Vacation Care
Parent Handbook
“As part of UnitingCare Queensland, the mission of UnitingCare Community is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities as we: Reach out to people in need; Speak out for fairness and justice; Care with compassion, innovation and wisdom.”
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Introduction

Welcome to the UnitingCare Community Vacation Care Program, a community based program for school-aged children aged 5-18 years with a diagnosed disability. The Vacation Care Program is funded by the Federal Department of Families, Housing, Community Programs and Indigenous Affairs and provides engagement through a range of indoor and outdoor activities including:

- Cooking
- Sports
- Craft
- Pretend play
- Sensory play
- Outdoor play
- Themed days

Our aim is to provide a caring and secure environment where each child can develop his or her physical, intellectual, language, social/emotional and life skills to become a competent and confident individual.

This handbook has been designed to provide you with an outline of the conditions and policies associated with our Vacation Care Program.

- We ask that Parents/Carers/Agencies contact the Vacation Care Administration Team to discuss your application for a vacation care place and any special care requirements.
- Parents/Carers are required to agree to and abide by conditions set down by UnitingCare Community.

Staff

Our team has been selected on their care giving qualities and formal/informal knowledge, skills and experience and/or willingness to acquire these. You will find the team friendly and approachable and they will assist you when they can.

Staff are required to hold a current First Aid certificate and these are renewed three yearly with the CPR component upgraded yearly as required. All staff have a current Blue Card for working with children and possess qualifications and training in:

- Allergies and Anaphylaxis
- Asthma, Diabetes
- Epilepsy
- Gastrostomy feeding
- Medication administration
- Behaviour management

In addition, our staff take part in a program induction where they are informed of the needs of each individual client and undergo regular training in a variety of areas to meet the health care, social and emotional needs of our clients.
Program

All children accessing our programs are grouped appropriately. The criteria for each grouping can be different, e.g. age groups or level of care. Children can access activities offered in other groups during the day if the staff ratio allows for this.

A daily program for each group will be on display on the parent notice board located in the sign-in area of each centre to give parents a guide of the kind of activities that will be taking place for that day.

Our aim is to have a variety of activities available for children to engage in, running simultaneously with the choice of inside and outside play, weather permitting.

Locations

UnitingCare Community's Vacation Care operates from the following sites:

- Beenleigh Special School - Mt Warren
- Mitchelton Special School - Kedron Avenue, Mitchelton
- Mt Ommaney Special School - Capital Drive, Mt Ommaney
- Nursery Road Special School - Nursery Road, Holland Park

Hours of operation

The hours of operation at all venues are 8:00am to 5:00pm. Each centre opens no earlier and closes no later than the specified hours. No staff should be operating as a carer on the premises before or after these hours.

A late fee of $2.00 per minute will be charged if your child is not collected by 5:00pm.

Program participation

Your child must be of school age 5-18 years and have a diagnosed disability. Our policy of inclusion aims to understand and provide for the individual needs of your child. UnitingCare Community Vacation Care undertakes a needs assessment process that uses a tool to identify specialised health care requirements, behavioural support needs and other individualised care needs. This process is undertaken in partnership with schools, specialists and family.

The program will endeavour to incorporate all children, however, if the required level of safety cannot be met vacation care will not be provided by UnitingCare Community.

Fee structure

Fees for Vacation Care are $75.00 per day less the Child Care Benefit (CCB).

A $20.00 non-refundable application fee will apply to all applications and must be paid before they can be processed.

Childcare benefit

Some families may be entitled to receive Government Assistance i.e. the CCB, to help pay fees. In this case your fee will be reduced.

The level of assistance available will depend on your families’ circumstances. To find out if you are eligible, families are required to register with the Family Assistance Office on 136 150.

It is the parent’s responsibility to investigate their eligibility, undertake any necessary re-assessment procedures and then provide UnitingCare Community with CRN’s (Customer Reference Number), Date of Birth (DOB) and full names (as it appears on your Centrelink statements) for both child and parent or full fees will apply.

To learn more information about CCB visit www.familyassist.gov.au
Childcare rebate

The Childcare Rebate (CCR) helps working families with the cost of childcare. The Childcare Rebate covers 50 per cent of out-of-pocket childcare expenses for approved childcare up to the maximum legislated amount per year per child in approved care.

