

Early Learning Centre 2025 Handbook





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Introduction

Welcome to St Leonard's College. We look forward to a positive and enriching time for your child and your family as members of the St Leonard's community.

Background

After extensive research, study tours to Italy by staff, discussion and experience, the decision was made to develop an Early Learning Centre influenced by the inspirational early childhood educational philosophies from Reggio Emilia, Italy.

Our ELC opened in 2004 with purpose-built facilities, specialised equipment and a wonderful team. Our outdoor play area was further enhanced in 2024. We continue to be excited by the prospects for the future. We invite you to join with us on a journey of learning which will provide a strong foundation for the lives of the children in our care.

We are proud of the recognition awarded to the ELC from ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority) with an overall rating of Exceeding National Quality Standards.



2025 Orientation

Orientation day for all children in ELC3 and ELC4 is Friday 31 January 2025. ELC classes begin for all children on Monday 3 February 2025. Morning tea is available for parents after drop off on that day.

Communication with College Families

St Leonard's College communicates with families in a range of ways. The most important is discussion with your child's teacher. Our parent portal, *STL Link*, contains all the information parents need, including calendar dates, key contacts and class blogs. Our newsletter keeps families abreast of school activities and three times a year, our magazine, *Network*, is distributed to members of the College community. All current families receive a digital copy of *The Leonardian*, our College yearbook, and have the option to order a printed copy.

Parent Community

Parents' involvement with the College is welcomed in many different ways. Each ELC class has parent representatives who organise events such as coffee mornings, parent dinners and family functions. Parents can also become part of the College Community by joining International Friends, Club Sport and the Community Day Fair Committee.

Key Dates 2025

Term 1

Friday 31 January - Friday 4 April 2025 (9 weeks)

Australia Day Public Holiday - Monday 27 January Labour Day - Monday 10 March

During term break Good Friday - Friday 18 April Easter Monday - Monday 21 April

Term 2

Tuesday 22 April - Friday 4 July 2025 (11 weeks)

Anzac Day - Friday 25 April Reporting and Assessment Day - Friday 6 June King's Birthday - Monday 9 June

Term 3

Tuesday 22 July - Friday 12 September 2025 (8 weeks)

Curriculum Day - Friday 15 August

Term 4

Monday 6 October - Friday 5 December 2025 (9 weeks)

Mid Term Holiday - Monday 3 November Melbourne Cup Day - Tuesday 4 November





Key Contacts



Early Learning Centre Hours

ELC3

Full time: Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 3.00pm Part time: Monday - Thursday, 8.30am - 3.00pm Sessional: Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 12.00pm

ELC4

Full time: Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 3.00pm

Out of School Hours Care

Before School Care: 7.00am - 8.30am (Team Kids) After School Care: 3.00pm - 6.00pm

Office Hours During the Holidays

The College will be closed from 4.00pm on Friday 20 December 2024 until 8.00am on Thursday 2 January 2025. During January the reception will operate from 8.00am to 4.00pm.

Contacts

Head of Early Learning Centre:

emily.trenchard@stleonards.vic.edu.au

Early Learning Centre: 9909 9325

Out of School Hours Care: 0409 406 991

Junior School Office: 9909 9551

Events for 2025

McMillan House Picnic (ELC to Year 4):

Monday 3 March - 5.00pm to 6.30pm

Community Day Fair:

Saturday 22 March - 10.00am to 4.00pm

ELC End of Year Celebration:

Monday 24 November - 5.00pm to 6.00pm

If you are interested in becoming a class representative, helping out at the many events at the College during the year or would like more information about community events, please contact our Community Liaison Coordinator at classrepevents@stleonards.vic. edu.au.





The Hundred Languages of Children

The child is made of one hundred. The child has a hundred languages a hundred hands a hundred thoughts a hundred ways of thinking of playing, of speaking.

A hundred, always a hundred ways of listening of marvelling, of loving, a hundred joys for singing and understanding, a hundred worlds to discover, a hundred worlds to invent. a hundred worlds to dream.

The child has a hundred languages (and a hundred, hundred, hundred more) but they steal ninety nine. The school and the culture separate the head from the body. They tell the child:

to think without hands to do without head to listen and not speak to understand without joy love and marvelling only at Easter and Christmas.

