



Welcome to Binnowee

We are looking forward to having you and your child as part of our preschool community. The information in this handbook will hopefully answer most of your questions. However, if there is something you wish to discuss further please do not hesitate to ask. We will be more than happy to assist you where we can.

Organisation

Binnowee Kindergarten is a community based, not for profit preschool, set up as a parent cooperative. The preschool is managed by a parent Board of Management. The Board is responsible for the financial management of the preschool, employment of staff, policy decisions and works in conjunction with the Director to ensure the smooth running of the preschool. The Annual General meeting is held in March each year. We appreciate and rely on the support and involvement of parents. The Board encourages and welcomes the participation of parents at its meetings and social functions. The Board meets once a month, usually on the third Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm.

Binnowee Kindergarten is licensed by the Department of Education, Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate. The preschool must adhere to the children's services laws and regulations in order to receive funding from the Department of Education. We rely on three sources of income to operate; state funding, fees and minimal fundraising.

History of Binnowee

Binnowee, which is an Aboriginal word meaning "a green place," has been operating as a preschool since 1935. Miss Winifred Macourt began the preschool and operated it first from the home of Mr. S Oxley, near Thompson's corner.

The land at 6 New Line Road was purchased in 1956 and the buildings officially opened in 1957. In 1972 extensions to the preschool were completed bringing it to its present size.

Hours and Days of Operation

Binnowee is open between 8.30am and 4pm Monday to Friday during state school terms and is closed on all Public Holidays. We are a two unit preschool with 20 children in each class. Binnowee offers 2 or 3 day programs for four year old children and a 2 day program for 3 three year olds. The 2 day programs are Thurs/Fri. Our 3 day programs are Mon/Tues/Wed.

Fees

Fees are set by the Board of Directors to cover the running costs of the preschool and are payable in advance. Fee Statements are emailed out. Term 1 fees are due by the second week of term. Fees for terms 2, 3 and 4 are due in the first week of each term.

Fees can be paid by direct deposit via the Internet. Internet payment details will be included on your Fee Statement. Your child's name should be included to identify your payment when paying by direct deposit.

If parents are having difficulty paying fees we encourage them to discuss this with the Director or the Clerical Assistant. Failure to pay fees will be referred to the Board of Directors and may result in the child's position at the Kindergarten being revoked.

Early removal: If a child commences at Binnowee but leaves before the end of the year a minimum of two "term weeks" notice is required. If we are unable to fill the position, 4 weeks fees will be payable. If a child

leaves part way through term 4, full fees are payable for the whole of the term.

Early removal also results in the forfeiture of the \$100 refundable bond which forms part of your Acceptance fee. The bond is only refunded if your child stays for the whole year. This refund is applied to term 4 fees if you advise us by September 1 that your child will not be returning to Binnowee the following year.

Temporary Absence: If a child is absent due to illness or holidays full fees are still payable. If a parent wishes a position to be held vacant for their child in this situation then full fees are to be paid for the whole of the absence. It is not the policy of the preschool to fill vacancies arising from such events with a temporary/casual enrolment.

Fees are not charged for public holidays or school holidays when the preschool is closed.

Financial Assistance: If you have a current low income Health Care Card you may be eligible to pay reduced fees. Strict economic criteria apply. Please see the Director for further details if required. There is also additional funding available for children who meet certain additional needs criteria.

Preschool Philosophy and Practice

The early childhood years are crucial in terms of overall development of a person. What takes place during these formative years plays an important part in determining the way a person feels about themselves, the way a person relates to other people, a person's development of language, their problem solving capacity, their gross motor development, fine motor development and the way a person thinks.

At Binnowee Kindergarten we recognise the significance of these early childhood years, the subsequent importance of early childhood education and our role as educators in assisting and fostering the development of children. The preschool program plays an important part in not only preparing a child for school, but also for life. We endeavour to help each child fulfil their maximum potential and to provide the building blocks for future learning and development.

Our preschool program is based on the Early Years Learning Framework. The Framework's vision is for all children to experience play-based learning that is engaging and builds success for life. We use this framework to develop learning programs responsive to children's ideas, interests, strengths and abilities.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of belonging, being and becoming. Through the Framework we work to promote each child's:

1. Sense of identity
2. Connections with their world
3. Sense of well-being
4. Confidence and involvement in their learning
5. Communication skills

Children develop at different rates and this development is dependent on many factors including life experiences, learning styles, personality, attitudes, levels of readiness and maturity.

