



*A rural discovery based sustainable
early childhood environment*

PARENT HANDBOOK



KIA ORA & WELCOME TO



THE FARMYARD FOR EARLY LEARNERS

It is a pleasure to extend a warm welcome to you and your child/children on behalf of our staff and Kaiako here at The Farmyard for Early Learners. As parents and whānau you are your child's first and most important teachers. Our teaching team recognise that your child's early years are critically important and as a result, value the trust placed upon us by all parents.

We very much look forward to working with you and hope that you will find this booklet useful in making the transition into The Farmyard.

The Farmyard for Early Learnings

Educating the Future

Our Values

RESPECT – Constantly seeking to understand and support each other

TRUST – Unconditional responsibility for emotional and physical security

AUTHENTICITY – A genuine farmyard family experience

SUSTAINABILITY – A way of life for now and the future

PASSION – Our calling, our pleasure and our heartfelt commitment



Our Philosophy

Children are welcomed into The Farmyard from babies to six year olds. In everything we do, our focus is on the whole child. The rhythms of our environment and our thoughts create an unhurried flow of teaching and learning across the seasons. In this beautiful farmland setting, our children have the opportunity to interact and explore; to express and share; and to reflect, learn and grow: every day.

We believe in the education of the whole child using the head, heart and hands, based on child development. You will see a soft integration of our values illuminated through the early childhood curriculum of Te Whāriki, Steiner Curriculum and with the growth of our Rongo Taiao (Forest Class). We now include the N.Z. Curriculum to further education for five to six year olds, supported by Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

We welcome you to explore further and find out more about The Farmyard

Learning

Through play and meaningful real-life experiences, within the Centre and local community children develop the essential life skills and characteristics they need to thrive in the 21st century.

Your child will have opportunities and experiences to:

- Learn about and understanding the world around them
- Learn to value and respect people, places, and things
- Grow and develop as a socially competent, caring individual
- Develop an appreciation and understanding of sustainable, environmental practices
- Develop a positive awareness of Te Ao Maori, their own and other cultures
- Be curious, creative, resourceful, adaptive, and resilient
- Grow confidence and capabilities in science, literacy, and mathematical learning
- Build on their interests, strengths and needs

Leading

Teaching 21st century leadership and life skills based on the idea that there is a leader in everyone, and leaders strive to be the best version of themselves.

We will work alongside your child to encourage their leadership to:

- Be a responsible person and doing the right thing without being asked even when no one is looking
- Make good choices, in relation to actions and attitudes
- Help others
- Influence others
- Set their own goals
- Show initiative
- Foster persistence
- Strive to reach their full potential



Succeeding

We believe every child has the potential to succeed. Through love and support your child will grow and develop as a competent confident learner, healthy in mind body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and ready for school.

We work to equip your child to strive to reach their potential by:

- Empowering your child to have a can-do attitude, make decisions and become increasingly independent.
- Ensuring learning and development are interrelated and interconnected supporting your children's holistic development (intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual learning).
- Encouraging learning through responsive, reciprocal relationships with people, places and things.
- Linking with you their whānau to understand your wishes for your child.
- Strengthening the dispositions of learning (courage and curiosity, trust and playfulness, perseverance, confidence and responsibility) within your child.
- Understanding and using your child's love language to make sure your child feels loved and appreciated.



Settling your child

Starting childcare is a big step for children and for parents. These tips are designed to help you and your child settle into The Farmyard and adapt happily to the new surroundings. Here are some suggestions that can help with settling your child:



Visits | Familiarising yourself and your child with the centre

Start visiting the centre a week before your child starts. We encourage two to three visits prior to your start date. Visits will be arranged by the Team Leader or Centre Manager.

It is helpful to prearrange the visits, so we can ensure your child's key teacher is available to start building the relationship with you and your child. Start with a short visit where you can stay the whole time. These short playful visits will help your child get familiar with the new people and environment. Together, the two of you can explore the classroom and meet some of our The Farmyard community. During the second and third visit you will be encouraged to leave your child for a small period of time.



