

City of Ryde

PARENT HANDBOOK

January 2008



Welcome to City of Ryde Holiday Activities!



We hope that the time you and your child spends with us will be a happy, enjoyable and valuable experience. The purpose of our facilities is to provide high quality care for primary school aged children in the local community during school holiday periods, in a safe and caring environment.

In maintaining our standards it is extremely necessary to have clear guidelines and policies in place that will ensure that children attending the centre are safe and the centre runs smoothly.

This parent handbook contains guidelines and policies for the families who attend the centre. Please read this parent handbook carefully and keep for future references.

If you have any further questions or comments please don't hesitate to contact the Children's Activities Coordinator on 9952 8307.

CITY OF RYDE CONTACT DETAILS

Enquiries: 9952 8222
9952 8307

Truscott St: 0408 257 975
5-2-7s: 0408 119 581

web: www.ryde.nsw.gov.au

In Person Enquiries Address:
City of Ryde - 1 Devlin Street, Ryde 2112



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General Information

The City of Ryde operates 2 vacation care facilities in the Ryde community. The service caters for the children who attend primary school. The vast majority of children attending come from Ryde local community but we welcome other children who can make their way to our services from outside the area. Over the past year we have had children from Truscott Street Primary, Ryde Primary, Gladesville Public, Putney Primary, Eastwood and many other schools.

5-2-7s: During the School holiday periods we offer a 40 place 5-2-7s Kids Club. This service caters for children who are beginning or in their early years of primary school. It primarily caters for 5-7 year old children, however children whom are 4 years old who are enrolled to attend primary school can attend in the summer school holiday period.

Truscott Street: We also operate a 5-12 years 100 place program, this is currently operated out of Truscott St Primary School. This service caters for all primary school children. Should you wish to know more about Vacation care please do not hesitate to contact City of Ryde for more information on 9952 8307.

The aim of our service is to provide a high quality service for children who require care during the school holiday periods. City of Ryde holiday activities staff hope that we can work side by side with parents and guardians to ensure our service meets the needs and requirements of children and their families.

Our service has successfully passed accreditation by the National Childcare Accreditation Council in January 2005. We also passed a Spot Check in the October 2007 holidays, we are extremely proud of this achievement and we are due for reassessment in February 2008.





City of Ryde Holiday Program Aims:

- Create a stimulating, attractive, age appropriate and supportive environment that is child centred
- Cater for each child needs interests and expectations
- Offer high quality affordable care for families in the local area
- Provide a social and friendly atmosphere that develops skills for co-operation and builds a sense of community in children

Mission Statement

City of Ryde holiday programs aim to provide a consistently high standard of childcare with a focus on making the child experiences valuable, enjoyable, in a safe environment and to provide a service that meets the needs of the children and parents who use the facility.

Our Philosophy

Our philosophy is for all that use the centre – children, families and staff, and has been identified as follows:

1. A commitment to promote a high quality children's service that values and supports the principles of quality school aged care.
2. To offer a secure and safe environment for all those who attend the centre.
3. The development and continuance of a loving home-like environment for all who use the centre
4. An acceptance and welcoming of all individuals regardless of ethnic and/ or cultural backgrounds
5. To provide opportunities for skill development and to provide experiences that allow children to learn from others
6. To provide opportunities for skill development and to provide experiences that allow children to learn from others
7. A commitment which values the time to talk between all persons

DEFINITION OF OOSH

The term Out of School Hours Service (OOSH) refers to an organization that provides care and recreation for school aged children before and after school and throughout the school holidays.

An Out of school hours service should aim to:

- Provide a wide variety of supervised play and recreational activities, which assist in the social, emotional, creative and physical development of primary aged children.
- Promote and encourage equity and access throughout the whole organization, providing equal opportunities for children, parents and staff.
- Enables parents/guardians to pursue work/study/training or other activities, in the knowledge that their children are being well cared for in a safe and happy environment.

