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Dear Parents

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and your children to *Urunga Community* *Preschool*.

Urunga Community Preschool was established in 1983 and has strong and historic links to the local community, with a continuity of staff that spans generations of families who have attended the Preschool.

Our building was architect designed and has proven itself to be a practical well-organised space as well as an aesthetically pleasing environment for children to learn and play. We are surrounded by beautiful mature trees making for a cool, shady environment. A lovely sea breeze makes the playground pleasant on hot Summer days. Our huge sandpit, gravel bed and climbing equipment make our playground interesting and an ever changing environment. Nature continually offers us seasonal pleasures, some of which include our tawny frog mouths, cicadas, water dragons and blue tongue lizards. Our vegie garden and much loved chickens provide us with fresh produce for ‘cooking’.

We are located centrally in the Urunga village which provides us with ready access for regular visits around the community. We make frequent visits to the library, the Post Office, the Art Gallery, the school, the Fire Station, the Dentist and make good use of our beautiful foreshore area with the boardwalk and park.

We invite parent participation in any way that you are able, and parents are most welcome to come and spend time with your child at the Preschool, or discuss any queries that you may have with the staff.

We hope you find the Urunga Community Preschool a safe, friendly and happy place for your child to attend.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the land on which the Preschool is situated, the Gumbaynggirr people.

Sincerely

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE & STAFF

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**Our Philosophy**

Vision statement

Our vision is for a preschool community in which every child, family and educator feels safe, secure and supported. We strive to embed wellbeing for all throughout our work. Wellbeing in the world of early childhood is holistic, and incorporates physical, emotional, social, occupational, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. We know that when we experience wellbeing, we are more able to learn and grow together as a community.

*The outcome of a Wellness lifestyle is a capacity to contribute in positive and meaningful ways to one’s community, society and the welfare of the earth.* (https://www.wellnessaustralia.org/the-wellness-dimensions/)

Our place

Urunga Community Preschool was established in 1983 and has strong and historic links to the local community, with a continuity of staff that spans generations of families who have attended the Preschool.

Our Preschool reflects the ethos of the North Coast and those who choose to live here: a love of the outdoors, the rivers, the oceans and a relaxed way of life.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the traditional custodians of the land on which the Preschool is situated, the Gumbaynggirr people.

The principles founding the National Quality Framework guide us in our beliefs:

THE RIGHTS AND BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD ARE PARAMOUNT

CHILDREN ARE SUCCESSFUL, COMPETENT AND CAPABLE LEARNERS

EQUITY, INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY UNDERPIN THE FRAMEWORK

AUSTRALIA’S ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CULTURES ARE VALUED

THE ROLE OF PARENTS AND FAMILIES IS RESPECTED AND SUPPORTED

BEST PRACTICE IS EXPECTED IN THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

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Children

We believe that when children feel safe and secure that they are best placed to learn and thrive. We put children first, and strive to support their learning and development within an age-appropriate, play-based emergent curriculum. We see each child as a unique being with whom we are walking with on their learning journey. We respect children as capable and competent people who are actively constructing their own learning as they interact with their peers and educators, their families and culture, and our community and environment. We believe that children’s learning takes different pathways and that the doing and discovery is just as important as the endpoint. Children have rights and agency, and we support them to assess risks, to become independent and to develop resilience. Children’s wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do at Urunga Community Preschool.

Families and our community

We understand that children learn best when they have secure relationships with caring adults and that learning stems from the family, community and culture. Families place a great value on participation at Preschool in preparing their children for school.

Families are children’s first and most influential teachers. We honour families’ expertise and engage in shared decision-making about children’s learning and development. We know that lifelong friendships and associations between families often start at Preschool, and believe that we play an important role in the wellbeing of families. We engage in frequent conversations with parents to share the joy in each child’s achievements and to best meet their interests and needs. We are here to support families in their most important work of raising children.