To learn more information about CCR visit www.familyassist.gov.au

Support organisation payment

Families can also elect for the Department of Communities - Disability Programs or other support organisations to be invoiced for the fees. It is the families’ responsibility to make arrangements for these payments prior to applying for a place for their child in our program.

If a support organisation is to be invoiced for your fees, the contact person responsible for the approval of this payment is required to fill in the appropriate section of your application form for each operation period. A signature must be obtained from the support organisation to indicate they will pay the fees.

No application will be finalised if a parent has indicated that an organisation is to pay and the relevant section has not been completed.

What do my fees pay for?

UnitingCare Community is a not for profit organisation and employs well qualified and experienced staff. Fees are required to pay staff wages, specialised training for staff and resources for the children.
Account enquiries

The Coordinator or Administration Officer are the most appropriate people to handle enquiries about your account. Please feel free to contact them regarding account enquiries either by email or telephone.

The staff working at our centres are responsible for the care of the children and are unable to assist parents with any account enquiries.

Accounts and invoicing

Invoices are sent to parent/carers and/or approved government/support organisations after the care period. All invoices are generated to include all CCB/CCR reductions and the total amount on an invoice is the amount due. Fees are payable in full by the given date on the invoice. Payments can be made by bank cheque, money order, credit card or direct deposit into our account. Please obtain details from the Administration Officer or Coordinator for a direct deposit or credit card payment.

Your account is considered to be overdue if your fees have not been paid in full by the due date (30 days from the date of invoice). Families with overdue accounts will not be accepted for care in the following holiday period until all fees outstanding have been paid in full.

If families are suffering genuine hardship, it is important for UnitingCare Community to know so a realistic payment plan can be established.
Dishonoured cheques

Parents are liable for any bank charges incurred to UnitingCare Community for dishonoured cheques. These charges will be added to your account.

Late collection fees

If a child is not collected by the time the centre closes the staff on duty will attempt to contact the parents/carers, emergency contact, taxi program, case worker or people authorised to collect the child. In the event contact is unable to be made within 30 minutes, the child will be transported to the local police station.

If you know you are going to be late collecting your child, please phone the centre so we can reassure your child. In the event this occurs, you will be required to give program staff an estimated time of arrival and maintain frequent contact with the program.

If a child is collected after the centre’s closing time, the family will attract a late fee of $2.00 per minute for each minute they are late, which will be added to the invoice amount. This amount is not covered by CCB. Late fees may be charged at the Coordinators discretion i.e. Taxi mix up.

Cancellations

A cancellation or date change can be made up to one week out, from the first operational day of Vacation Care. Any cancellations made after that date will incur a cancellation fee of $20.00 per day, with a maximum fee of $100.00 per week.

Any date change will also incur the cancellation fee and a new booking date will depend on staff availability.

Any cancellation made prior to one week before care will not incur a fee.

Absences

If your child is going to be absent you are required to contact the Vacation Care mobile phone to notify staff. You will still be charged for the session, unless your child has entered hospital or any other extenuating family circumstances.

Application process

Applications can be made by contacting the Administration Team on (07) 3270 6451 or email vacationcare@uccommunity.org.au and requesting an application pack.

Applications can be made by returning all forms, documents and kits, along with a non-refundable application fee of $20.00. Applications will not be processed until all forms are returned completed and the application fee is paid. The application fee can be paid via cheque/money order, direct deposit or credit card. (Please see application fee form in application pack.)

Applications must be made by said cut off date. Late applications will be taken subject to placements and staff availability. Once your child has attended our program, a new pack will be automatically sent to you via email or post for the following care period.

No new applications will be processed if previous accounts are not paid in full.
Waiting lists for requested days

It is important for families to return their pack before the cut-off date as places fill up extremely quickly. The administration team do their best to cater to every family’s needs. However, due to staff availability, client ratios and following the priority of access, you may not receive all days requested. If you desperately need a particular day, please indicate that on your application form.

