



Northern  
Schools  
Early Years

# THE NSEY BUZZ

*The Official Newsletter of Northern Schools Early Years*



Love a life of  
learning and  
living!

## Hello from our CEO

Firstly, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to all of the children and families that have joined our learning community for this first time this year! Around 550 three-year-old children started kindergarten in January, and we have 1193 children enrolled in our kindergartens overall this year. It's been wonderful to see how quickly the children have settled into their kindergarten experience!

I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to the 20 new staff who have joined us this year, including those at our new Greenvale Primary School Kindergarten, and welcome back to our existing staff. It was lovely to start the year with an Organisational Day that brought our whole team together to reconnect and commence the year with sharing professional learning, expectations, setting goals and discussing professional agency.

Since we have so many new families in our programs, we thought it was a good time to explain what makes Northern Schools Early Years unique: our Kindergarten to Grade 6 model (read more on page 3). You'll also read about the impact of our Wellbeing Team, and some of the exciting things that have been happening at NSEY, including opening Greenvale Primary School Kindergarten, holding our Organisational and Professional Learning Day, welcoming new team members and lots more!

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**We look forward to working in partnership with all our families and stakeholders this year to continue to fulfill our purpose 'To Love a Life of Learning and Living'!**



**Sigi Hyett,  
Chief Executive  
Officer**

## Enrolments opening for 2026!

It's almost time to register for kindergarten in 2026! Merri-bek Council will open 3-year-old and 4-year-old registrations from Tuesday 1 April 2025. Hume Council accepts registrations at any time.

Remember, if your child is currently attending 3-year-old kindergarten, you must submit an enrolment registration to secure a place in a 4-year-old program for 2026. For those children attending 4-year old kindergarten who will go to school next year, you must enrol at the school. This does not happen automatically.

- To register for a 3 or 4-year old program in the City of Hume: [complete the Council registration form](#).
- To register for a 3 or 4-year-old program in the City of Merri-bek: [complete the Council registration form](#).
- Complete our online forms for [Rothschild Road Kindergarten](#) (Gisborne) or [Molesworth Street Kindergarten](#) (North Melbourne) contact the NSEYC Office on 9306 1662 or email us at [office@nseyc.org.au](mailto:office@nseyc.org.au).
- To register for long day care at Glenroy Hub Children's Centre, go to the [Merri-bek Council website](#) or call 9240 1111.

You can also pick up enrolment forms from our office, our kindergartens or school offices. If you need any assistance to register, please contact our office on 9306 1662.

## Important dates/events



- 2nd April - World Autism Awareness Day
- 7th to 18th April - School Holidays (kindergartens are closed)
- 18th April - Good Friday (Christianity)
- 30th April - International Guide Dog Day
- 15th May - International Day of Families
- 17th May - International Day Against LGBTQIA+ Discrimination (IDAHOBIT)
- 26th May - National Sorry Day
- 27th May to 3rd June - Reconciliation Week
- 27th May - Northern Schools Early Years Annual General Meeting

## School term dates for 2025

Term 1	Tuesday 28 January - Friday 4 April
Term 2	Tuesday 22 April - Friday 4 July
Term 3	Monday 21 July - Friday 19 September
Term 4	Monday 6 October - Friday 19 December



## Have you read our Children's Handbook?

It's a great overview of what children can expect when they start at an NSEY kindergarten. You can [find it on our website](#).



For more information about our services, for help with enrolling, or any other queries please contact us on 9306 1662 or email [office@nseyc.org.au](mailto:office@nseyc.org.au) and we'll be happy to help!



## Introducing our Kindergarten to Grade 6 model

At the NSEY, we are super proud of what we call our “piece of gold”, something that makes us different to almost any other Early Years Management organisation: our Kindergarten to Grade 6 model. Having our kindergartens co-located on school sites has lots of benefits for our communities, however what makes the NSEY truly unique is the way that our kindergartens and primary schools work together to achieve the best outcomes for children.



This happens at every level, within the kindergarten program, at the management level, and through the involvement of school principals in the in the planning, connections and and oversight of our services. We even won a the Minister’s Award at the Victorian Early Years Awards in 2023 in recognition of the impact and uniqueness of our model (see photo above).

