 000 will be called immediately
- Families will be notified as soon as practicable

Immunisation Requirements

Belford Oaks follows Victoria's *No Jab, No Play* legislation. As such, we require:

- A current Immunisation History Statement at enrolment
- Updated statements whenever new vaccinations are completed
- Evidence of any catch-up schedule if applicable

Attendance may be suspended if immunisation requirements are not maintained.

The flu vaccine is strongly recommended annually for children under 5. Belford Oaks funds flu vaccinations for all educators.

Allergies & Medical Conditions

If your child has an allergy, asthma, or any medical condition requiring treatment or monitoring, please provide:

- A current medical management plan (e.g., Asthma Action Plan, Anaphylaxis Action Plan, Allergy Plan)
- Any prescribed medication needed to support that plan

To keep your child safe, plans and medication must remain current and be available at the Centre at all times. We will regularly check in with you about any changes.

Administration of Medication

If your child is well enough to attend care, but requires prescribed medication during the day, you must provide written authorisation before it can be given. Medication must be supplied in its original packaging with the child's name, correct dosage, and expiry date clearly visible. When you arrive, please hand medication directly to an educator and complete the required authorisation form.

Belford Oaks does not supply paracetamol or ibuprofen, so families must provide these if needed. All medication is stored securely during the day and must be collected by the parent or guardian at pick-up.

Fees and Financial Information

First steps

- Read our *Fees Policy*, specifically the following attachments:
 - Attachment 1: Fee Information for Families
 - Attachment 2: Complying Written Agreement
 - Attachment 3: Process for Unpaid Fees
 - Attachment 4: Fee Payment Agreement (you will be required to sign this upon enrolment)
- Read our *Enrolment and Orientation Policy*, specifically the following attachments:
 - Attachment 1: General Enrolment Procedures
 - Attachment 4: Centre Enrolment Procedures
- Download the Xplor Home App



Payment of Fees

- Fees are invoiced on a rolling weekly basis through Xplor



- Balances and statements can be viewed anytime in the Finance tab of the Xplor Home app
- Fees must always **remain 2 weeks in advance**
- Families are expected to pay the amount owing **each Friday**
- We highly recommend you set up Direct Debit to ensure payments are processed automatically, on time and without needing to set reminders! Please note that there is a \$1 processing fee per transaction.
 - However, we do offer alternative methods of payment, outlined below with their associated processing fee:
 - BPAY - \$2.31 per transaction
 - Credit card (VISA/Mastercard) - 2.66% per transaction
 - Credit Card (AMEX) - 4.97% per transaction
 - Direct transfer - No fees. Please include your child's name in the description.

If you have questions or need help setting up your payment method or understanding your invoices, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS)

Most families are eligible for CCS, which reduces your out-of-pocket costs. CCS is paid directly to the Centre and shown as a reduction on invoices. Families only pay the gap fee.

Your CCS percentage depends on:

- Combined family income
- Activity hours for each parent/guardian
- Number/age of children in care
- Type of service (approved long-day care)

Families must maintain CCS eligibility by:

- Completing income assessments + tax returns ✓
- Keeping immunisations up-to-date ✓
- Updating Centrelink about changes ✓
- Avoiding more than 42 absence days per financial year
- Avoiding more than 6 continuous weeks without attending

Full fees are payable if CCS stops for any reason. We will always do our best to help, but we do not have any control over Centrelink decisions or CCS payments. Families are responsible for keeping their CCS eligibility up to date with Centrelink/MyGov.

Late Payments & Debt Collection

- The Centre follows a tiered reminder process
- Continued non-payment may result in suspension of a child's place
- Outstanding balances may be referred to debt collection if required

If you have difficulty paying fees, please speak with the Director early as a short-term payment plan may be arranged. Fee pauses, reductions or holds are not available.



Operational Information

Drop-off and pick-up

Upon drop-off and pick-up, parents are responsible for signing their child/ren in and out using the iPad located in the foyer.