If we are unable to give you all the days you have requested, you will be placed on a waiting list for that day. If there are any cancellations, absent children or additional staff available, the site supervisor at the program your child attends may contact you and ask if you would like to take the vacant place.

Confidentiality and storage of information

UnitingCare Community complies with the Privacy Act 1988. UnitingCare Community will only use personal information for the purposes they are collected in accordance with the guidelines provided in the Privacy Act. All information collected is stored in accordance with the Privacy Act 1988.

We would encourage you to familiarise yourself with this document and ask for clarification if required.

Vacation Care’s program charter, goals and objectives

As part of UnitingCare Queensland, the mission of UnitingCare Community is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities as we: Reach out to people in need; Speak out for fairness and justice; Care with compassion, innovation and wisdom.

In addition to the mission of UnitingCare Community, the Vacation Care program has identified objectives of its own, specific to the work we do. Our objectives and goals are listed to provide you with a clear indication of how we operate, and what you can expect as a client of our service. At all times, the program and its staff operate within the values of UnitingCare Community: Compassion, Respect, Justice, Working Together and Leading through Learning.

Program charter

- To support the community by providing a unique and individual-based quality program

Program goals

- To provide an effective, accessible and professional program for children with a disability and additional needs and their families within the community
- To foster positive relationships with all children through daily interactions and forms of communication; to build positive self-esteem and self-concepts
- To actively promote and advocate children’s rights
- To constantly strive for partnerships with families, carers and agencies
- To continue to develop lines of communication using various mediums such as verbal or written and by encouraging a transparent, open door policy
- To work together in a positive and productive environment and respecting various opinions and skills
- To provide a safe, healthy and inclusive environment by remaining up to date with current information and practices and supporting protective care within all aspects of the service
- To assist in the development of supportive networking between parents, carers, staff and other professionals or agencies
- To undertake the Outside School Hours Care Quality Assurance (OSHCQA) registration process and continually work toward our quality improvement plan.
Objectives

- To promote the development of life skills and competencies
- To promote acceptance and understanding of children with additional needs within the community
- To provide a program which respects the individuality of each child and family regardless of race, creed, gender, disability, class or culture.

Our philosophy

We believe that every child is unique and an individual

The Vacation Care program values equity, empowerment, cultural diversity, acceptance, reconciliation and inclusion. These values form the basis from which we work.

Our program primarily seeks to meet the unique needs of individual children and provide experiences which will foster their overall development.

We recognise the value and vulnerability of children. We take seriously the responsibility we have to the community to ensure that all children have the opportunities to develop healthy self-concepts, strong bodies and minds, positive relationships with others and a sense of their independence within the wider environment and community.

We believe children learn through experiences and play

We endeavour to provide children with a wide range of developmental and competency-based experiences which promote active involvement with materials, peers and the environment, allowing children freedom of choice and decision making in their play.

We believe children need to feel safe, respected and valued in their care environment

Children need a warm, caring, predictable, positive, comfortable, familiar and cooperative environment where they can explore, problem solve, create and work at their own pace and ability. This will promote their curiosity, imagination, confidence and they can feel a sense of achievement, belonging and self-esteem.

We believe parents/carers are our best resource and the most important people in their child’s life

We work with the families to achieve equal partnership, participating with them and supporting them in the nurture of their child. Communication between the staff and families is essential in maintaining continuity for the child. We operate under a transparent open door policy and parents are encouraged to give feedback and make suggestions relating to the operation of the service.
We believe that professional, effective childcare workers have the skills, knowledge and commitment to provide expert care for your children

Our staff are encouraged to seek professional development and adhere to all policies, laws and legislations. Constant learning is achieved through analysing, evaluation and reflections.

Our involvement within children’s services demonstrates that UnitingCare Community is committed to the provision of quality experiences for children. Not only are these experiences the foundations on which children build their life skills, they are also an investment in the quality of our future society.

The key to offering support to children is our belief in and our commitment to the intrinsic value of the individual child.

Priority of access

The Federal Government has established guidelines for those who can receive priority access into a centre. All centres receiving Childcare Benefit must abide by these guidelines.

- **Priority 1** - A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.
- **Priority 2** - A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy the work/training/study test under Section 14 of the Family Assistance Act.
- **Priority 3** - Any other child.