They tell the child: to discover a world already there and of the hundred they steal ninety nine. They tell the child: that work and play reality and fantasy, science and imagination, sky and earth, reason and dream are things that do not belong together.

And thus they tell the child that the hundred is not there. The child savs: No way The Hundred is there.

Loris Malaguzzi 1920-1994

The Program

St Leonard's College Mission Statement

Through inspiring and caring professionals and in a physically, emotionally and spiritually safe coeducational environment, St Leonard's College provides an exemplary, innovative education for its students, enriched by the traditions of its heritage and the diversity of all humanity to develop global citizens who know and embrace all others as equals.

St Leonard's College Early Learning Centre Mission Statement

Our mission is to create a centre of excellence for children 3-6 years of age. The centre values and respects children, their families and staff and fosters a learning environment that provides a foundation for young children to become responsible citizens of the world.

The Early Learning Centre provides a range of learning experiences that will foster self-esteem, resilience, reflection, imagination, curiosity and the motivation to become lifelong learners. Children's wellbeing and sense of identity will be nurtured to develop confident and involved learners.

We value and respect diverse cultures and traditions of our children and families while recognising the uniqueness of the individual.

Our Early Learning Centre attracts dedicated educators who work together as a team with children and families. Families are valued for their participation, involvement and partnership. They will be encouraged to share their expectations, thoughts and ideas. Our centre values relationships that promote collaboration and communication both with and between children, families and staff.

The physical environment is welcoming, safe and stimulating, provoking and aesthetically beautiful.

The Program

- Promotes a strong identity and positive image of children
- Advocates for children's rights as citizens and enables them to realise their own potential
- Encourages the active participation and involvement of families and the wider community
- Is influenced by the Reggio Emilia Educational Project and the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP)
- Embraces the Early Years Learning Framework
 (EYLF) and the Victorian Early Years Learning and
 Development Framework (VEYLDF) which inspire
 our conversations, by providing a common language
 about learning
- Provides an environment which stimulates, challenges and provokes children's thinking
- Reflects the children's and adults' interests and provides opportunities for different learning styles
- Values children as individuals and group members; honouring diversity
- Provides small and large group experiences which will provide complex problems for children to solve, enabling persistence and motivation
- Brings to life the children's thinking and wondering
- Encourages reflection and research for staff, children and families
- Promotes participation in research projects which will provoke children to theorise, analyse, reflect, revisit and interpret

- Provides learning experiences that are fun; valuing the importance of learning through play
- Interactions with children and families demonstrate respect, inclusion and rights of privacy

Introduction to the Reggio Emilia **Approach**

In conjunction with the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme, our learning environment is influenced strongly by the Reggio Emilia approach to education which views:

The child as a protagonist. Children are rich, strong, and capable. All children have potential, curiosity and interest in constructing their learning, negotiating with everything their environment brings to them. Children, teachers and parents are considered the three central protagonists in the educational process.

The child as a collaborator. Education has to focus on each child in relation to other children, the family, the teachers and the community, rather than on each child in isolation.

The child as a communicator. This approach fosters children's intellectual development through a systematic focus on symbolic representation, including words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play and music which lead children to surprising levels of communication, symbolic skills and creativity. Children have the right to use many materials in order to discover and communicate what they know, understand, wonder about, question, feel and imagine. In this way, they make their thinking visible through their many natural languages.

The environment as a third teacher. The use of space encourages encounters, communication and relationships. Every corner of every space has an identity and a purpose, is rich in potential to engage and communicate and is valued and cared for by the children and the adults.

The teacher as a partner, nurturer and guide. Teachers facilitate children's exploration, work on short and long-term projects and guide experiences of joint, open-ended discovery and problem solving. To know how to plan and proceed with their work, teachers listen and observe children closely. Teachers ask questions, discover children's ideas, hypotheses and theories, and provide occasions for discovery and learning.

The teacher as a researcher. The teachers see themselves as researchers preparing the documentation of their work with children who they also see as researchers.

The documentation as communication. Careful consideration and attention are given to the presentation of the thinking of the children and the adults who work with them.

The parent as partner. The ideas and exchange of ideas between parents and teachers favours the development of a new way of educating, which helps teachers to view the participation of families not as a threat, but as an intrinsic element of collegiality and as the integration of different wisdom.



Victorian Early Years Learning and **Development Framework**

The Victorian Framework sets the highest expectation for every child.

