



MADGE SEXTON

K I N D E R G A R T E N

McLaren Vale

Frequently asked questions.

A number of enquiries from future users of the Kindergarten tend to ask similar questions as they investigate the local kindergartens/preschools and schools for their child. A big question is always around understanding when their child will start Kindergarten. It is hoped that the following FAQ's (frequently asked questions) will answer most of your questions! Please read the following frequently asked questions to see if your enquiry can be answered. If you still need to talk to the Director you are welcome to phone or email for further response.

Q: If I need to talk to the Director, how do I do this?

A: The Director is generally a part of the Kindergarten team during Kindergarten hours and cannot always respond to your extended enquiries during this time so a request for an appointment by email or phone is always appreciated. Please note that all staff team members are usually able to answer general enrolment questions so it is not always necessary to speak to the Director. The staff member will refer you to the Director if he/she is unable to answer your question.

Q: Can I come and visit the Kindergarten?

A: We realise that many families wish to have a look around the Kindergarten, and believe this is an important thing to do, to get a "feel" for the place and help you to decide if it is the right environment for your child. If you wish to do this, please phone the Kindergarten to make an appointment time convenient for both parties. If your child has very specific needs we can organise a meeting with regional support staff before their Kindergarten start date. We will also organise an Induction meeting time for new children and families in the term before they start Kindergarten.

Q: When will my child start Kindergarten?

A: Children need to be 4 years old before the 1st of May each year before starting sessional Kindergarten. If your child turns 4 on 1st May or after this date, they will start the following year. All children will begin Kindergarten in Term 1 (January) of each year and do four terms of preschool.

Children are eligible for four terms ONLY of Kindergarten unless there are circumstances such as special needs. Please contact the Director if you feel this is relevant to your child.

Q: When do I put my child's name on the waiting list?

A: You are welcome to put your child's name and details on our list as early as you like. Please note that we cannot take the details of unborn children.

Q: How do I enrol my child at Madge Sexton Kindergarten?

A: You can complete a preliminary enrolment over the phone, in person at Kindy or by email. The information that we require is your child's:

- Full name
- Date of birth
- Residential address (not postal address)
- Parent's names
- Contact phone numbers
- Contact email address (all correspondence is done by email—please provide ONE email address)
- Intended school
- Information attaining to the priority of access as stated in MSK Enrolment and Orientation policy (i.e. siblings attending local Government feeder schools (McLaren Flat, McLaren Vale), child attending childcare in 5171, or older sibling previously attended Madge Sexton Kgn.)
- If your child is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander or under the Guardianship of the Minister
- If your child has any medical conditions or additional needs. (This is so that we can plan for support if needed.)
- An official enrolment form will be given to you to complete and return if your child secures a place at Madge Sexton Kindergarten.

Please see our Madge Sexton Kindergarten Enrolment and Orientation Policy for more information.



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Q: What school does this Kindergarten feed to?

A: This Kindergarten feeds primarily to our local Department for Education schools; McLaren Vale Primary School and McLaren Flat Primary School, but there are other schools that children go onto including: Tatachilla Lutheran College, Galilee Catholic School, All Saints Catholic School, Southern Vales Christian College, Willunga Primary School, Kangarilla Primary School and Woodcroft College. Children may also go to other schools that are specific to their needs and/or cultural/religious beliefs that are not listed above.

Q: Do I need to talk to the Principal of the school I think my child will attend?

A: If you have not made a decision regarding your child's school, it would be useful to make an appointment with the Principal or attend an open day/night or Principal's Tour within the public or private sector. **YOUR CHILD IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY ENROLLED INTO THE LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOL.** You must make contact with the school of your choice to enrol your child or to be put onto the waiting list. Your child is always eligible for entry into your local (zoned), public school but it is important to make contact with them early so that they are able to include your child in their staff and class planning processes. For private and public schools you may be put on a waiting list depending on zones, priority of access policies, etc.

Q: Does my child need any particular skills to attend Kindergarten?

A: There is no formal standard requirement in written language or numeracy. It is preferred that your child is toilet trained and can communicate their needs. Being able to dress him/herself, open and close their snack and drink containers and carry his/her own bag is an excellent way to encourage independence. Velcro on shoes is a useful tool, if your child cannot tie their own laces, which is normal at this age. Children can communicate in various ways and if your child has a special need (i.e. speech difficulties, physical disability, English as a second language, etc.) the teaching team will ensure that your child's individual needs are met. This may mean other forms of communication with your child (i.e. picture cue cards, communication device, etc.) and possibly, intervention with the District Staff to ensure that teaching staff have guidance if needed.

Q: What will my child have learnt at Kindergarten?

A: Your child will learn through their own interests and through a play based environment. Your child will have opportunities to explore, create, and develop their problem solving and thinking skills. Your child will have learnt effective ways to communicate and get along with others.

Q: What is the routine of this Kindergarten?

A: Through our structured learning environment, our daily routine expectations and experiences for children are: amazement, anticipation, astonishment, communication, connection, consideration, contemplation, cooperation, discovery, enthusiasm, excitement, eagerness, hypothesising, imitation, invention, innovation, marvel, observation, questioning, reflection, surprise, transformation, wonder.....

Please see the Parent Information Book for an outline of our Daily Routine.

Q: What does the Reception teacher expect of my child to enter their class?

A: This of course varies for each individual teacher and setting, but generally it is hoped that the Reception child can listen to others, follow simple instructions and rules, communicate needs effectively, be toilet trained, and display independence in terms of carrying own bag, getting own food out of bag at different eating times.



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Frequently asked questions.

Q: But the children are just playing..... how are they learning and what are they learning?