Within these main categories priority should also be given to the following children:

- Children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families
- Children in families which include a disabled person
- Children in families on lower incomes
- Children in families with non-English speaking backgrounds
- Children in socially isolated families
- Children of single parents

Management of the Centre

The Management Team, consisting of the Coordinator and Administration Officer, support the operation of all the venues.

Each of our centres has a site Supervisor who is supported by Group Leader/s.

All information must be given or directed to the Coordinator in relation to booking changes, cancelled days, medication and changes to health needs.
Communicating with children

UnitingCare Community's Vacation Care understands that our clients have a wide range of communication skills.

All our staff are trained in key word sign and carry PECS cards on them at all times.

When communicating with children, our staff use the following effective techniques:

- Gain their attention - gain eye contact
- Get down to their level
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use key word sign, pictures or objects for visual aids
- Make instructions/explanations simple and short
- Give reasoning for requests
- Be consistent in approach

Accessing our Program

What to bring

Your child will require:

- Morning/afternoon tea and lunch
- Drinks for the day (water is always available)
- Sunscreen and a hat
- Minimum of two sets of spare clothes
- Any personal care items e.g. nappies (we do not supply these)
- Medications and medical procedure equipment
- Security items
- Communication book (if applicable)

All items brought into Vacation Care must be clearly labelled with your child’s name for easy recognition and returned to your child’s bag.

This includes: clothes, underwear, shoes, hats, sheets, bottles, containers and bags.

UnitingCare Community Vacation Care will take no responsibility for lost items or broken items such as toys etc. Note that all care is taken to return items safely.

Dress requirements

Play clothes are the most suitable for children who love freedom of climbing, rolling, digging, painting and other messy activities such as play dough and goop. Due to the amount of messy/water play children engage in, there should be a minimum of two changes of clothing per day. The clothing should be able to be easily managed when going to the toilet.
Please also keep in mind Sunsmart Guidelines (sleeved and collared shirts are preferable). We do offer in and outside activities throughout the day, however children do spend a lot of time outside and a hat is essential. Children without an appropriate hat will not be permitted to play outside of the undercover area. 30+ Sunscreen is applied to children before each session eg. after morning tea, after lunch, and after afternoon tea.

All children should arrive and depart the centre wearing shoes. We also recognise the benefits of barefooted play for a child’s growth, development and sensory awareness and, weather permitting, shoes can be removed for activities.

During winter months, please ensure that your child comes to Vacation Care wearing appropriate clothing, as the program does not have spare clothes eg. jumpers, long pants.

Please make sure all clothing and shoes are labelled with the child’s name.

**Transport**

Transport to or from Vacation Care is the responsibility of the parent/carer. A number of our families use taxi services and have regular drivers assigned to them that are familiar with our program and the clientele we cater for. This can be organised by contacting your local taxi program to make arrangements.

**Arrival and departure procedures**

Parents/carers are required to sign their children in and out. This is a requirement to gain CCB and a legal requirement of our program operation. It also assists staff to ensure safety in a case of emergency and to ensure staff/child ratio is correct.

If your child arrives by taxi, the Supervisor will assume responsibility and complete sign in / out records on your behalf.

Please relay any relevant information attaining to your child to the staff on arrival e.g. seizures, breakfast, behaviours etc. This ensures both your child and the staff are able to modify their day if required.

A staff member must be notified that you have collected your child. Only people nominated on your child’s Authority to Release Form are authorised to collect your child. Please ensure this is kept up to date. If you require a person to collect your child who is not nominated, you are required to give written notification to the Supervisor or contact the Coordinator. The person will be required to show photo ID before custody of your child will be given.

**Early arrivals**

Please do not enter the Vacation Care program prior to the opening time of 8:00am. Although there are staff present at that time, they are required to prepare for the day and cannot care for your child while doing so.

**Parking and safety**

We ask all parents to exercise the greatest of care when driving in and out of our Vacation Care services. We also ask parents to adhere to Entry, Exit and “No Parking” indicators in the car park areas. Please do not park on the grass.