It identifies five Early Years Learning and Development Outcomes for all children:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators

The Victorian Framework describes each of these outcomes for children from birth to eight years. The outcomes provide a shared language for all early childhood professionals and families to use when planning for children's learning and development.

The Victorian Framework is an effective way for early childhood professionals to work together with children and families to facilitate learning and development.

The Practice Principles for Learning and Development are the foundations for professional practice based on the latest international evidence about the best way to support children's learning. They are based on the understanding that when early childhood professionals establish respectful and caring relationships with children and families they are able to work together to deliver effective learning and development experiences relevant to children in their local contexts. These experiences gradually expand children's knowledge and understanding of the world.

Source: Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework for Children from Birth to Eight Years. Introduced in November 2009

St Leonard's College ELC receives **Exceeding rating for their Assessment**

The ELC staff are very pleased to be awarded the highest rating for their last assessment.

ACECQA (Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority) rates all Children's Services in Australia against the National Quality Standards every three years. It is reassuring to be acknowledged for leading the way in the field of early childhood education and care.

All aspects of our ELC were observed, from our program and practice to the learning environment we create for the children. Congratulations to the ELC team who through their positive daily interactions with children and families, program implementation and professional standards, make our ELC a wonderful place to be for children and families.









Classroom Routines and Requirements

Settling In

Some children settle into an early learning program quickly and happily. Some may feel nervous and may be upset on their first day. As they build connections to the program, their new surroundings and the staff, they will be eager to start each day's experiences. We will do everything we can to make your children feel secure and happy, in what may be their first time away from their parents. All children who are new to the centre attend for half days during their first week.

Signing In

For safety and security reasons, parents are required to sign their child in and out of the centre. The arrival and departure time of the child must be documented. Please call or email if there are any changes for your child's pick up on the day. If your child is to attend the After School Program, please document this in the sign in book also.

Please do not fill in the departure time until you collect your child.

The Portfolio

Leaving messages for your child in their portfolio

Sharing the first years of a child's life is a big responsibility, but it is also an experience rich with feelings of affection and with discoveries. Your child's experience with us will go beyond the time we spend together. Their portfolio will contain messages for your child - events, thoughts, feelings and ideas that tell the story of the child's life at the centre and at home. It will be a reflection of your child's learning throughout the year, using images, documentation and pieces of their work.

Health and Attendance

Regular attendance is important for a child at this age, however a child who is ill recovers best at home. If your child has an infectious disease, please let us know as we will inform you of the length of time your child is required to stay at home. If your child has an ongoing condition or allergy, it is important for us to be aware of this.

All children need to be immunised as per the 'No Jab, No Play' government regulations.

Toileting

We encourage children attending the Early Learning Centre to be independent in the bathroom.

Our definition of independence is:

- Children who recognise when they need to go to the toilet and do so
- Children who can clean themselves independently





Art Smock

A named protective smock is required for each child. These are available from the Uniform Shop. Smocks should stay in your child's locker during the week and should be taken home on Fridays for laundering.

Hot Days

As we are concerned with all aspects of safety for your child, the children will be required to wear a school hat every day during term 1 and term 4. Please apply sun cream to your child prior to coming to the centre. We will reapply sun cream to the children during the day. This applies during terms 1 and 4. We will enforce this policy rigorously in the best interests of your child. Please provide a named, roll-on sunscreen for your child which will be kept at school.

Spare Clothes

All children are required to have a complete change of clothes in their bag. We do have a few spares, but children are usually happier to wear their own clothes. If, however, your child comes home wearing an item of our clothing we would appreciate prompt laundering and return of the item so that our emergency supply is always available for whoever needs it.

Morning Tea

Each child is required to bring their own morning tea in a small container. We encourage healthy foods such as fruit, vegetables and cheese.

Lunches

Parents are requested to send their child's lunch in a suitably named container. Please do not send lollies or chocolate. As Early Childhood Educators, we are

concerned with the health and welfare of all young children. We will be encouraging the children to develop awareness of food that is nutritious.

Sending 'junk food' also creates unhealthy competition between the children, as they begin to compare and assess who has the 'best' lunch.

As we will also be developing the children's awareness of the environment and teaching them to re-use and recycle, we would prefer you send a water bottle and a rubbish-free lunch.

For the wellbeing of all the students and particularly those with allergies, the centre has a nut free policy. No nuts or nut by-products are to be included in the children's lunches.