Children are active citizens in the community, and we strive to engage with our community in meaningful ways. Our preschool is central to Urunga and an important part of village life. We go out into the community often, and we welcome community members in to enrich the children’s learning. We value our strong relationships with the local school, the library, café, museum, fire station and our neighbours.

We strive to learn from, and engage with the local and broader Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; understanding that “Australia is a nation of great diversity, and an ancient land that has been cared for by Indigenous Australians for many thousands of years” (NQF principle four).

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Our role as early childhood professionals

We are proud to be a team of highly experienced and professional educators, who consistently provide quality care and education for children. We strive to support children and each other in a caring and collaborative environment. We believe that educator wellbeing is important and that our preschool is a fulfilling and enjoyable place to work.

Our role is to engage, facilitate and scaffold learning whilst providing challenges and provocations. Our curriculum decisions will provide a balance between child-led, child initiated and educator supported learning. We believe in being reflective practitioners and dynamic in our own learning to include current theories and best practices. We model social responsibility and strive to promote a sense of fairness and social justice in children.

Our environment

We are situated in the most beautiful part of the world, surrounded by nature rich in wildlife. We believe that the natural environment is a powerful teacher inviting exploration, investigation and sustained play. We aim to develop children’s understanding of the significance of the land to the Gumbaynggirr people, and to acknowledge that our preschool is on Gumbaynggirr land.

We believe that sustainability is everybody’s responsibility and we aim to continually reduce our environmental footprint on the planet.

We foster children’s capacity to understand and respect the natural environment and the interdependence between people, plants, animals and the land, by providing many rich educational experiences in and about nature, and through conversations with children about their impacts on the environment. We know that children who develop dispositions for caring for the environment are more likely to care for the environment in the future, helping to sustain a healthy planet for everyone. “Nature itself is children’s best teacher” (Coffey, 2001).

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**Management of our Preschool**

Our building is owned by the *Bellingen Shire Council*, and is managed by a Committee consisting of interested parents and community members. It is a community based not-for-profit organisation, regulated and funded by the NSW Government.

The five **main objectives** of the Preschool as set out in our Constitution are:

1. To operate and manage a quality community based, non-profit Preschool to provide a program of experiences which will promote the total development and well-being of the young child.
2. To undertake additional fundraising activities for the purpose of providing funds for additions to and or replacement of equipment.
3. To encourage parent and community involvement as an essential part of the operation of the Centre, so that through frequent and active participation, both family and community will work together to achieve the basic aims of the Centre.
4. To provide regular informal gatherings of children, parents and relatives learning through play.
5. To bring parents regular knowledge of child development, education and emotional needs.

Our Management Committee made up of a group of at least four people who are usually parents of children attending the Preschool.

The Committee is elected at the Annual General Meeting held early in the year from members of Urunga Community Preschool Association.

General meetings are held regularly for Committee members, staff and any interested members of the Association to discuss the management of the Preschool. These meetings are aimed at informing and involving parents of the Preschool’s activities, and giving them the opportunity to voice their opinions. We encourage all parents to attend these meetings. Your ideas and assistance are vital to the running of the Preschool.



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**Our Staff**



DIRECTOR/ECT/ Sarah Barcala

EDUCATIONAL LEADER/

NOMINATED SUPERVISOR Bachelor of Education (Birth to 5 years)

EDUCATOR Sonya Anderson

 Associate Diploma in Child Care

EDUCATOR Leeann Anderson

 Certificate III in Children’s Services

EDUCATOR Leigh Lamb

 Diploma of Children’s Services

EDUCATOR Fran Walton

 Diploma of Children’s Services

EDUCATOR Rachel White

 Diploma of Early Childhood Education & Care

EDUCATOR Zoe Wall

 Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood)

OFFICE MANAGER Louise Close

 Certificate III in Children’s Services

 Certificate IV in Accounting

All staff hold current First Aid Certificates, and undertake regular refreshers in Asthma and Anaphylaxis. Staff are trained in Child Protection practices and are legal mandatory reporters with current Working with Children Checks. Staff are encouraged and supported to attend Inservice courses regularly.