We encourage you not to leave children unattended in your car. Please remember to lock your vehicle at all times and do not leave valuables in it.
Authority to release child

At the time of enrolment, parents must provide Vacation Care with the names of adult persons (over 18 years of age) authorised to collect your child via the Authority to Release Child form attached to your application pack. It is the parent’s responsibility to notify the centre of any changes in authorisation e.g. court orders etc. There are extra Authority to Release Child forms located at the centre available for use, if your circumstances change during the care period.

People collecting your child will be required to show photo ID to confirm their identity. **No child will be released to a person not indicated on this form.**

Items and toys from home

While Vacation Care understands that some children need security items with them at all times and allows personal items to be brought into the centre, all items must be labelled with the child name eg. toys, clothes, shoes, jumpers, blankets etc.

Calls to collect your child

When we call you about your child it is because you are needed and it is important that you are able to respond quickly. It is likely that we will ask you to come to collect your child because of an incident or illness. If you receive a call from Vacation Care staff, a parent/carer or person on the Authority to Release form needs to attend to the site within 30 minutes to collect the child.

Illness

As soon as staff become aware that a child is unwell, the parent/carer will be contacted and the child is to be collected from the centre. We do not have the facilities to properly care for sick children for a long period of time as they cannot be isolated from the group. As infection spreads quickly it is important that sick children are collected as soon as possible.

Accidents/Incidents

Despite the observance of all safety precautions, occasionally a child may sustain an injury at the centre. Parents will be notified of any significant injury and appropriate action will be taken. All staff hold current First Aid qualifications and will attend to a child in need. A written record of the incident stating all relevant details will be kept. Parents are able to view these documents at any time.

Unsafe behaviours

Dependant on the situation, if your child displays continued unsafe behaviours, staff will contact the parent/carer to obtain strategies. Strategies will be implemented and if unsafe behaviour continues, program staff will contact the parent/carer or persons on the Authority to Release form to collect the child from the site.
Medication, health and wellbeing

Medications

Staff are trained to administer medication. All children who require medication to be administered must have an up to date Medication Administration Kit, signed by a doctor, returned with their application pack. If your child requires this kit, you must request it when you receive your application pack.

The information in the kit must match the information in the client profile and parents are required to inform the Coordinator of changes to medication for their child as they arise or via the client profile update form attached to the application pack.

**NO medication will be administered without this kit or a printed chemist label detailing child’s name and times to be taken.**

If a child is prescribed a new medication, it will NOT be possible for our program staff to be the first to administer the medication to the child in case of an adverse or allergic reaction. We understand that this may cause an inconvenience for some families; however the decision has been based on our capacity to ensure the safety and wellbeing of children in our care.

Gastrostomy feeds

Staff are trained to administer gastrostomy feeds. All children who require medication to be administered must have an up to date gastrostomy administration kit, signed by a doctor, returned with their applications pack. If your child requires this kit, you must request it when you receive your applications pack. Parents/carers must provide all equipment and formulas. You can request this kit from the Administration Officer.

No gastrostomy feeds will be administered without this kit.

Diabetes

The centre will follow the guidelines set down by Diabetes Australia and that prescribed by the child’s Doctor. Staff have been trained to watch for Hypoglycaemia and are aware of emergency action that may be required. If your child has diabetes, you must provide UnitingCare Community Vacation Care with a Diabetes care plan that has been signed by a medical professional. If you do not have this document, please request a Diabetes Care Plan upon enrolment.

Asthma

The centre will follow the four step Asthma plan. Puffers etc. must be given to staff for storage. If your child requires a puffer, a Medication Administration Kit, signed by a doctor, must be returned with their applications pack. You can request this kit from the Administration Officer.
Seizures
All staff are trained in managing seizures. UnitingCare Community Vacation Care management plan for seizures is as follows:

- Record time of seizure
- Remove objects away from the child to avoid injury
- Place a pillow under their head
- Loosen any tight clothing
- Roll the child into recovery position and ensure their airway is clear
- Offer support and assurance
- Allow the child to rest until recovered - constantly monitoring the child
- An ambulance is called if the seizure lasts longer than three (3) minutes, one seizure follows another, the child is injured or the child has diabetes.