Lunch can also be ordered from the school canteen via flexischools.com.au





Siesta

The children will rest for approximately an hour each day. During this time children enjoy relaxing music and stories. They may sleep or rest quietly on their beds. Each child will be supplied with a waterproof mattress. They will need a small fitted sheet (cot sheets are perfect), a small pillow and a rug or a blanket. Each of these items needs to be clearly named. The pillowcase and sheet will be sent home at the end of the week for laundering.

Toys

We encourage children not to bring toys from home to the ELC. Toys can get lost or become damaged causing children distress. When children bring in toys or football cards for example, it can cause competition and exclusion of other children. We are happy for your child to bring in a soft toy for comfort at siesta time or favourite books to share.

Birthdays

Birthdays are a very important part of a young child's life. If you would like to bring along something to share with the other children, we encourage you to do so. Icy poles are most inclusive if there are any children with allergies in the group. If your child is having a private birthday party, unless every child in the group is invited please do not distribute invitations at the centre, as children are easily hurt if they feel omitted from such an occasion.

Environmental Awareness

The program will develop awareness in children for recycling and re-use. Sustainable practices are encouraged such as rubbish free lunches, composting, use of a worm farm and saving power.

Your Trash is our Treasure

As we will be engaging in many and varied art experiences during the year, we will need a number of different items to be collected from the home.

These include:

- Margarine containers
- Corks
- **Buttons**
- Scrap paper
- Cardboard
- Cardboard rolls
- Wrapping paper
- Wool
- Waxed bags
- Old shoes, ties
- Clothes for dress-ups
- **Boxes**
- Cards
- Cotton reels
- Ribbons



The Gallery

The Gallery is a place of beauty and for children's efforts to be valued. For safety reasons, children are not permitted to run in the Gallery. Please ensure that your child is aware of this rule.

Children are not permitted to have food in the Gallery unless supervised by staff.

Toddlers

Toddlers are welcome in the centre but must be supervised by their parents at all times. We have been distressed in the past to see parents chatting in an ELC room whilst their toddler plays unsupervised in the gallery. Toddlers like to tip out activities that staff have prepared for the children. Parental supervision eliminates this risk.

Security Code

The code on the front and back doors will be changed annually for the safety of our children and the security of the centre. Please do not share this code with anyone other than a person who will be coming to collect your child. It is unacceptable to pass on this code to your child's siblings as we do not want anyone under the age of 18 to operate the door code.







The Specialist Program

Motor Skills

Motor skill development refers to the ability to receive, interpret and respond appropriately to sensory information. The aim of Motor Skills, therefore, is not only limited to the acquisition of physical skills but also to assisting the child to function more successfully in all areas of the curriculum. This is achieved by the use of sequentially planned movement experiences in which parent involvement is encouraged.

Swimming (ELC4)

During term 1 and term 4, ELC4 children will participate in weekly swimming lessons.



Story Time

An appreciation and love of books will be developed during our visits to the library. The children will be able to borrow a book on a weekly basis. To keep our books protected and in good condition your child will need a library bag. These are available from the Uniform Shop.

Music

Music is a structured program which revolves around a number of musical activities including games, singing and playing percussion instruments. These activities will introduce the children to basic concepts of rhythm, pitch and pulse.

Creative Arts

Each week children will work with our Creative Arts Educator to explore a variety of materials to express their ideas.





Documentation

What is it?

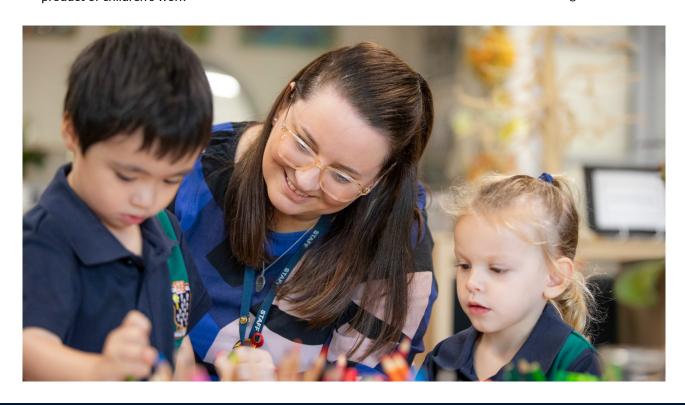
- **Photographs**
- Transcripts of small group discussions, explorations of inquiry (recorded audio)
- · Children's symbolic representations of their theories and ideas (drawing, sculpting, painting)
- Collaborative projects, e.g. a group painting, model or some other form of representation at the culmination of a project
- Video

Why do it?