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**Enrolments**

Our Preschool will give equal priority of access to:

* Children who are at least 4 years old on or before the 31st July in that preschool year
* Children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31st July and from low income and Aboriginal families
* Children with English Language needs
* Children with disabilities
* Children who are at risk of significant harm (from a child protection perspective)

There is no order of priority assigned to the list of points above. Priority is given to the groups outlined above before any other groups, including non-equity three year olds.

Children from these groups will be encouraged to participate in 600 hours of Preschool per year i.e. enrolment for at least two days per week.

Two year olds will be able to attend Friday mornings only. Nappy changing facilities are available for this group.

An *Enrolment Form* should be completed online.

There are a few other documents we require in order to accept your enrolment. These are:

1. The child’s Birth Certificate, Passport or other means of identification
2. Proof of Address
3. Health Care Card
4. Under the *NSW Public Health Act*, an immunisation record **must** be provided:
5. An ***Immunisation History Statement*** showing your child’s immunisations are up to date – these are available on line, or;
6. A ***Medical Contraindication Form*** if your child is unable to be immunised with any vaccines due to medical reasons, or;
7. An ***Immunisation History Form*** where an immunisation provider has certified that your child is catching up their immunisations.
8. Any medical Action Plans i.e. for allergies and asthma – as per ‘Medical Conditions’ policy.
9. Any Court Orders affecting access.

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**Supporting your child’s independence**

You are encouraged to support your child’s self -help skills such as dressing, toileting, hand-washing etc. See attached PDF ‘Toilet training: in pictures’. A good rule of thumb is to: ‘Never do something for a child that they can do for themselves’. This builds their capabilities and self-esteem.

**Children with Additional Needs**

Children with additional needs shall be given special consideration for enrolment. The Preschool shall aim to provide Individual Educational Programs, monitor progress, liaise with other services and personnel regarding the child’s development and offer support for the parents.

**Attendance**

The operating hours of the Preschool are 8:30am to 4:00pm. The *Daily Attendance* sheet should be signed on arrival and departure from the Preschool. Please record a phone number where you can be contacted during the day. To ensure smooth running of the programs, please leave as soon as your child is settled in. Volunteers and visitors to the Preschool must sign in also. A *Visitors’ Sign-In Book* is on the table in the foyer.

The Preschool closes at 4:00pm. A late fee will be charged if your child is collected late, at the rate of $40 for every half hour thereafter.

**Code of Ethics**

Urunga Community Preschool supports the **Early Childhood Australia: *Code of Ethics.*** For further information please refer to: [www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au](http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au).

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**Curriculum**

We create a *Weekly Curriculum Plan* based on the children’s ideas and interests and happenings in our community and the environment. This can be accessed via our website, is displayed at our service and emailed to parents.

**Portfolios**

Your child’s Educator will compile a portfolio that showcases your child’s journey at Urunga Community Preschool. The portfolio will contain a variety of elements to best reflect your child’s individual learning journey. There will be some checklists, work samples, photos and learning stories which will be used for ongoing planning to facilitate your child’s learning.

We understand that children learn best when they have secure relationships with caring adults and that learning starts from the family, community and culture. By working in this context we can link your child’s experience at home to the Preschool setting and build upon what they already know.

**Sun Protection**

* ****In Summer, outdoor activities will be limited between 10am & 2pm. However, in Winter, as our playground is heavily shaded, outdoor activities may take place during this time.
* Children will wear hats whenever they are playing or doing activities outside.
* Children who do not have hats with them will play in the shade or wear a clean spare hat.
* The Preschool will endeavour to incorporate sun and skin protection awareness activities into the programs.
* In Summer we encourage you to apply sunscreen to your child before arriving. If needed staff will apply sunscreen/insect repellent to your child. Please let staff know if you do not wish us to apply sunscreen or repellent.
* Please dress your child to minimise sun exposure, especially on the shoulders.