If someone other than a parent or authorised nominee is collecting your child, please email the Centre in advance with the person's full name and address. They must be 18 years or older and show photo identification (e.g. driver's licence) when they arrive so we can verify their identity. We cannot release a child to someone whose identity cannot be verified.

Parking

We have a car park at the front of the building which is available to parents at drop-off and pick-up times, which can be in high demand during peak drop-off and pick-up periods. Please keep your visits as brief as possible to allow other families to access the car park.

For everyone's safety, please drive slowly, remain alert for children and prams around walkways and the Babies yard, and always hold your child's hand when moving through the car park. Furthermore, avoid blocking driveways or using neighbouring properties for parking to maintain strong and positive relationships with our local community.

Clothing and Footwear

It is important that children are dressed in comfortable and practical clothing, which enables them to move freely through the environment, without restriction. Children need to wear sleeved tops at all times (singlets are not appropriate under our [Sun Protection Policy](#)).

Clothing must be clearly labelled, and the Centre will not take responsibility for any lost clothing.

Smocks are provided and are worn during art activities and messy play. Please provide at least 2 changes of clean clothes each day.

Children should wear footwear that allows them to participate in all experiences and activities safely and comfortably; therefore, we ask that children wear safe footwear.

- No thongs are to be worn at any time when at the Centre.
- Gumboots can be brought to the centre for outdoor play in the digging patch etc but they are not appropriate for everyday wear.

Nappies and Toileting

You are required to supply nappies for your child when at the Centre. Please bring at least 4 nappies a day. If your child is toileting, please supply several complete changes of clothing including shoes and a nappy if your child requires one for sleep/rest time.

Meals

Belford Oaks provides all meals, ensuring they are healthy, balanced, meet children's individual dietary needs, and are made fresh on-site. **No outside food is to be brought into the Centre.**

Children are offered three main meals and one late snack each day:

- Morning tea: 9:00–10:00am (progressive)
- Lunch: begins at 11:15am for Babies, 11:30am for Toddlers and Kinders
- Afternoon tea: 2:00–3:00pm (progressive)
- Late snack: around 4:30pm (sandwiches, fruit, veggies, cheese)

Meal times are calm, social occasions. Tables are set with plates and cutlery, and educators sit with the children to role model positive eating behaviours. Children choose their seats, serve themselves when appropriate, and help clear away their dishes.

We provide alternatives for children with allergies or dietary requirements; please share this information with educators and the cook and supply a current Allergy and Anaphylaxis Management Plan where relevant.

We follow a nut-free policy - foods containing nuts or nut-based oils are not used or permitted.

Meals are designed around the Australian Dietary Guidelines, featuring fresh, seasonal produce, low sugar and salt, and foods from every food group. Milk is served with morning and afternoon tea, and water bottles are accessible to children throughout the day. Weekly menus are displayed in the foyer, in each room, and on our website.

Rest, relaxation and routines

Rest and sleep needs vary widely from child to child. Educators work closely with families to follow each child's home routine as closely as possible and will adjust as children's needs change throughout the year. Please keep educators updated about any changes to your child's sleep requirements.

Babies Room (6 months–2 years): Educators follow each child's individual sleep routine, using home practices and daily cues. Babies sleep in cots or on mattresses and are comforted with their familiar sleep items.

Toddler Room (2–3 years): Children are offered a rest period around 12–2pm, with flexibility based on individual needs. Non-sleepers have a quiet rest space before moving to calm play or outdoor time.

Kinder Room (3–5 years): Children enjoy a short rest period from about 12–12:30pm with stories or calming music, followed by a group learning session with the Kinder teachers.