If your child suffers from seizures and the UnitingCare Community Vacation Care care plan does not meet their needs, a care plan from a medical practitioner is required.

Medical procedures
If your child requires any kind of medical procedure to be administered such as colostomy bag, wound dressing, eye/ear drops, blood sugar level testing etc, a medical procedures kit signed by a doctor, needs to be returned with their application pack. You can request this kit from the Administration Officer.

The staff at our centres hold first aid certificates, but are not trained nurses. It is with this knowledge that you request a procedure to be performed.

Nutrition and food
Meal times at Vacation Care are a valued part of the daily routine and provide a good opportunity to practice independence, personal hygiene, safe food handling and develop social skills as children are encouraged to sit together at the table to eat and engage in small group interactions.

As a program, we promote healthy eating and we request that parents/carers keep this in mind when preparing your child’s food and supply only healthy, nutritious foods for children’s lunches and morning/afternoon teas. Chocolates lollies and soft drinks etc. are discouraged. UnitingCare Community Vacation Care is allergy aware and requires your assistance to be nut free; please consider the many clients at Vacation Care whom have severe allergic reactions to nuts when packing meals for your child.

Food can be refrigerated and/or heated if required. Please also send any special cutlery/plate/cup your child may require. Remember to make sure all lunch boxes, drink bottles, food containers and special equipment are labelled.

Vacation Care occasionally provides healthy foods for children to try and encourages children to assist in cooking from recipes they have chosen (keeping in mind all allergies) – be sure to keep Vacation Care staff informed of all allergies your child has.

Special diets
If, for medical reasons your child requires a restrictive diet, please inform the Administration Officer and careful attention will be taken regarding your requirements.
Hygiene

Our programs follow strict hygiene practices outlined by childcare legislation in addition to disability standards. Our staff maintain strict protocols in preventing infection, cross contamination and ensuring certain allergens are not present at our sites.

- All children and staff are to wash their hands before they enter rooms, before/after all meals, after toileting and when transitioning from activities.
- If a parent or sibling would like to enter rooms, they need to wash their hands before doing so.
- As head lice can spread rapidly, if a staff member is made aware that your child has lice, the Supervisor will contact you to arrange for your child to be picked up immediately.
- We follow the childcare legislation if your child has soiled their clothes we are unable wash them. They will be bagged and labelled with your child’s name and stored in a secure place. A tag indicating that you have soiled items to be collected will be attached to your child’s bag. It is your responsibility to inform staff that you require collection of these items upon picking your child up.

We strive for our children to assist in keeping their own personal hygiene, promoting the development of life skills and we encourage independence where appropriate. Our program records information about each child’s personal hygiene routine everyday. This is used to help individual development of personal hygiene and inform parents of vital information regarding their child. You can obtain this information from the program Supervisor.

Ratios

UnitingCare Community’s Vacation Care operates on a maximum one staff to three children ratio. However, dependent on your child’s needs, the ratio may be lower e.g. 1:1 if determined by the Coordinator via the individual needs assessment process.

Emergency procedures

UnitingCare Community will manage all emergency situations in a professional and efficient manner. Fire drills are run by centre staff to ensure that all staff are ready in the event of a fire.

If an emergency procedure has been activated, parents will be informed by the Service Supervisor upon collection of child. For more detail, please see the Fire and Evacuation Policy, Emergency and Disaster Policy and Lockdown Policy in the policy section.

Safety

Needs management

UnitingCare Community’s Vacation Care is committed to the safety and wellbeing of young people with a framework that incorporates needs profiling, reporting and the development and implementation of appropriate mitigation strategies.

All clients accessing the UnitingCare Community Vacation Care Program will have an individual needs profile done to ensure we provide the highest quality care. This may be done upon enrolment or with parents/carers of existing clients annually. Areas of need considered are health/medical, behavioural, environmental and crisis. UnitingCare Community is dedicated to ensuring all children are safe and secure and will endeavour to manage safety in an efficient, effective and professional manner. Please ensure you provide all relevant information upon application of wheelchair operation and access, balance and instability information, evidence of aggressive behaviour, medical information, emotional stability and any other factors that will impact your child’s life and care with the UnitingCare Community Vacation Care Program.
Safety issues for parents/carers:

To help the staff keep the site a safe place for your child/children, we ask you to abide by certain safety regulations.