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**Financial matters**

The **NSW Department of Education** provides us with annual funding under the *Start Strong for Community Preschools* program and through the *Preschool Disability Inclusion* program.

In addition the NSW Government’s *Start Strong Affordable Preschool* initiative provides fee relief of up to $4,220 per year for children who are at least 3 years old on or before 31st July 2023. This provides funding for two days of preschool per week and may only be accessed through one early childhood service.

If your child attends another service and you are claiming fee relief from that service, our daily fee will be as follows:

**Full day for 3 to 5 year olds (’non-equity’) $55.00**

**Full day for 3 to 5 year olds (‘equity’ i.e. low income/Aboriginal/disability/additional needs) $45.00**

**Annual fee $35.00**

The **Annual fee** applies to all enrolments and is to be paid **before your child’s first day of attendance.** This fee covers membership of our Association, which is compulsory, and enrichment activities, incursions and excursions throughout the year.

**Our bank details are:**

***Urunga Community Preschool***

***BSB: 533-000***

***Account No: 32825563***

**Please quote your child’s name as reference.**

Unfortunately, we receive no Department of Education funding for our two year olds, therefore the fees are:

**Half day Friday $25.00**

**Annual fee $35.00**

**Fee accounts:** Accounts are issued in the first weeks of each Term. Fees are to be paid two weeks in advance at all times. If you are able to pay the full amount sooner than the end of Term, this is appreciated. Fees must be paid on time in order to maintain your child’s position at Preschool.

**Method of payment:** by direct deposit into our account at the Bananacoast Community Credit Union.

**Late payment of fees:** Any parent having problems with payment should approach Sarah or Louise to discuss.

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**General information**

**Parent involvement:** Parent involvement is both rewarding and appreciated. There are many ways to be involved e.g. by joining our Management Committee, by providing feedback, responding to surveys, helping with odd jobs, assisting with fundraising and joining us on excursions.

**Clothing:** Please send your child in play clothes as it is difficult to keep clothes clean. Include a labelled change of clothes in your child’s bag.

**Paint removal:** Wet paint can be washed out in cold water. Dried paint stains should be soaked overnight in cold soapy water, then hand washed in lukewarm water with soap. Do not use hot water, laundry detergents or stain removers.

**Preschool excursions:** Throughout the year we will organise various excursions. A permission note will be sent home outlining details. We follow all the guidelines for excursions set down by the *Education and Care Services National Regulations* to ensure enjoyment and safety. A *Risk Assessment* will be conducted prior to the excursion for parents to view.

If you would like your child to participate in everyday outings within our local area, please sign and return the *Spontaneous Walking Excursions* authorisation. This authorisation needs to be updated every twelve months.

**Newsletters:** These are prepared at least twice a Term to keep parents informed of all that is happening at the Preschool. If you wish to add anything to the Newsletter please let staff know.

**Policies:** Parents may view our Policy Book in the office at any time.

**Risk Assessments:** Parents may view our Risk Assessments in the office at any time.

**Smoke and alcohol free zone:** The Preschool and its surrounds are smoke and alcohol free zones.

**Holidays:** The Preschool operates parallel with the NSW school terms. We are closed on all Public Holidays and if the holiday falls on your usual Preschool day, you will not be charged for that day.

**Birthdays:** If your child has a birthday on his/her Preschool day, please feel free to bring a cake to share with the other children. Please provide a list of ingredients so an alternative treat can be provided for children with allergies.

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**Correspondence pockets:** These are located on the wall inside the foyer. Please check your pocket each Preschool day. Reminders of coming events may be displayed in the foyer.

**Breastfeeding:** We encourage and support breastfeeding. A quiet and private place will be provided for any mother who wishes to breastfeed at Preschool.

**Fire Protection/Evacuation:** Procedures follow guidelines of *Education & Care Services National Regulations* and are outlined in our Policy.  *Evacuation* and *Lockdown* drills are carried out regularly.

**Notification:** All parents will be notified of any common infectious disease in the Preschool by signs placed in strategic positions in the foyer and/or by email.