What to bring each day

Please ensure all belongings are clearly labelled with your child's name

- A spacious **bag** that securely holds all items (including artwork)
- A named **drink bottle** (water only)
- Two **complete changes of spare clothes**
 - Please provide tops which cover the shoulders
 - No thongs or gumboots
 - We recommend providing clothes that are paint and mud friendly
- A **labelled wet bag** for any soiled clothing
- **Sun hat**
- **Sunscreen** if you have nominated to not use the Centre-provided sunscreen. Please label it clearly to leave at the Centre.
- A **comfort item, dummy, and/or sleeping bag** if required
- **Nappies** for the day
- For toilet training: extra underwear, bottoms, socks, and spare shoes.
- In addition to the above, for babies please provide whichever is relevant:
 - Expressed breastmilk: in labelled bottles
 - Formula:
 - either prepared bottles labelled with child's full name and formula type
 - or dry formula separate + empty labelled bottles if preferred
 - Milk drinkers (cow/soy): empty labelled bottle if you would like them to use a bottle instead of a cup

Orientation Processes

For many children, childcare may be their first time away from family, and some level of anxiety is normal. Educators and families work together to build a trusting relationship that supports your child's transition into care. Even children with previous childcare experience will need time to adjust to new educators, routines, and environments.

As part of the orientation process, you will be contacted by the Centre to schedule two orientation visits before your child is due to commence. Orientation helps your child and family become familiar with the environment, routines, and educators, and greatly supports a smooth transition.

Orientation guidelines

- The times of the orientation sessions are selected intentionally to reflect when the daily routine is settled and when educators can best support your visit.
- For these first visits, we recommend you stay in the room with your child. This reassures them that you trust the environment and the educators, contributing positively to their sense of security. The educators may recommend you step out of the room briefly to give your child the opportunity to practice security with other adults in your absence.
- Until your child is officially enrolled, you must remain on the Centre premises.

The settling-in process


- Begin with shorter days and gradually increase the time your child spends in the room as they become more familiar with the environment. If you are unable to collect your child during shorter stays, please arrange for a family member or friend to assist.
- Always say goodbye to your child before leaving the room. Once you've said goodbye, avoid lingering or re-entering the room, as this can make the settling process more challenging.
- At separation times, project confidence and positivity, even if it's difficult. Children can sense hesitation, and your reassurance will help them feel secure.

Tips for a smooth transition

- Bring a comforter, such as a soft toy, dummy, or an item that has your scent, to help your child feel secure.
- Communicate with educators: Our educators are experienced in supporting children's transitions and can offer personalised strategies to help your child settle in.
- Call for updates: If you're feeling unsure, please call the Centre during the day to check on your child's progress. We would much prefer you reach out than worry unnecessarily.

Remember, the settling-in process takes time, and every child is unique. With patience and support, almost all children adjust to care and come to see it as a positive experience.

Who to contact when

Your question/concern	Best first contact	How to reach us
Your child's day, learning, routines, friendships, behaviour, toileting, sleep, minor illness	Your child's educators	Speak at drop-off or pick-up OR email the room directly: babiesroom@belfordoaks.org.au toddlerroom@belfordoaks.org.au kinderroom@belfordoaks.org.au
You want to request an additional casual day	Create the request in Xplor Home as early as possible	
Your child is sick or absent	Mark the absence in Xplor Home as early as possible <i>Optional: email the room and cc info@belfordoaks.org.au</i>	Open Xplor, click Bookings along the bottom, click +New at the top and you should see this come up! 
Planned holidays or extended leave	Mark the absence in Xplor Home as early as possible AND email the room and cc info@belfordoaks.org.au	
Operations, staffing, policies, concerns about enrolment or fees	Fiona or Gabrielle in the office	Speak in person or email: director@belfordoaks.org.au info@belfordoaks.org.au
Urgent matters during the day	Call the Centre	(03) 9859 7148
You need someone else to pick up your child unexpectedly	Call or email Centre Management with the required information	(03) 9859 7148 info@belfordoaks.org.au
A matter that hasn't been resolved with Centre Management OR Wanting to share ideas for improving the Centre	Contact the Committee of Management	vicepresident@belfordoaks.org.au committee@belfordoaks.org.au Committee member phone numbers are displayed in the foyer

Why notice matters

Knowing when children are away helps us to support casual booking requests, staff responsibly (and reduce costs for extra staff), and plan smooth routines for all rooms.

A general rule: **If you're unsure who to contact, just ask.** No question is too small, and we always prefer a quick conversation over a lingering worry.



Belford Oaks

Community
Children's Centre

www.belfordoaks.org.au