*[Insert Letterhead/Logo]*

3 April 2020

**COVID-19 Updates – Support for Families**

Greetings OSHC Parents and Community,

The announcement of the *Early Childhood Education and Care Relief Package* has been welcomed by our service. The threat of the current crisis has direct implications to our viability. The new supports available to the service not only assist our families but our employees also. The purpose of the funding is to support services to remain open to enable essential workers and vulnerable children and families to access quality education and care.

The Relief Package announced by the Federal Government means there will be no out-of-pocket costs for children to access childcare, including OSHC. The initial commit of the Relief Package is for three months, with monthly ongoing reviews from this point. More details of the scheme are found at <https://www.dese.gov.au/news/coronavirus-covid-19>.

There are two aspects to the funding:

***Waive Gap Fee for Absences***

For the fortnight inclusive of Monday 23 March to Sunday 5 April, families not attending the service for COVID-19 reasons will be able to have the out-of-pocket (gap fee) waived. This retrospective calculation will be itemised in the statements provided to families.

***No Out-of-Pocket Costs for Care***

From 6 April until the end of the financial year, services will receive guaranteed payments instead of Child Care Subsidy (CCS) and Additional Child Care Subsidy (ACCS) to provide care to families that need it.

In doing so, our service must coordinate bookings through a priority of access, meaning vulnerable children and children with parents required to work away from home will have the first opportunity to access care. After we satisfy the needs of these families, we can then include children from parents working from home, and then, if available, we can cater for any other child/ren.

We must ensure the safety of children and educators. Therefore, we may not have the capacity to meet the needs of all families. The priority of access will be the framework used to determine available places. If needed, we may ask families to provide evidence of working needs (a simple letter from your employer should suffice).

We recognise this is a challenging time for us all. We will endeavour to work with parents and our educators to maximise our capacity to meet needs of families. We have the complex task of coordinating places and ensuring the service is safe for us all.

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| **Safety of Children, Families and Educators**  We would like to take the opportunity to remind parents of the current Australian Government advice that it is safe for children to be attending education and care services, such as OSHC.  We will continue to be proactive in preventing the spread of infectious disease in our service. To be supported in keeping the service free from exposure, we remind parents to be vigilant in ensuring any sick child remain at home and not attend the service. Likewise, the service will ensure any staff member who presents with any illness will remain isolated from the service.  We are endeavouring to promote social distancing measures within the service. We are proactive in planning our program to ensure our activities support these practices. We encourage families to talk to children about the importance of changing our behaviours for the sake of the wider community.  Our hygiene routines continue to be adopted in a rigorous manner. We take every effort to ensure handwashing is completed frequently and thoroughly. Additionally, other relevant behaviour and practices (i.e. sneezing and coughing into an elbow) are widely promoted. If there are any areas of the service parents can identify improvements to protect from COVID-19, please make this known. |

We look forward to playing our part in supporting families and the community through this crisis. Your continued support and encouragement during the challenging time is deeply appreciated.

Kind Regards