We promote the attitude that learning is fun. The basis of our philosophy is that children learn through play. We structure the learning environment so that children enjoy what they are doing and are successful in what they do. We try to build a close and supportive relationship with each child where they feel secure, valued and respected.

In this environment they will be ready to explore, make mistakes, take appropriate risks and experiment with many new experiences. They can practice and master a variety of skills and extend the boundaries of their world.

We promote self-respect and respect for the rights of others together with taking responsibility for one's actions. These goals are accomplished over time.

Our learning environment supports the development of children who can make choices, think independently, take challenges, explore ideas, ask questions, feel nurtured, safe and well cared for within a social play based context. While there is a rhythm to the day, we endeavour to be flexible and responsive to the children's own rhythm and to their interests, ideas and contributions.

We want to do the best we can for your child. It is important to us that your child enjoys and learns from their preschool experience. We encourage you to speak with us about any concerns you may have or if you would like any information regarding your child's development. Throughout the year we monitor each child's development and welcome the opportunity to discuss your child's progress with you.

Binnowee Curriculum Planning and Programming Cycle

Educators use the National Quality Standard (NQS) and the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) to guide the development and implementation of the educational program.

- Quality area 1 of the National Quality Standard focuses on an educational program and practice that engages, stimulates and enhances children's learning and development.
- The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) is used to guide the curriculum plan and to interpret and assess children's learning and development.

Observation, planning and reflection is an ongoing process that underpins the educational program at Binnowee. Planning the program involves observing, questioning and following up on information about the children to inform the experiences that create the program. Reflecting on the program involves the staff thinking about what is offered and why, how it extends on children's learning and how it contributes to group and individual goals. Staff use the Early Years Learning Framework together with their knowledge of the children's current learning and development, to implement and reflect on programming. Reflecting on the program and documenting children's experiences and learning forms the basis of future planning.

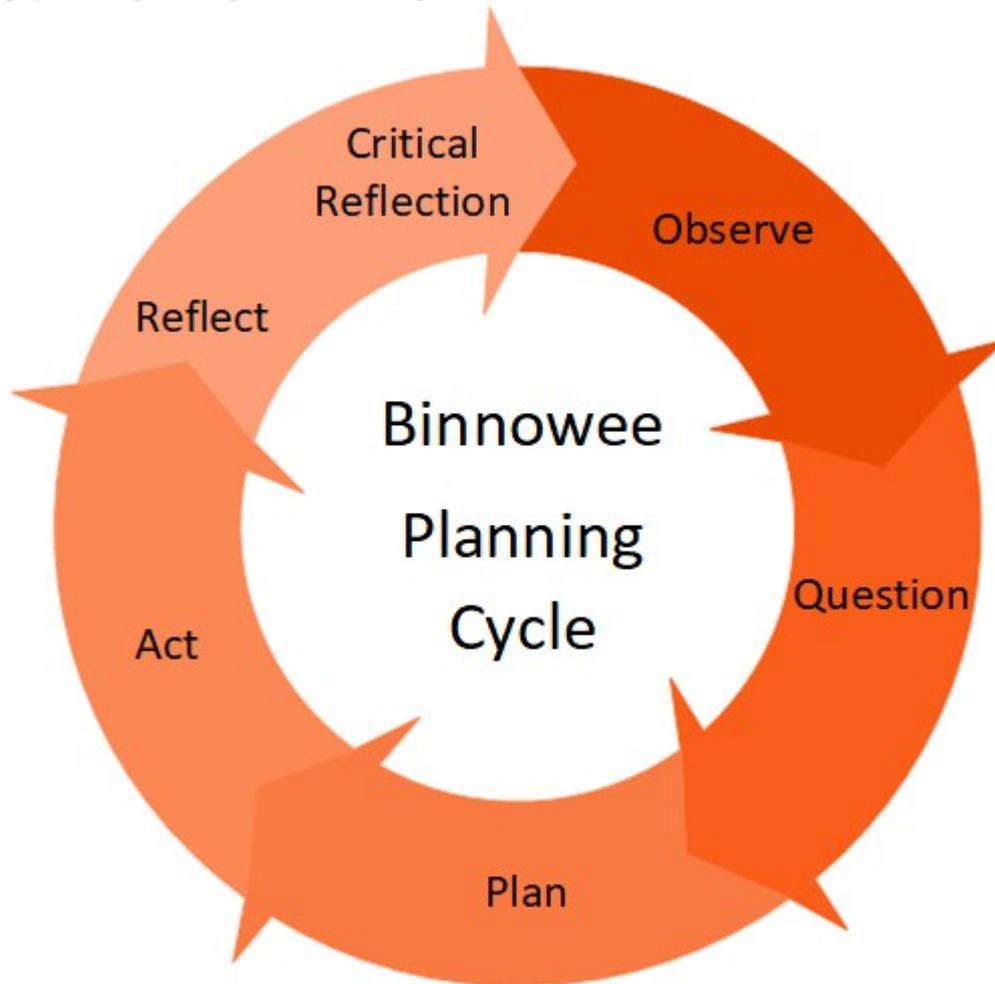
Documentation is essential in the ongoing cycle of planning, documenting and evaluating children's learning and development. As part of the program and planning process, documentation is a tool that is used to reflect on and extend upon children's learning and development. Documenting children's experiences, learning and development makes children's learning visible to children, educators and families and promotes shared learning and collaboration.