- No smoking on any of the UnitingCare Community properties. This includes the carpark. Government regulations state that smokers are not permitted within 10 metres of a childcare premises.
- Please ensure that all doors and gates are closed behind you.
- Do not allow children to climb or attempt to open the gate/door in our centres.
- Do not allow children, particularly older siblings, to run inside the centres.
- No glass jars, polystyrene should be used in our centres. Plastic bags and plastic wraps are not recommended to be used by children.
- Do not leave medication in children’s bags.
- If children have pierced ears - STUDS ONLY will be allowed, no other jewellery.
- Please be aware of your responsibly to collect your child if an unsafe situation arises, if your child is ill or injured or your child’s behaviour has become unsafe and more assistance is required than staff ratios allow.

Site safety

All sites that are utilised by UnitingCare Community’s Vacation Care program are pre-existing purpose built Education Queensland Special School sites.

Equipment and chemicals

We check equipment constantly for sharp edges and conduct a daily safety check each morning of the Centre premises and equipment. Quarterly audits are conducted on all equipment and toys to ensure safety for children.

All chemicals are stored out of reach of children, all chemicals used are environmentally friendly and Material Data safety sheets are provided for all products used within the centre on each of our sites.

Complaints management

Client complaints or concerns will be handled according to the UnitingCare Community policy and parents/carers are urged to raise these direct with the co-ordinator either in person, by phone or email/letter. Any complaints from parents/carers relating to our service that are received by the school should be referred to the co-ordinator in the first instance. Our policy requires us to respond to the complainant within 10 days and we will advise the school that we have done so.

Guidelines

Medication and health care management

UnitingCare Community is committed to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of clients participating in our programs. The provision of support and assistance to manage and monitor personal health care, including medication, is an accepted support need for many clients. All clients have the right to have their health care needs met in a community setting and in a manner consistent with expected and stated community standards for health care. UnitingCare Community will promote medication and health care management practices, which are consistent with legislative requirements and accepted community health care practices and standards.
Wherever possible, individual clients shall be encouraged and supported to participate to the greatest extent possible in the management of their personal health care, including the management and administration of medication. The Queensland Health (Drugs and Poisons) Regulation (1996) defines the level and extent of involvement of a carer in the administration of medication or in medication related tasks. The level and extent of involvement is determined by the level of training the individual carer has received. Where possible medications should only be administered by a health professional or the parent.

Medications can be administered by staff if the following criteria are met:

- The client who requires help with their medication (or the person’s legal guardian) requests assistance.
- The staff member assists the client to take the medication exactly as instructed by the prescribing doctor or pharmacist.

**Behaviour management**

UnitingCare Community encourages children to manage their own behaviour.

Staff will role model appropriate behaviour management techniques and recognise the diversity and individuality in every child. All information must be treated with confidentiality.

**Desired outcomes**

- To promote the development of life skills and competencies
- To promote acceptance and understanding of children with additional needs within the community
- To provide a program which respects the individuality of each child and family regardless of race, creed, gender, disability, class or culture.
- To teach children to take responsibility for their own actions.
- To make their own decisions.
- To develop respect for others and themselves.
- To learn socially acceptable ways of expressing their needs and feelings.
- To develop self confidence.
- To teach children an awareness of the limits within their environment.
- To give children the freedom to play within known limits.
- To encourage children to voice concerns over ill treatment.

The program’s aim is to help children know what to do, instead of what not to do. When a child is redirected or stopped, we explain why. This assists the child to make judgements about what they can and cannot do.

We encourage children to cooperate, enhance self esteem and encourage their ability to interact with others. Staff are to foster positive behaviour and encourage self control and understanding and an appreciation of other’s needs, rights and feelings.

Self-discipline can only be achieved if children are aware of limits which are consistently reinforced by all staff. It is important for staff to be conscious of individual’s developmental level throughout this process.

Where practical, staff will adhere to behaviour management plans devised by other professionals to ensure consistency and routine. Our staff follow a least restrictive policy when implementing all behavioural strategies.
Child protection

The centre shall act to protect each child and create an environment where children are safe from all forms of harm.