We asked the school principals from two of our newest partner primary schools to share their experience of joining the NSEY, and the benefits for their learning communities.



### Samatha Kenely, Principal Roxburgh Park Primary School

*Partnering with NSEY to manage our new kindergarten has brought a range of positive impacts across the board. Through this partnership it is clear that NSEY specializes in delivering high-quality early learning programs and has a strong focus on partnerships with families, schools, and communities.*

*For children, the partnership ensures access to high-quality early learning programs, fostering their development and preparing them for school. We have seen the kinder and school working closely together to meet the needs for the children. This term we have seen the introduction of early numeracy foundation skills being modelled in the kinder to begin building mathematical thinking.*

*Families benefit from a collaborative approach that values their input and supports their children's education. We have seen a stronger relationship with our Foundation families that had attended the NSEY kinder. For our early childhood and Foundation teams, I can see that working together will lead to a more cohesive and effective team, enhancing the overall learning environment within the K-6 model.*

*We’re excited to deepen the relationship between NSEY, our school, and families to further align educational goals and create an even more cohesive community-focused approach. We’re also looking forward to continuing to invest in the kindergarten and Foundation team's growth through collaborative learning opportunities through shared planning and sharing of practice*



*Member for Greenvale Iwan Walters, Sigi, Samantha, the Minister for Children Lizzie Blandthorn and kindergarten children cutting the ribbon at the official opening of Roxburgh Park PS Kindergarten*





## Introducing our Kindergarten to Grade 6 model - continued

### Anne-Maree Grozdanoski, Principal Coolaroo South Primary School

We decided to join an Early Years Manager to enhance the consistency and quality of practice across our kindergarten and to improve outcomes for children. NSEY stood out due to their strong reputation, deep understanding of early childhood education, and proven impact on children's development. We were particularly impressed by the opportunities they provide for staff to engage in professional learning, coaching and mentoring and networking, which aligns with our commitment to continuous improvement.

The transition process was smooth and well managed. The CEO of NSEY was instrumental in making the process clear and straightforward. Early on, we had productive meetings with our school leadership team and school council to ensure everyone was informed and supportive of the change. The CEO also met with existing families to familiarise them with the service and answer any questions they had in relation to the kindergarten program. This collaborative approach helped address any questions early on, ensuring a seamless transition.

One of the most valuable changes since joining NSEY has been the involvement of allied health staff, having access to a social worker has made a significant positive impact on both families and children. Another benefit has been the monthly principal meetings facilitated by NSEY. These meetings allow principals to stay informed about what's happening across all services and have a voice in shaping supports and priorities at the local level.

We're excited about the continued opportunities for collaboration, particularly around transition programs that support children moving into primary school. The use of data to inform early intervention programs before children start school is something we're particularly looking forward to.

**We're so proud to work in partnership with Samantha, Anne-Maree and all of the principals and school teams that are part of our model. Thank you for your contribution!**



#### Photos

**Top:** Sigi Hyett (CEO, NSEY) and Val Karaitiana (Chair of the NSEY Board, and Principal of Dallas Brooks Community Primary School) accepting the Minister's Award for our K-6 model at the Victorian Early Years Awards 2023

**Middle:** Kindergarten and primary school children celebrate Book Week at Dallas Brooks Community Primary School

**Bottom:** Kindergarten children participating in Glenroy Central Primary School's AUSLAN program





## NSEY Organisational Day

Each year at NSEY we start the year with an Organisational Day to provide our teams with an overview of our K-6 model and management support structure, set out expectations and plan for the year ahead, and share professional learning on critical aspects of practice.

Early childhood teachers, educators and Family Support Workers from all 18 of our education and care services joined our management and administration team for a whole day of inspiring and thought-provoking presentations and workshops. These included:

- An overview of the NSEY Language Program with Nina from Speech Pathology Victoria
- A presentation on 'Slow Pedagogy' from early childhood expert Kelly Boucher and Suzanne Mangan, Education Leader and ECT from our Rothschild Road Kindergarten (which they also presented at the ECA Conference last year)
- A session on 'Professional Agency' led by Catharine Hydon and Kerrie O'Neill of Circularity Consulting.