The collection of documentation that guides the programming cycle comes from -

- Program reflections (sent to parents via weekly or fortnightly emails)
- Weekly or fortnightly program plan (based on observations, children's requests, follow up experiences, current interests and exploration, parent input)
- Observations of individual children and groups of children
- Group or room goals (based on children's needs, class expectations)
- Children's individual goals (derived from observations of children's strengths and needs and parent input)
- Parent/teacher chats (offered twice yearly along with regular informal chats)
- Teaching reflections (recorded weekly)
- Reflections and discussions with team members (daily conversations, staff meeting discussions and dialogue, email conversations, etc.)
- Family input and feedback (parent surveys, parent/teacher chats, emails, invitations to contribute)
- Documentation such as photographs, samples of children's work, children's voices, comments and conversations, displays of children's work and learning.

The Planning Cycle

The planning cycle is an ongoing cycle of review through which current practices are examined, outcomes reviewed and new ideas generated. The cycle is an ongoing process of observing, questioning, planning, acting and reflecting.



Observe – gather information

Question – what learning and development has taken place to make meaning of what has been observed.

Plan – plan the next steps to continue supporting learning and development.

Act – put the plan into action.

Reflect – evaluate the effectiveness of the plan.

Critical Reflection - use multiple perspectives to think about your practices with honesty and purpose.

Critical Reflection

“Critical reflection involves closely examining all aspects of events and experiences from different perspectives” (EYLF p.13)

Critical reflection is a form of learning and development that involves engaging with questions of philosophy, ethics and practice. Educators examine what happens in the preschool, reflect on what might change and make informed choices as a direct result of the reflective process.

Critically reflecting involves:

- reflecting on your own personal biases
- examining and rethinking your perspectives
- questioning whether your perspectives generalise
- considering all aspects of experiences
- engaging in professional conversations with colleagues, families, professionals and community members
- using the reflective questions in the learning frameworks to prompt your thinking

Reflective questions from the Early Years Learning Framework used to guide reflection:

- What are my understandings of each child?
- What theories, philosophies and understandings shape and assist my work?
- Who is advantaged when I work in this way? Who is disadvantaged?
- What questions do I have about my work? What am I challenged by? What am I curious about? What am I confronted by?
- What aspects of my work are not helped by the theories and guidance that I usually draw on to make sense of what I do?
- Are there other theories or knowledge that could help me to understand better what I have observed or experienced? What are they? How might those theories and that knowledge affect my practice?

(Early Years Learning Framework pg.13)

Educators are involved in an ongoing cycle of reflection through which current practices are examined, outcomes reviewed and new ideas generated. Educators critically reflect and evaluate children's learning and development and use this as a source of information for planning. Critical reflection is used as a tool to improve the effectiveness of the program and teaching strategies. Critical reflection occurs both as individuals and as part of a group through discussions, written teaching reflections, staff meetings, professional development, networking, research and professional dialogue.

A Day at Binnowee

Our day usually begins with outside play in the summer months and with indoor play in the winter months, although this can change to suit weather conditions. A variety of experiences are programmed for each day, such as gross motor & movement challenges, construction activities, dramatic play, sand play, books, drawing and puzzles. We encourage physical activity as it is so important for children's health and development.

In planning our programs we try and cater for the interests and needs of all the children. The programs are flexible and may change depending on how the day is going. We welcome your feedback.

During inside time the children participate in a wide range of experiences such as home corner, block play, books, puzzles, toys, dough, art and craft experiences. We encourage the children to choose their own experiences and we respect and support them in their choices.