- · It allows children to revisit their own discovery process and perhaps provide a beginning for further learning
- It provides educators with a tool for research
- It provides a means of communication with parents and the community
- It shows that adults value both the process and the product of children's work



- It leaves children with traces of the past memory
- Documentation provides the opportunity to display to others how powerful children are at:
 - Reflection
 - Revisiting/Recognising
 - Self-evaluation and social evaluation
- Gives parents the opportunity to know what their child does and makes their learning visible



Parental Involvement and Support

Parent involvement is an integral component of our program and we welcome your participation on a daily basis. Parents' ideas and thoughts will be encouraged.

All parents require a current Working With Children Check. Volunteer Registration process is online through *STL Link*.

Communication between the ELC and home is crucial. Staff will communicate with parents verbally at the centre, via phone, email, the portfolio, journals, newsletter, a staff/parent conference and through the extensive documentation of children's learning.

Events and Celebrations

We encourage the active involvement of parents at all times in the program. We provide a number of events and celebrations throughout the year which family members will be invited to attend.

At the beginning of the year we organise a picnic at the Early Learning Centre for the children and parents to get to know each other. We also have:

- Mother's Day celebration
- Father's Day celebration
- Community Day Fair
- Grandparents or special friends celebration
- End of year concert/Christmas party
- Sports day





These are some of the social functions that are organised by the Early Learning Centre and the College. There are many other functions to attend during the year. A class representative will be chosen for each group and will be responsible for organising any other social activities for parents and families during the year.



Concerns

If you have any educational concerns or queries, please speak to the Educator rather than the Coeducators. The Coeducator is often placed in an awkward or embarrassing position when asked by a parent to comment on a child's development as this function is outside their area of responsibility.

If you have a serious concern which cannot be addressed by the teacher, please make an appointment with the Head of ELC, emily.trenchard@stleonards.vic.edu.au. If you wish to discuss your child's progress, you will need to make an appointment outside the program time.

We also love hearing positives about the centre, staff and program.









Uniform

Expectations of Students

Each student at St Leonard's College is expected to be dressed in the correct College uniform and neatly groomed at all times during every school day. This includes the period travelling to and from school.

Winter school uniform is the official uniform, however in terms 1 and 4 students are allowed to wear the summer uniform unless notified that they should wear the official uniform.

Students must not wear an item of school uniform combined with casual clothes in the street.

Hair Accessories

Navy blue or bottle green hair bands, scrunchies or navy headbands only. Please do not send your child to the Early Learning Centre with precious clips or decorative hair wear. It creates competition and is very upsetting for the children if these items are lost or broken.

Summer Uniform - ELC Options

Navy shorts or skort (combination shorts and skirt)

St Leonard's navy fleecy track pants

Navy polo top with navy sleeves and vertical green crested band

Navy rugby top with crested vertical green and white stripe

Navy skivvy

St Leonard's D-Tech navy sport jacket (optional)

Plain white sports socks

Shoes: runners

Navy bucket hat with embroidered crest

Winter Uniform - ELC Options

St Leonard's navy fleecy track pant

Navy rugby top with crested vertical green and white stripe or St Leonard's D-Tech navy sport jacket (optional)

Long sleeved navy skivvy

Plain white sports socks

Runners

Small navy scarf (optional)

Miscellaneous

School bag (backpack)

Navy art smock

Library bag

Policies

All ELC policies are available in the **ELC Gallery**

Child Safe Environment

It is St Leonard's College policy that all children and staff have the right to a safe environment. This means an environment which actively promotes respect, tolerance and acceptance, and where issues are effectively and responsibly resolved.

St Leonard's College implements a restorative practice approach to guide children as they develop the skills for appropriate ways to solve problems.

If physical contact occurs between one or more children, staff will encourage children to think about the child who has been hurt or upset. They will ask the child who has been unable to solve the problem questions such as:

- How do you think the child you hurt is now feeling?
- How could you solve the problem in the future?

If the problem recurs, parents will be notified.



Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening allergic reaction. Up to two per cent of the general population and up to five per cent of children are at risk. The most common causes in young children are eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, cow's milk, bee or other insect stings, and some medications.

Young children may not be able to express the symptoms of anaphylaxis.

A reaction can develop within minutes of exposure to the allergen, but with planning and training, a reaction can be treated effectively by using an adrenaline autoinjector called an EpiPen®.

St Leonard's College ELC recognises the importance of all staff responsible for the child at risk of anaphylaxis by undertaking training that includes preventative measures to minimise the risk of an anaphylactic reaction, recognition of the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis and emergency treatment, including administration of an EpiPen®.

Staff and parents/guardians will be made aware that it is not possible to achieve a completely allergen-free environment in any service that is open to the general community. St Leonard's ELC staff recognise the need to adopt a range of procedures and risk minimisation strategies to reduce the risk of a child having an anaphylactic reaction, including strategies to minimise the presence of the allergen in the service.

In accordance the following procedures will be followed.

- A risk minimisation plan will be completed, which includes strategies to address the particular needs of each child at risk of anaphylaxis, and this plan will be implemented
- Parents of a child at risk of anaphylaxis will be provided with a copy of the centre's Anaphylaxis policy
- All parents/guardians will be made aware of the Anaphylaxis policy
- All Anaphylaxis action plans for the children are to be signed by the child's doctor and are visible to all staff
- EpiPen® (within expiry date) is available for use at any time the child is in the care of the ELC
- EpiPen® is stored in an insulated container, in a location easily accessible to adults (not locked away), inaccessible to children and away from direct sources of heat
- All staff, including relief staff, are aware of each EpiPen® kit location
- Staff responsible for the child/ren at risk of anaphylaxis undertake anaphylaxis management training, which includes strategies for anaphylaxis management, recognition of allergic reactions, emergency treatment and practise with an EpiPen® trainer, and this is reinforced at yearly intervals
- The ELC's emergency action plan for the management of anaphylaxis is in place and all staff understand the plan
- A treat box is available for special occasions (if relevant) and is clearly marked as belonging to the child at risk of anaphylaxis
- Parent/guardian's current contact details are always available

- Information regarding any other medications or medical conditions (for example asthma) is available to staff
- If food is prepared at the service, measures are in place to prevent contamination of the food given to the child at risk of anaphylaxis





Out of School Hours Care

St Leonard's College is committed to offering quality Out of School Hours Care (OSHC) for students in the form of before and after school care. Before and after school care programs are available to children in ELC to Year 6. Care is available on a permanent, casual or emergency basis.

Before School Care (ELC - Year 6)

Before school care prepares children for the day ahead by creating an informal but well supervised environment with a variety of quiet activities. This program starts at 7.00am and is run by TeamKids. If you have not used TeamKids before then you will need to register your child. Please go to the website below and follow the enrolment instructions.

Website:

www.teamkids.com.au/venues/st-leonards-collegebrighton-east-oshc-5/

Email:

 $\underline{StLeonardsCollege@teamkids.com.au}\\$

After School Care (ELC)

The after school program provides a variety of stimulating, creative and recreational activities within a safe and supportive environment. Children are provided with afternoon tea each day. The ELC staff run the after care program in our ELC classrooms from 3.00pm to 6.00pm. Families must book their child into after care via the email below.

ELC Out of School Hours Coordinator:

Karen Smyth St Leonard's College Early Learning Centre 163 South Road, Brighton East VIC 3187

Email: OSHC@stleonards.vic.edu.au

Phone: 0409 406 991









Fees

Picked up prior to 4.30pm \$25 Picked up after 4.30pm \$35

Late Pick-up Fees

A penalty of \$1.00 per minute will be incurred for late collection of children. Parents who pick up their child late three times or more per term will have their child's position in the program reviewed.

If a child has not been collected by 6.30pm, and no contact on the enrolment form is available to collect the child, the Program staff will call on a senior member of St Leonard's College staff to collect the child or, as a last resort, request assistance from Victoria Police.

Absenteeism

In the event of a child being absent from the OSHC Program, parents must advise the OSHC Coordinator or the Head of Early Learning Centre of the child's absence prior to 10.00am. Please email oshc@stleonards.vic.edu.au or emily.trenchard@stleonards.vic.edu.au otherwise fees will be charged.