HOURS OF OPERATION

Operating Hours

City of Ryde Holiday Programs are available during all NSW Department of Education & Training School holidays.
City of Ryde does not operate on pupil free days or public holidays.

Vacation care dates vary during each holiday period. Please check City of Ryde website and program for specific and detailed holiday dates and activities programs.

Truscott Street (5-12 yrs) 7:30am – 6.00pm

Ryde 5-2-7s (5-7yrs) 8.00am - 9:30am

Children are not permitted on the premises until centre opening times.

Prior to the children arrival staff spend time in preparing craft, games, activities, and ensuring the centre is safe.



STAFF / CHILD RATIOS

The centre is staffed on strict staff / child ratios with a maximum of 15 children to 1 staff member. Our staff ratios are based on the recommendations of the National Standards

Staff ratio is: 1 staff to 15 children at the centre
1 staff to 8 children on excursions
1 staff to 5 children water activities

CITY OF RYDE HOLIDAY PROGRAMS STAFF

The City of Ryde holiday programs have a great team of qualified, experienced and friendly staff. At present a large percentage of our staff are primary teachers, PE teachers and university students currently studying teaching or child studies.

The centre is staffed by both permanent casuals and casual staff.

*There will always be at least 2 staff members at the centre. If there are more than 30 children enrolled on any given day additional staff members will be present.

Senior First Aid certificates are held by all permanent casuals staff members and by most of the casual staff at our service.



City of Ryde



VACATION CARE DAILY ROUTINE

7.30am: Centre Opens (Truscott Street) 8.00am: Centre Opens (Ryde 5-2-7s)

7.35am: Follow programming to set up indoor play and activities (Truscott)

8.05am: Follow programming to set up indoor play and activities (5-2-7s)

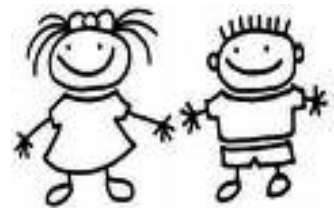
10.00am: Morning Tea (outside under Cola Area unless raining)
- Outside Play time (Kids free choice or structured group games)

11.00 Inside activities from program and outdoor play activities
11.30am depending on supervision and on activity)

1.00pm: Lunch



1.40pm: Indoor / () or activities (check program)



3.00pm: Afternoon Tea - Outside Play time (Kids free play time)

3.30pm: Inside activities (see program)

4.30pm: Begin Cleaning procedure - packing away equipment and activities

4.30pm: Outdoor play



5.00pm: Inside group games or quiet activities

5- 5.30pm: Finish Cleaning procedures (see cleaning checklist)

5.45pm: Begin Lock up procedure



6.00pm: Centre closed

Priority of Access

The federal government has approved our service to provide the following;

Truscott Street (5-12 yrs) = 100 places Ryde 5-2-7s (5-7 yrs) = 40 places

This approval allows for this number of children to be able to access a deduction on their fees through Child care Benefit.

Our responsibility is to ensure the places are made using the priority of access guidelines as set down by the Federal Government. Therefore our service will take children into care on the following basis.

PRIORITY 1

A child at risk of serious abuse or neglect.

PRIORITY 2

A child of a single parent who satisfies, or parents that both satisfy the work/ training/study test (under section 14 of the family assistance act).

PRIORITY 3

Any other child.

Within each priority mentioned above, the following children are to be given priority:

- children in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families;
- children in families which include a person with a disability;
- children in families on lower incomes
- children in families with a non-English speaking background;
- children in socially isolated families; and
- children of single parents.

Please note: Should the service become full a parent using care who is Priority 3 may be asked to vacate the place for a child in a Priority 1 or 2. Fourteen (14) days notice will be given.

If you have any other questions regarding Priority of Access please contact the centre coordinator.