So you know what is happening at preschool each day, we take photos of experiences that have occurred

during the day and run these as a slide show at the end of the day. The overarching program plan is displayed in the rooms or in the foyer. We also email weekly or fortnightly reflections of the children's play and learning, along with an individual profile for each child in the last week of each term. If you would like more information about what has happened during your child's day we encourage you to chat with one of your child's teachers.

Arrival and Departure

On arrival and departure you need to complete the sign in/out book located in the hallway outside your child's classroom. Notice pockets are located in the hallway outside the locker room and should be checked for notes each day.

Pick up time is between 2.30 pm and 4.00 pm. If a child is not collected by 4pm a late fee may be payable. For your child's safety, children will not be released into the care of people who are unknown to staff members. Staff need to be informed if someone other than yourself is to collect your child. The person collecting your child will be required to show photo ID (e.g. driver's licence). Please write their name in the sign in/out book or phone the preschool during the day to let us know who is collecting your child. Also please ensure your child knows who will be collecting them

What to bring each day.

- A bag your child can open and which is also big enough to contain craft items made during the day as well as all their belongings.
- A spare set of clothing and underwear.
- A hand towel to hang in the locker.
- A water bottle in a refillable plastic container.
- Morning tea in a labelled plastic bag, separate from their lunch.
- Lunch in a labelled container which is easy for your child to open & handle.
- If your child usually sleeps during the day please speak with your child's teacher about whether or not it will be necessary to bring a sheet set.

The children's morning tea and lunch must be stored in the refrigerator at preschool. Morning tea can be placed in the door or drawer of the fridge and lunch on one of the shelves in the fridge.

If you are providing home baked foods or processed foods that have no labelling you need to let us know the food contains no nut products. If staff are unsure whether an item of food contains nuts we will send it home with your child in the afternoon.

Please do not include cakes, chips, lollies, sweet biscuits, fizzy drinks or chocolate anything as we try to promote healthy eating habits in the children in partnership with you.

Please label everything, even shoes.

No nut products may be brought to Binnowee.

We have children enrolled who are highly allergic to nut products. This is a **life-threatening allergy** for these particular children. It is possible that they may die if they come into contact with nuts or nut related products. This particular allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis. Please tell your family or anyone else who packs your child's Binnowee food about **not** including nuts in their lunch/morning tea.

If your child has peanut butter before coming to preschool please ensure that their face and hands are washed before coming to Binnowee. Sticky mouths or fingers easily spread peanut butter. Its presence on a surface such as a toy can be enough to trigger a dangerous reaction in a child who has an allergy to nuts.

In the interests of maintaining a safe environment for all children we have an exclusion policy of all nut products—especially **peanut butter and Nutella** or items of food containing **almond meal**.

Birthdays

Birthdays are of course very special occasions and you are welcome to send cup cakes or something appropriate to your culture for your child to share with the other children in their class on their birthday if you wish. Please remember—

NO NUTS or PEANUT OIL.

Reducing waste and sustainable practices

We endeavour to encourage our children to develop and extend an appreciation for the natural environment. Environmental sustainability is an important part of the Binnowee program and we ask parents to consider reducing the amount of plastic and pre-packaged foods sent to preschool. For example, cheese can be cut from a block and placed in a reusable container. Yoghurt can be bought in a big tub and sent in a reusable container. Fresh fruit and vegies need no packaging and are a healthier option than processed foods.

We are also encouraging the children to be environmentally responsible by talking about turning lights and the air conditioner off when we are no longer in the room. We compost fruit and vegie scraps and we welcome recyclable materials for reuse as art and craft materials.

What to Wear

We suggest children wear casual play clothes suitable for messy activities that are easy to undo for going to the toilet. Children should be toilet trained before attending Binnowee.

We encourage sun safety awareness and ask that children's clothing provide adequate protection from the sun. We also ask that you apply sunscreen to your child's skin before coming to preschool each day.

Children also need to wear shoes they can safely run and climb in. Please do not allow them to wear shoes that easily fall off their feet whilst they are moving about.

Performances

Special Performances at Binnowee are part of our preschool program. We find this is a wonderful addition to our rich and engaging preschool program. The cost of each performance will be added to the term's fees.

Emergency Procedures

In the event of a fire or other emergency which requires evacuation of the preschool the children will be taken to St Matthews Church (across the road) and supervised until they are collected by their parents. This is a safety precaution which thankfully we have never yet had to implement.