Saying goodbye and reassuring your child you will return

- Plan to stay a little while. Staying for 5 minutes can help ease the transition. When you see that your child is comfortable, it is time to leave. If your child is finding it difficult to say goodbye work with your key teacher to establish a good bye routine/ritual which ensures your child is supported and comforted.
- We understand saying goodbye can be hard, try and keep your tone positive. Children pick up on the reactions of the trusted adults in their lives. So, try not to look worried or sad, and don't linger too long. Say a quick goodbye and reassure your child that all will be well, and you will see them soon.
- Think about creating a special goodbye ritual. For example, you can give your child a kiss on his or her palm to "hold" all day long. Goodbye rituals are comforting to children and help them understand and prepare for what will happen next.
- Resist the rescue. Try not to run back into the classroom if you hear your child crying, as upsetting as this can be. This is a big change, and your child may, quite understandably, feel sad and a little scared. If you run back in, it is likely to prolong your child's distress and make it harder for them to adapt. Rest assured teachers have many years of experience with helping families make the shift to childcare. You are welcome to call the centre and check that they have settled or one of our teachers can give you a call and update.

Cuddlies or special toys

To assist them settling in, if they wish, let them take a special toy or other possession, to help them feel safe and secure.



Communicate

Make sure you provide the teachers with all relevant information regarding your child and their specific needs, including routines, change in eating or sleeping habits, changes you have notices and moods.

Contacting the centre

You are welcome to give us a call as often as you feel necessary. Very soon your child will be absorbed in the activities and experiences of the centre and will feel quite at home.

What to bring to the Centre

- ✚ A school bag
- ✚ A change of clothes
- ✚ In summer a clearly labelled sunhat
- ✚ In winter a warm hat, jacket and shoes
- ✚ Drink bottle
- ✚ Wet bag for wet and dirty clothing



It is important to clearly name all clothing, footwear and bags. This will help staff return the right property to the right child. We can't take responsibility for property that is lost.

Lost property is situated in your child's classroom. Please check for lost property regularly.

Children learn through creative play and this kind of play can be messy. They will get paint on their clothes so dress them in comfortable clothes, easily washed and suitable for active play.



Parent Involvement

Parents and whānau are acknowledged as first teachers, our teachers work collaboratively with you in the interests of your child. We encourage you to engage in your child's learning you can do this by:

Spending Time in the Centre

The centre has an open-door policy - whānau are welcome to spend time at the centre with their child. Involvement in the centre can be in many forms including, attending any planned special excursions, parent evenings, sharing aspects of your culture and things that are important to your whānau, sport, music, interest, or hobby with the children in the centre. Parent help is always appreciated if you or a whānau member is available please let the manager or a teacher know (ideas include gardening, mending books, sewing, telling stories, etc).

Communication at pick up and drop offs

Teachers will share with you your child's day. It is helpful if you could share with us how their evening and morning has been. If you would like to discuss any aspect of your child's centre experience, please approach a teacher, however, please bear in mind that drop off and pick up times can be busy and we may ask you to make a time if further discussion is required.

Storypark - Children's online portfolio

The Farmyard uses Storypark e-portfolios to help parents and families relive their child's important moments and to be more involved in their child's learning. You will receive an invitation to join Storypark once your child has started, and you will be in charge of who you invite to be involved. We encourage parents and extended whānau to contribute to Storypark with stories of life at home so that we can celebrate/share or build on these in the centre.

Planned Reviews & Consultation

Policy and Centre reviews will be displayed on the Storypark notice board regularly to get your views and comments. Please ensure you read the document and add your comments. Your views are important to us. These will be reviewed in our leadership meetings.

Parent Focus Groups

We hold Parent meetings during the year from time to time to discuss current reviews, strategic goals and policies and procedures. Please express an interest if you wish to join the focus group at some point.