Childcare Benefit:

Every family is eligible for a reduction in their fees. It is important to remember that while the subsidy is means tested every family is entitled to the minimum reduction. The deduction can be received by parents in two ways.

1. Up front deduction on family fees

To have our service reduce the fees that you pay us, parents must apply to the Family Assistance Office (FAO) to arrange an income assessment.

FAO Contact Number 13 61 50

When you contact the FAO for a fee reduction please quote the centres Service Provider Number to ensure your child/ren are registered to the centre. Using the information you provide the FAO will inform you and us of the percentage deduction we can make on your fees.

2. Deduction on your Tax at the end of Tax Year

Some parents may wish to claim the deduction as a lump sum once they submit their tax return. In order to do this you will still need to register with the Family Assistance Office (FAO). At the end of Tax year you will need to inform the centre that you will need a rebate report.

City of Ryde Service Provider Numbers

Truscott Street:
555 010 246T

5-2-7s:
555 010 247L

RALC:
555 010 245X

Childcare Tax Benefit:

From July 2004 families are able to claim back 30% of out of pocket expenses for childcare for each child to a maximum of \$4000.00 per year. This is claimed via the taxation system at the end of the year.

City of Ryde Fees

Centre Fees for 2008 are as follows

* Fees are subject to change

Vacation Care:

The current fees are \$32 per day, per child.

This is a flat rate and cannot be changed even if the child is not attending all day.

PLEASE NOTE: There can also be extra fees for activities and excursions these fees will vary and will be noted on the vacation care enrolment form.

Late Fees:

A late fee applies to any late collection of a child from the centre after 6.00pm.

The fees are charged at \$1.00 per minute. These fees must be paid on the spot or will be asked to complete a late fee payment form.

Parents who are unavoidably detained should advise the centre as soon as possible.

If the child is not collected by 6.00pm and the centre has not been advised, the nominated contact person will be called.

It is Centre policy to notify DoCS and/or police if children are left unattended or not collected and the parent of guardian cannot be contacted.

How to Book and make payment of fees

Please complete the enrolment form, booking form and any other forms that are required and send with a cheque, money order or credit card authorisation from to

1. City of Ryde
Locked Bag 2069
North Ryde NSW 1670

or

2. Take your completed form and pay in person at
Customer Service Centre
Ground Floor
City of Ryde
1 Devlin Street
Ryde NSW 2112

or

3. Take your completed forms with a credit card authorisation or cheque to any of the City of Ryde Library Branches. Please note no cash payments will be accepted at any of the libraries and payments will not be processed on the spot. The libraries are a drop off point and from there forms will be forwarded onto customer service, where the bookings will be entered and processed.

Additional information

- *Enrolments are not accepted unless all fees are paid up front.*
- *Receipts will be issued upon payment, please retain for your records*
- *Families with any outstanding fees will not be accepted until all fees are up to date.*

About our program

We aim to provide a program of activities that is developed to incorporate the different needs and interests of all children attending the centre. The program includes a wide selection of structured and unstructured activities that are stimulating, interesting and exciting and is developed in consultation with the children attending the centre.

The weekly program of activities is on display in the centre and programs are available to all parents guardians including persons who do not regularly attend the centre.

Cultural Relevance:

The City of Ryde ensures that it is accessible to children and parents from different cultures and languages and our Holiday Programs encourages children to enjoy activities free from discrimination. The centre takes a cross-cultural approach to activities within the centre and endeavours to incorporate these into the program.

Children with Additional needs

The centre has a strong commitment to working towards an acceptance of children with additional needs within the service.

City of Ryde is able to accept children with special needs/disabilities. (Please note, our Centre does not have special access equipment such as toilet facility, wash basins, etc.)

Please speak with our Children's Activities Coordinator to ensure your child's needs can be met. If your child has special needs at least 4 week notice prior to care must be provided to discuss additional support arrangements. If your child can not be integrated into the 1:15 ratio the service may need to apply for funding for an additional worker. This process can require up to 4 weeks.