In seeking to take a proactive role in relation to child abuse, the centre supports:

- Positive child guidance and behaviour management practices by parents, volunteers, students and staff
- Interpersonal support for families
- Appropriate education for children regarding personal safety and protective behaviours
- Ongoing staff training and conditions which support the physical and psychological wellbeing of the staff
- Maintaining fairness and natural justice when dealing with all cases
- Confidentiality at all times.

As a childcare program we are dedicated to ensuring child protection. Staff are committed to ensuring that all children feel safe and secure and are well informed on issues of abuse and neglect.

Staff will ensure that all suspected cases are responded to in a professional manner which in turn protects the rights of the child. Staff will endeavour to protect children through encouraging and maintaining parents / carers involvement within the program and responding to their concerns in a sensitive way.

It is imperative that staff are kept informed of issues arising with custody and access rights.

Emergency and disaster

To ensure the safety of all who access the centre.

Objectives

Circumstances may arise throughout the day, which require immediate responses to maintain a safe environment. The following procedures are adhered to should an emergency or disaster situation arise.
Procedures

Power cuts

In the event of a power failure at the centre the Supervisor should ascertain where the problem exists (centre based or wider community).

- If centre based an electrician should be contacted immediately.
- If the wider community is affected then the local electricity service provider should be contacted stating that we are a Childcare Centre currently operating with no electricity and request an immediate response.

Water cuts

The Supervisor in charge should contact the local water board office to ascertain how long the centre will be without water. If notified prior to the water cut then water can be stored.

State Emergency Service Brisbane City - 3403 8888
Queensland Water Commission - 3227 8207 - www.qwc.qld.gov.au

Storms and natural disasters

For storms and other natural disasters staff will bring children indoors immediately and check the rolls to ensure all children are accounted for. Electricity will be turned off and and all doors and windows will be closed. Staff will ensure all children stay calm and keep away from doors and windows. Children will be entertained by singing songs or telling stories. In the event of prolonged storms the Supervisor may choose to contact parents and make them aware of the situation.
Violent/Aggressive person

1. In the event of a non-custodial parent, relative or stranger seeking to remove a child from the centre staff should:
   - Remain calm – get the Supervisor if possible or Group Leader in charge
   - Remain professional – explain that you were expecting someone else to collect that child today
   - Ask for ID to check their authorisation to collect that child (record details if possible)
   - Ask another staff member to contact parent or police, depending on the situation
   - Keep the child inside the room away from sight of this person until identity and authorisation is confirmed
   - If the child is released take down the licence number and make of care, time and description of person. Remember we have a duty of care to all children, staff and visitors present at our centre.

2. If someone enters the centre while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff should remain calm and professional and:
   - Contact police immediately
   - Remove all children from the intoxicated person.

3. If a parent is attempting to collect or remove a child, whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff should remain calm and professional and:
   - Offer a coffee or beverage
   - Offer to call someone to pick them up
   - Offer to ring a taxi
   - Contact police with concerns (000).

4. In the event of a person acting in a violent or aggressive manner staff should remain calm and professional and:
   - Call Police (000)
   - Avoid contact or confrontation
   - Remove all children
   - Contact parents of child/children concerned.
Fire and emergency evacuation procedures

Evacuation procedures that enables staff, children and others to exit the centres buildings as safely and quickly as possible will be implemented.

Through regular fire drills, staff and children will come to know what is to be done when the building evacuation alarm goes off and, through this regular experience, will not be fearful of this procedure.

Lockdown

Lockdown procedures will be activated to enable staff to assemble children safely in the building should there be a crisis situation outside the building. Example: Armed or violent persons, disaster or other situation that requires lockdown.

Staff will talk to children about having to sometimes possibly assemble inside due to a danger being present with the playground. This will be conveyed to children as a non-threatening experience.

Conclusion

UnitingCare Community’s Vacation Care is committed to providing the community with a high quality childcare program. Should you have any queries or problems regarding any aspect of the program or your child’s care, please contact the Coordinator immediately.
The language of kindness can unlock the treasure in every child.