Whānau Events

Whānau events are held regularly and we encourage everyone to participate. These events provide a great opportunity to strengthen relationships among our The Farmyard families and community.



Cultural Focus

We value and celebrate the diverse cultural groups represented within our community. These cultures, countries and languages are explored centre-wide. We value input from our whānau members to share their cultural customs, stories, songs, art, recipes or experiences with our tamariki.

General Information

Hours of Operation

The Centre is open from Monday to Friday 7.45 am to 5.15 pm including school holidays. We are closed for public holidays.

The Farmyard is a cashless centre. Statements will be emailed to the nominated Bill Payer every Tuesday at 4pm. Invoices are to be paid via internet banking. Bank account and Bank Reference details are on the invoice or your terms of trade.

Fees and Payment of Fees

(Inclusive of GST)

Our fees are available on the website. Fees include meals (for selected centres only), nappies, sunscreen, Storypark. Fees are subject to change and may be increased when necessary, at the discretion of The Farmyard Childcare Limited.

To enable you to keep on top of your account you may select the frequency of payment that best suits you. Weekly, fortnightly, or monthly.

Failure to keep up to date with your fees may result in the dissolution of your child's enrolment.

Statutory Holidays

For ease of automatic payments full fees are applicable for any statutory holiday that falls on a day when your child would normally attend as fees are calculated over the year divided to give a weekly rate.

Absences

Full fees will be charged for all booked days regardless of whether your child attends or not, with exception of pre-informed annual leave which is 50% of fees for up to 4 weeks per annum.

If your child is going to be absent, please inform the centre by email or phone of their absence and reason for absence ie holiday or sickness. We are not able to claim funding for hours or days children are not attending regularly, so please ensure you are attending the hours and days you book.

Attendance sign-in for your child

You must sign your child in and out on the tablet at reception, using your unique pin number. Pin numbers are not to be shared; each person authorised to collect your child will be allocated their own number.

This is important as it is used in the event of an emergency, as well as documentation required by the Ministry of Education.

Changes to booked times

Any changes to your child's times must be discussed with the Centre Manager in advance and a change of booking form signed. Please note that changes are subject to availability and there may be wait times on requested days.

Notification of Withdrawal

Two weeks' notice is required in writing. In the event of two weeks' notice not being provided, fees will be required to be paid until the notice period has expired.



Operational Documents Summary

The centre has a comprehensive operations manual. This clarifies expectations and ensures a uniform approach to ensure we meet regulatory requirements and are implementing good practice consistently, putting us all on the same page. A copy of our key policies and procedures is available on Storypark. Some key points within these that you need to understand are:

Authorisation to collect children:

On enrolment you will be asked to identify persons authorised to collect your child. If, for some reason your child is to be picked up by someone other than yourself, or those listed on the enrolment form please notify the Centre in advance. Please also warn anyone that is unfamiliar to us that they may need to provide identification before we will release your child into their care. Children will not be released to any person unauthorised to have access.

Injuries and Incidents:

All injuries and incidents are recorded in an Injury/Incident Register. If your child is seriously injured or seriously ill we will get immediate medical assistance. If there are costs involved in this you will be required to cover these. All Kaiako are first aid trained and able to administer basic first aid. All injuries, incidents and illnesses are documented so you will be notified at time of pick up and provided with a copy of the report. If the incident / injury is of a significant nature we will contact you immediately to inform you of what has happened.

Administering Medication:

Medication can only be administered to your child if we have written authority from you, or by a doctor or ambulance personnel in an emergency. If your child requires medication to be administered for a short term condition during their time in the centre, you must complete the medicine register located in the classroom each day the medication is required. The medication must be passed to a teacher to ensure it is safely stored. . Clearly label any medications brought in. Prescribed or non-prescribed medicines are to be brought into the centre in original packaging which clearly shows a name, dosage and expiry date. If your child requires medication for a long term allergy or health matter speak to a teacher who will provide you with an Individual Health Plan which to complete which will be reviewed every three months with you.