It was wonderful to see our teams engage so deeply in the content of these sessions and embrace all of the learning opportunities.



***Huge thanks to all of our presenters, and to our administration and management teams who worked hard behind the scenes to make it all happen!***





## The impact of our Wellbeing Team

For several years now, the team at Northern Schools Early Years (NSEY) has been working to achieve their vision of creating a Wellbeing Program to support families across our services (which are in communities with some of the highest levels of vulnerability in HUMA, such as Dallas, Meadow Heights and Broadmeadows), as part of our integrated Kindergarten to Grade 6 model. Thanks to the School Readiness Funding (SRF), this vision is now coming to life, and we can see the very real impact it is having on the lives of children and families!

Our Wellbeing Program now includes a team of seven Family Support Workers (FSWs), six of whom are qualified social workers, working across either one or two sites each. NSEY kindergarten services with the most complex needs now have a dedicated FSW on site, enabling them to develop trusting, reciprocal relationships with children, families and educators, as well as with the school teaching and wellbeing teams where the services are based.

In collaboration with the Early Childhood Teacher, our Wellbeing Team provides support for:

- enrolment, accessing kindergarten and transition to school
- building social connections and engagement within the community
- accessing support to extend child development and wellbeing
- engaging in the kindergarten program, and
- referral pathways to additional services.



While the team is still forming and we continue to review the model, our Wellbeing Program is already having a hugely positive impact for children and families. One clear example of this impact is that FSWs have supported our ECTs to submit 49 Kindergarten Inclusion Support applications for the 2025 kindergarten year. 31 of these were able to be submitted when the children were three, so that the hours were approved and in place for the start of their 4-year-old year. The program is having a real impact, keep up the great work, team!

**School Readiness Funding (SRF)** provides extra support for Victorian government-funded Kindergarten programs to help children gain the most from their learning. The amount of School Readiness Funding each service receives is based on the level of need of the children enrolled at their service. This is informed by parental occupation and education data. Many of our kindergarten services are located in areas with high levels of vulnerability and disadvantage, which means we attract significant funding across our organisation.

The main focus of our School Readiness Plans for 2025 is strengthening communication and language development for children, and the continuation of our Wellbeing Program. This involves Family Support Workers and Social Workers being based at our services with the highest level of SRF to provide direct support to children and families with emerging vulnerabilities, as well as building the capacity of our teachers and educators. Coaching and mentoring will also take place across most of our services, empowering educators to deliver a meaningful program that supports children's communication language and literature, and to use individual children's ideas and dispositions to further their communication and language development.





## News from our early learning teams

### Take a peek out our new Greenvale Primary School Kindergarten!



This January we commenced operating a new kindergarten at Greenvale Primary School, built by the Victorian School Building Authority. An official opening event was held with the Minister for Children, Lizzie Blandthorn, and local member for Greenvale Iwan Walters both in attendance, along with principal Angelika Ireland and some of her students. It's a beautiful space and we're excited to see it come to life as more children enrol! Thanks to our teams for doing such a wonderful job setting up the space in a very short timeframe.



### Welcome to our new Teaching and Learning Facilitator, Angela Ditchmen!

A few weeks ago we were thrilled to welcome the newest member of our Management and Administration team, Angela Ditchmen, as our new Teaching and Learning Facilitator working alongside Linda Hyett.

Angela has extensive knowledge and experience across a range of contexts within the early years profession. She has supported the delivery of a number of State Government initiatives including the Best Life Best Start reform, and has deep knowledge of the learning frameworks, Child Safe Standards, and much more.

Angela's most recent role was working with fka Children's Services as the Lead Pedagogy and Practice consultant, mentoring early years teams. Angela understands the complexities of our sector and collaborates with teams to support quality education and care outcomes, approaching her role with humour, joy and kindness.



*Angela was warmly welcomed by our head office team (above) and the Upfield Kindergarten team (below)*



# Child Safe Standards in Victoria

New Child Safe Standards now apply in Victoria, to better protect children and young people from abuse. The Child Safe Standards require organisations involving children to have policies, procedures and practices to keep them safe. It is important that parents and carers also understand the Child Safe Standards.