**Please inform the Director or ‘Responsible Person’ (identified in the foyer):**

* If another person is to collect your child, by written note or personal telephone call only (not by the person collecting the child). The person collecting the child will be asked to provide identification details.
* Of Court Orders affecting access.
* If your child is to receive any medication while at Preschool. Forms stating relevant details are to be completed. Do not leave medication in your child’s bag or lunch box.
* If you suspect your child might have an infectious condition i.e. head lice, influenza, impetigo (school sores), ringworms, scabies, mumps, chickenpox, gastroenteritis, conjunctivitis etc. If an infectious condition is discovered by a staff member, the ‘Responsible Person’ will contact the parents or emergency contact on the *Enrolment Form* and ask that the child be collected immediately.
* If you are going away for holidays or any other reason.
* There are any changes in circumstances such as address, telephone number, mobile phone number etc. It is up to you to keep our emergency contact register up-to-date.
* Don’t hesitate to speak to the Director, ‘Responsible Person’ or other staff if you have any concerns about your child’s behaviour and development at Preschool or at home. Special times for discussion can be arranged for working parents.

**Feedback/Complaints**

We welcome all feedback as an opportunity to improve our service. If you have a complaint or would like to offer your opinion about any aspect of our Preschool, a *Complaint Form* is available on the table in our foyer. Please complete and either hand to the Director, a Committee member or a staff member. Your comments are important to us and will be given due consideration.

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**What your child needs to bring:**

**Full day groups:**

* Labelled bag for clothes, lunch, craft

 items, hats etc.

* Labelled hat for outside.
* Labelled change of clothes.
* Labelled bottle of water. Please place on the drinks tray.
* Substantial morning tea e.g. crackers and cheese, fruit, yoghurt
* Nutritious packed lunch, strictly no junk food i.e. lollies, chips, any form of chocolate. Exceptions will be made for shared birthday cake.
* Pack morning tea and lunch in the one insulated labelled bag with a cooler brick or frozen drink. Place this bag on the food trolley for children and staff’s ease of access.
* Labelled cot sheet or quilt for quiet time in a plastic bag or similar. Please place in the basket.

**Half-day groups:**

* Hat, lunch and drink. Change of clothes.
* Sheet not needed.

**Lunch boxes and storage of food:**

Our food handling and storage procedure is as follows:

* Pack morning tea and lunch in one insulated bag with a cooler brick
* ****Place drink bottles on the tray for children to access throughout the day
* Place the insulated bag on the food trolley for children and staff’s ease of access
* Ensure there is a name on the outside of the insulated bag. Some children have similar bags.
* The fridge is available for food with high risk of spoiling e.g. chicken
* We encourage a ‘plastic wrap free’ lunch box
* Unfortunately we cannot reheat food due to health regulations.

**Tips for keeping cool:**

* Freeze a small water bottle and add to lunch box
* Yoghurt can be frozen too
* Make the lunch the night before and store in the fridge before adding cooler bricks in the morning



***Food for Health: Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia***

**Encourage and support breastfeeding.**

**Children and adolescents need sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally.**

* Growth should be checked regularly for young children.
* Physical activity is important for children and adolescents.

**Enjoy a wide range of nutritious foods.**

Children and adolescents should be encouraged to:

* Eat plenty of vegetables, legumes and fruits
* Eat plenty of cereals (including breads, rice, pasta and noodles), preferably wholegrain
* Include lean meat, fish, poultry and/or alternatives
* Include milks, yoghurt, cheeses and/or alternatives. Reduced-fat milks are not suitable for children under two years, because of their high energy needs, but reduced-fat varieties should be encouraged for older children and adolescents
* Choose water as a drink

And care should be taken to:

* Limit saturated fat and moderate total fat intake. Low-fat diets are not suitable for infants
* Choose foods low in salt
* Consume only moderate amounts of sugars and foods containing added sugars.

**Care for your child’s food: prepare and store it safely.**

Reference: *Get Up & Grow* *– Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood.*