Communication and Complaints Procedure

Your feedback and opinion is important to us. If you have feedback or concerns we encourage you to speak to the person concerned, team leader or centre manager. If you feel the matter is not heard and wish to take matters further we encourage you to contact the service provider. If having followed this process and matters relate to non-compliance you may contact the local Ministry of Education. Our non-compliance compliance procedure is displayed in the reception, along with the contact details. If you have any queries or concerns talk to a teacher or the centre manager in the first instance

Contacting the Centre



- Phone number for the centre is **06 867 4565**
- Alternatively, we welcome you to email: **manager@thefarmyard.school.nz**
- To enquire about fee's bookings, absence, holidays, make-up days email: **admin@thefarmyard.school.nz**

Emergency Procedures

The centre has an emergency plan, which applies in a variety of emergency situations, and supplies to ensure the care and safety of children and adults at the centre. Evacuation plans and meeting points are displayed in the centre. Regular drills are carried out to ensure children and staff are familiar with what to do in the event of various emergency scenarios. In the event of an emergency all parents/caregivers are contacted via text messaging/phone calls/email, depending on technology available at the time.



WINZ Childcare Subsidy

Children who attend licensed early childhood centre for at least 5 hours a week can under certain criteria access subsidies. See www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz.

Regular Outings and Special Excursions

Outings are a valuable part of our programme as they provide children with new experiences and increase their understanding of the world around them and enable us to extend the education program. Regular outings form part of our regular curriculum as they provide valuable opportunities for our children to explore the wider community, exposing your child to a range of different experiences. Permission is requested at the time of enrolment for regular outings. Special permission will be sought, and information provided in advance of special excursions that involve travel from the centre. On all excursions risks are considered and ratios set in order to maximise children's safety. You may be asked to meet the cost of a special excursion.

Education Review Office (ERO) Reports

Education Review Office (ERO) is an external auditor that reviews the quality of education provided to children and supports in identifying strategies to improve teaching and learning. Early childhood centres are reviewed within the first two years of operation, and then on average every three years. You will find a link to our most recent review on our website.

Newsletter and Notices

These will be posted onto our community notice board on 'Storypark'. This will include information on happenings at The Farmyard, upcoming events and information.



Food and Nutrition



At The Farmyard, we recognise the importance of healthy eating for children so as they can learn and develop to the best of their ability. All food provided to children will be healthy and nutritious, and meet the 'Reducing food – food related choking for babies and young children at early learning services' guidelines.

Full meal service

The centre provides a nutritious morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea, and late snack for your child. If your child has any allergies or special dietary requirements, please alert us to this so we can provide the correct foods. Our goal is to provide home-made healthy and wholesome meals. We do not provide breakfast. Our weekly menu is located on Storypark. Any infant milk or food given to your child if under the age of 12 months is provided by or approved by you.

Parents Providing Food

Organising a nutritious packed lunch doesn't need to be complicated. Here are some suggestions for healthy snack choices and lunchbox ideas:

[www.health.govt.nz/system/files/resouces-](http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/resouces-files/HE1302_Eating%20for%20healthy%20childcare%20%20tp%2012_0.pdf)

[files/HE1302_Eating%20for%20healthy%20childcare%20%20tp%2012_0.pdf](http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/resouces-files/HE1302_Eating%20for%20healthy%20childcare%20%20tp%2012_0.pdf)

<https://www.heartfoundation.org.nz/resources/school-lunchbox-recipes>



Illness Policy

We are committed to providing a healthy environment for all children and staff. It would be difficult to remove the risk of infection and illness; however, we will provide an environment in which all efforts are made to reduce the risk of illness and infectious diseases spreading. A copy of the illness policy is available on Storypark. We do have a strict Cleaning and Sanitising policy and use Zoono hygiene products, an anti-microbial treatment that provides long lasting protection against bacteria, fungi and viruses. We encourage parents, children, and staff to use hand sanitisers each day to help protect themselves (There are hand dispenses in each room). All resources and equipment are cleaned and sanitised regularly.