## Resources for parents

The Commission for Children and Young People provides fact sheets about the Child Safe Standards for parents/carers in a range of languages:

English

Arabic | العربية

Hindi | हिन्दी

Punjabi | ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

Other community languages

## Our commitment to child safety

The Northern Schools Early Years Cluster Inc. is committed to child safety.

We want children to be safe, happy and empowered.

We support and respect all children, as well as our staff and volunteers.

We are committed to the safety, participation and empowerment of all children.

We have zero tolerance of child abuse, and all allegations and safety concerns will be treated very seriously and consistently with our robust policies and procedures.

We have legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child's safety, which we follow rigorously.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early, and removing and reducing these risks.

We have robust human resources and recruitment practices to reduce the risk of child abuse by new and existing board members, staff and volunteers.

We are committed to regularly training and educating our board members, staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

We are committed to the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds, and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.

We have specific policies and procedures in place that support our board members, staff and volunteers to achieve these commitments.





# Information for parents and carers about the Child Safe Standards

## Child safe organisations

When your child is in the care of an organisation you want to know that they will be safe from abuse. The Child Safe Standards are designed to prevent child abuse in organisations.

The Child Safe Standards apply to over 50,000 Victorian organisations that provide services or facilities for children. These include:

- schools and outside school hours care
- kindergartens and early learning centres
- sporting clubs and recreational groups
- coaching or tuition services
- out of home care services
- local councils
- religious and faith-based organisations
- hospitals, health and disability services
- professional babysitting services
- overnight camps for children.

**You can find a full list of the types of organisations that must meet the Child Safe Standards at [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/who-do-the-standards-apply-to-page](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au/who-do-the-standards-apply-to-page)**

## How do the Child Safe Standards protect my child?

The Standards require organisations to take actions in a range of areas, including:

- background and suitability checks of staff and volunteers
- codes of conduct for staff and volunteers
- training and supervision of staff and volunteers
- documented risk assessments for activities
- clear procedures for reporting and acting on any concerns or allegations
- commitment to listening to children and encouraging them to speak up if they don't feel safe.

**Children have a right to be safe. Organisations have a responsibility to protect children from harm.**



## How do I know if an organisation is meeting the Child Safe Standards?

You can look on their website or talk to the staff. The organisation should have documents like:

- Child Safe Policy or Statement of Commitment to Child Safety
- Code of Conduct for workers and volunteers
- information about how to raise safety concerns.

Some questions you could ask include:

- What are you doing to meet the Child Safe Standards?
- Do you have risk assessments for activities?
- Do your staff and volunteers have appropriate checks, training and supervision?
- What are you doing to encourage children to speak up if they feel unsafe?
- Who can I talk to in the organisation if I have a concern or complaint?
- What is the process if I raise a concern or complaint about child safety?

**You have a right to talk to organisations about how they are keeping your child safe from abuse. If you are concerned that an organisation is not keeping all children safe or is not meeting the Child Safe Standards, take action.**

## What can I do if I am not sure my child is safe?

Take action if you are concerned that an organisation is not keeping your child or other children safe.

Talk to someone senior at the organisation. Tell them what you are worried about and try to find a solution together.

If the organisation does not address your concerns, contact their regulator. If you are unsure who the regulator is, you can contact the Commission. The Commission has information about regulators because we work with them to ensure compliance by all organisations with the Standards.

## How do I ask my child if they feel safe?

Below are some examples of questions you can ask your child, changing the wording depending on your child's age.

- Do you know that you should always feel safe, no matter where you are?
- What do you like about *[the organisation]*? Is there anything you don't like?
- Have you ever felt uncomfortable, worried or not safe? Who would you talk to if you feel unsafe?
- Has anyone at *[the organisation]* ever talked to you about what they can do to make you feel safe?
- Do the staff listen to you and the other children?
- What do you hope will happen if you tell someone you don't feel safe?

### Contact the Commission for further information or to talk about the Child Safe Standards:

- Telephone us on 1300 782 978 or (03) 8601 5281
- Email us at [contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@ccyp.vic.gov.au)
- Visit the Commission's website: [www.ccyp.vic.gov.au](http://www.ccyp.vic.gov.au)

If you need an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50 and ask them to contact the Commission for Children and Young People on (03) 8601 5281.