Immunisation

Under the NSW Public Health Act 2010 parents are required to provide a copy of an Australian Childhood Immunisation Register (ACIR) History Statement that shows their child's immunisation is up to date **or** an Immunisation History form IMMU13 that shows their child is on a catch-up schedule. A child may not commence at Binnowee until this information is provided. We request that parents advise the preschool of future immunisations as they occur. Copies of immunisation records from the "Blue Book" are not accepted.

Medical

If your child requires medication at preschool please see your child's teacher. An individual medication record will be maintained in the medication folder for this situation. Only medication prescribed by a

doctor for your child will be administered. Should there be any difficulty please discuss the matter with the Director. If your child requires asthma, anaphylaxis or diabetes medication an action plan along with a medical conditions risk minimisation and communications plan will need to be completed. Please see the Director for further information.

In the case of accidents or emergencies where the parent cannot be contacted staff will consult a doctor and/or dentist and/or call an ambulance if required. Details of accidents will be entered into the Accident form and should be signed by the child's parent as soon as practical.

Please do not send your child to preschool if they seem unwell. It is difficult for them to enjoy their day if they are sick and they may infect other children and staff. If your child has symptoms of an infectious disease or appears unwell the Director may send them home.

Your child should not come to preschool if they:

- have a temperature over 38°
- have had an episode of diarrhoea or vomiting within the previous 24 hrs
- have a rash you cannot identify
- are coughing continuously
- have a runny nose they are unable to manage independently or associated with other symptoms such as cough, headaches and pains
- have head lice (until treated)
- have impetigo
- have been prescribed antibiotics in the last 24 hours
- have been given paracetamol, Nurofen, cough mixture etc. in the morning before preschool.

Parent Participation

Open Mornings Open Mornings are usually held once each term. On Open Mornings we invite you to spend some time with your child and have a glimpse of your child's preschool day at Binnowee. Open Morning commences after drop-off with inside activities and finishes about 10.30am. However there is no obligation to stay until 10.30am – just stay as long as you like.

Washing Roster This consists of washing craft aprons, towels, tea towels, dress-up clothes etc. A bag of washing is taken home on either Wednesday or Friday afternoon and returned after laundering the next day your child is at preschool. Each family is asked to participate on the washing roster once during the year. A Roster is displayed on the noticeboard where parents can nominate which day they wish to take the washing. Parents will also be asked to assist in taking toys home to wash from time to time. If you have difficulty in completing the required duty you are encouraged to discuss this with the Director.

Communication

We welcome and encourage all parents to talk with your child's teacher about any aspect of your child's learning and development. If there are concerns you would like to discuss in detail, please speak with your child's teacher to arrange an appointment. We also have a prescheduled parent meeting week during term two, along with an informal catch up opportunity in early term four, in which parents are invited to meet with their child's teacher at a mutually agreeable time. We value information about your family; special traditions, celebrations, customs or current circumstances. Information of this type assists us in caring for your child.

We also welcome suggestions and feedback about the preschool program. Please speak with your child's teacher or the Director if you have any questions, ideas or concerns with regards to the day to day experiences at preschool.

A comprehensive newsletter is emailed to all families once per term. Feel free to suggest topics you may like to see addressed in the newsletter.

Amongst our parent community we have a large array of talent, skills and experience. We are always pleased to hear from parents who are willing to share their expertise or talents with us. We welcome parents who may like to talk to children about their work – artists, musicians, cooks, etc. Please come and share your talents and knowledge with the children. Mothers with new babies are always in demand as babies are endlessly fascinating to many children. We always appreciate IT help and gardening advice also.

Lastly

Attending a new preschool for the first time can be exciting and for some children (and parents) a little overwhelming. The staff at Binnowee Kindergarten recognise and appreciate that each child is an individual and that each child may respond in a different way to the preschool program. We will endeavour to ensure that the transition process from home to preschool is as smooth and happy as possible. We will do this by providing an environment that is secure, engaging, stimulating and fun.

Throughout the year staff will plan a program of experiences that reflects and meets the changing needs of children. This is done through a process of observation, interacting with children, documenting our experiences (through photos, displays of artwork or construction work, written observations) and through collaborating with parents. An individually and developmentally appropriate play based program fosters lifelong skills in children, preparing them for the rest of their life.

If you have any further questions please speak with your child's teacher and /or the Director. We look forward to a happy year ahead, getting to know you and your child during this exciting time of growth and development.

Term Dates 2019

Term 1	Wednesday 30 January	Friday 12 April
Term 2	Monday 29 April	Friday 5 July
Term 3	Tuesday 22 July	Friday 27 September
Term 4	Monday 14 October	Tuesday 19 December