If you have concerns that a child may be unwell, information should be shared with a teacher upon arrival at the centre. In this case teachers will be vigilant and alert to any changes in behaviour, or signs of illness, and can respond to your child's needs promptly.

If your child is suffering from any of the symptoms listed below, they will be required to leave the centre. If you are unavailable the emergency contact person listed on your child's enrolment form will be contacted.

Reasons to exclude a child from The Farmyard

- The illness prevents your child from participating comfortably in play.
- The illness results in greater care needed than we can reasonably provide without compromising the health and safety of the other children.
- Your child has any of the following conditions: fever (38 degrees Celsius and over), persistent crying, difficulty breathing, persistent coughing, persistent runny nose, or other signs of possible illness.
- If your child has diarrhoea they should not attend. Your child must be symptom free for 48 hours and must have had at least one normal bowel motion before returning to The Farmyard.
- No child with vomiting should attend The Farmyard. Children must be symptom free for 48 hours and must be able to keep food down for those 48 hours.
- Rash with fever or behaviour change - until a doctor has determined that the illness is not a communicable disease.
- Tuberculosis - until the child's doctor or the Public Health Service advises that the child is non-infectious.
- For some vaccine preventable diseases, there is a requirement to exclude unimmunised children who have had contact with a case of the disease. This applies to Measles, Diphtheria and Whooping Cough, and would be arranged on the advice of the Medical Officer of Health.
- If your child is prescribed antibiotics for any illness they should not return until at least 24 hours after treatment has started or at the centre manager's discretion.
- The Farmyard reserves the right to request a medical certificate from a health professional before allowing your child to return following illness.

Fee Policy

Payment of fee policy:

The weekly fee charged is for the days booked and includes statutory holidays, sick days, and other absences.

- Invoices are emailed at 4pm Tuesday for the current week and are payable within 7 days via Bank Transfer or Direct Debit into The Farmyard account
- Fees are expected to be paid on a weekly basis.
- Children are entitled to 4 weeks holiday at 50% of their usual weekly fee per annum. For families receiving government subsidy, the 50% discount is taken off the parent portion of the fee. Written notice two weeks' prior to taking leave is required.

Late payment of fee policy:

- A \$15 late fee will apply if families do not keep their account current and no arrangement is in place with the centre.
- After receiving more than one \$15 late fee charge a payment plan will be negotiated between yourself and The Farmyard for payment of any overdue balance.
- The payment plan can be modified by The Farmyard to ensure it is agreeable to the Centre's needs.
- The payment plan must outline a new payment structure that includes the outstanding balance and ongoing fees. The amount due weekly must be equal to the current fees and a portion of the outstanding balance. Families will be given up to 12 weeks to pay the overdue balance amount.
- Failure to maintain the payment plan will result in an additional \$15 late fee and will require full payment of the complete balance within 14 days of the childcare services for the family may be withdrawn.
- If the full balance is paid and the family remains enrolled, parent/s will need to maintain weekly payments from that time and moving forward for the timeframe they remain at the Centre or care for that family may be terminated 14 days from the first non-payment.
- All outstanding balances at that time will be referred to a Debt Collection agency for future management. All costs of debt collection (legal, filing and court fees and all debt commissions) incurred will be payable by you. In terms of the Privacy Act 2020, you irrevocably authorise The Farmyard to seek and exchange information with any person, company or agency regarding your credit rating and debt recovery process.
- The above is at the discretion of the Business Manager and there will be no exceptions to this policy unless there is prior written consent from the Business Manager or Business Support.





www.learninglinkschildcare.co.nz



0800 690 920