A: As parents we all want our children to be as successful as possible for their future development. What skills will be needed for the future? Interaction with others? Conflict management? Negotiating with others? Turn taking? Role play of “adult type” occupations? Play is where the child practices many different ways of representing reality, creating symbols with clay, paint, blocks, sand, water and dress ups.

In a competitive and turbulent environment where no job is ever secure, the idea of expertise must include: versatility, imagination, reliability, and inventiveness. At the early childhood level, play is the perfect activity for the development of these qualities. Play can help young children deal with things they can’t always put into words. Tension, anxiety, fear and anger can be acted out in play. An experience can be replayed many times while children gradually come to grips with it.

“Play starts at birth and early childhood environments that promote play for all children and allow children to feel motivated, esteemed and appreciated are cause for celebration.” (Elspeth Harley 1999)

Observation of children participating in dramatic play demonstrates that they are using a wide range of cognitive skills as they plan and implement their play. (Observe your child at play!) These skills include; divergent thinking, understanding concepts, problem solving, imagining, limitation, visual/spatial discrimination, anticipation, attending behaviours, planning, concentration, reasoning, linking cause and effect, taking the perspective of another, choice and use of resources, testing relationships and adapting responses, classifying, and memory recall. When children initiate pretend play they often become totally absorbed, and can be observed demonstrating skills and behaviours, which are more refined and advanced than at other times.

The environment, props and the social interactions serve as scaffolds whereby the child can progress to high levels of development and understanding. Through play experiences children develop self-motivation and the ability to make their own choices. They balance individual freedom with social cooperation, negotiation and responsibility for the welfare of others. They develop the ability to reflect and learn from their own mistakes with courage and confidence in themselves and learners. Play can be the perfect context for developing these life skills.

Q: Can my child start “early”?

A: Children are entitled to four terms of Kindergarten consisting of 15 hours per week. Occasionally, there are reasons of special needs where a child may start which is called “Early Entry.” Please see the MSK Enrolment and Orientation Policy for more information. This is only considered in the first instance if there are session vacancies (i.e. still room for eligible preschoolers), and then each individual child’s needs are considered. You will need to talk to the Director to discuss further.

Q: My child has English as a second language, what does the Kindergarten offer to help?

A: Children with bilingual needs may be eligible for some support time from a Bilingual support worker who speaks the child’s first language. The time available varies from term to term according to funding availability and your child’s needs. The staff team may need an interpreter to ensure that parents’ are aware of our learning program. Children who have limited English can sometimes find it more difficult to settle into Kindergarten in the first instance. The staff team will endeavour to make your child’s introduction to the Kindergarten as smooth as possible. At home, please try to encourage English speaking as much as possible to give the children the opportunities to practise their English. The staff team often use picture cues to help children participate.

Q: My child has special health/medical considerations, e.g. allergies to nuts or bees, asthma, etc. What happens?

A: Madge Sexton Kindergarten is a Department for Education site and adheres to very strict policies when it comes to health and medical conditions. *Please see the Director for more information specific to your child or consult our policies page.*



MADGE SEXTON

KINDERGARTEN

McLaren Vale

Frequently asked questions.

Q: My child has special needs, what does the Kindergarten offer to help?

A: Children who have additional needs are welcome at this Kindergarten. If you have any reports from Paediatricians, Speech pathologists, Psychologists or other specialists, these would be useful to examine what methods the teaching staff may need to use to help support your child's development. Children who need support may be eligible for some time from a support worker who will help your child to access the learning environment and support your child in the learning program. The time available varies from term to term according to funding availability and your child's needs. Regional support such as the Special Educator, Speech Pathologist, Psychologist, Hearing Consultant, etc. may need to be in contact with families and the Director to ensure that your child's needs are met as well as possible. If you believe that your child will need support as soon as they enter Kindergarten please contact the Director as soon as possible to provide the Kindergarten with information about your child's needs.

Q: What is the referral process?

A: If your child has some needs or delays that may not have been recognised prior to starting Kindergarten, the Director may suggest a referral to have a Departmental Support person help to evaluate your child's needs. This may mean a Speech assessment completed by a Speech Pathologist, a skill assessment (social and intelligence) completed by a Psychologist, or an observation by a Special Educator if the staff team is uncertain of a child's particular needs. Please see the Director if you have any concerns regarding your child's development or you wish to discuss a possible referral.

Q: I think my child is gifted. What does this Kindergarten offer?

A: At this Kindergarten we believe that our learning environment is open-ended, which means that the environment does not have a 'black and white' or one end result to a discussion. Creativity is encouraged and celebrated, whether it be in creative arts, creating a vehicle with cardboard boxes, or creating a building with construction materials. We encourage the children to wonder rather than only have one answer. What are the possibilities? What are the paths we could take? Where can we go from here? Children are given the freedom to extend their thinking and learning as much as possible. As educators we give children the tools to help develop their thinking such as questioning skills, seeking out information from 'specialists' and using IT search skills and reference book skills. We ponder possibilities together and engage in the learning journey as much as the children do!

Q: Can my child choose other sessions that fall outside of the set groups (Group 1 and Group 2)? Can my child swap groups?

A: No. Each child is allocated into one group. Generally our enrolments are high and there are no vacant spaces to swap children around.

Q: Does my child have to access all sessions allocated to him/her in a group?

A: Each child will be allocated 15 hours in their groups; Group 1 or Group 2. If you choose not to access all of your child's sessions that is purely up to you, however you will still be required to pay full fees. Experience has shown that children who access all of their allocated sessions find it easier to make connections to others, understand and follow routines easier, feel a stronger sense of belonging to the Kindergarten group and environment, and show evidence of achieving planned learning outcomes quicker.