City of Ryde Holiday Programs can assist to cater for special medical needs, nutritional needs, personal care or extra carers (if special needs funding is available). Please ensure all relevant information has been included on your family's enrolment form.

A child with a disability will be accepted and encouraged to participate in the activities at their level of ability.

Clothing

Mess, paint and glue are a part of the fun at City of Ryde Holiday Programs. To avoid damaging your child's clothes we ask that you send your child in suitable play clothes, to pack a spare paint shirt and to pack a spare change of clothes in case of accident

Kid's Suggestions

Kids suggestions are readily encouraged at City of Ryde. It is kids suggestions that play a vital role in our programming. Kids suggestions are encouraged by using the kids suggestion forms and surveys.

Video and Television

There is a video / DVD and television at the centre and our policy is that only shows with a "G" rating are viewed at our Ryde 5-2-7s program and "G" and "PG" films at our Truscott street centre.

The Team Leaders and City of Ryde staff use the television at their discretion.

The television is not used regularly and is not regarded as a substitute for other planned programs, and will never be the only option of activity.

Anaphylaxis

WHAT IS ANAPHYLAXIS ?

Anaphylaxis is a severe, rapidly progressive allergic reaction that is potentially life threatening. It should be regarded as a medical emergency.

Approximately 1 in 200 individuals will experience such a reaction.

For this reason all City of Ryde Holiday Programs are now "Nut Free Zones".

Peanut butter, nutella and other nut based products are also discouraged.

Families with allergies, asthma or anaphylaxis are required to inform centre staff of their needs, they are also required to complete an allergy action plan, Asthma action plan or Anaphylaxis action plan. These plans are located on the City of Ryde vacation care page under Health Plans, alternately families can contact City of Ryde Children's Activities Coordinator for further information.

Asthma

WHAT IS ASTHMA ?

Asthma is a disorder in which chronic inflammation of the bronchial tubes making them swell, and therefore narrowing the airways.

" Asthma is the most common medical condition for Australia's school children, affecting 1 in 6 children"

(NSW Health 2005, www.health.nsw.gov.au)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PARENTS

Maintenance of Records

The centre keeps secure and accessible records for each child relating to personal details (parents, addresses, date of birth). It is the parents/ guardian's responsibility to ensure that this information is kept current. Any changes to personal information during the Holiday Programs should be directed in writing to the centre Team Leader.

A new enrolment form must be completed each holiday period and will be made available during the last 4 weeks of each school term.

If your child is a subject of an access or custody order please ensure that this is recorded on the enrolment form and a copy of the order is attached.

Maintain information with the Family Assistance Office

If you are claiming the Child Care Benefit it is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the Family Assistance Office (FAO) is informed of all required information (including changes of family circumstances and days). Your discounted rate will not be applied unless you bring a current copy of your Family Assistance Notice with you on enrolment, if this does not occur full fees will be charged until the official advice from the FAO is received by the centre.

Family Assistance Office can be contacted on 13 61 50

Support for Centre Rules

Acceptable standards of behaviour are maintained to ensure the service is able to meet its objectives without undue disruption. The support of parents in maintaining these standards is an important component of their success.

Signing IN / OUT

As both a legal and insurance requirement all children must be signed in and out of the centre each day. Please remember that children should not be dropped off before the centre opens and parents should not leave children waiting on their own. City of Ryde staff are not responsible for children outside the opening hours of the centre. No parent or guardian may collect their child unless they personally come into the centre and enter the departure time in the attendance register provided. Carers are only responsible for children who have been signed in.

Collecting your child

If someone different is collecting your child please ensure the staff are informed in writing or that person is listed as a contact or collector on your child's enrolment.

Children must not leave the centre except in the manner as indicated on the enrolment form.

Parents/ guardians must communicate alternative arrangements to the Team Leader beforehand.

If your child is not attending

If your child will not be attending the centre on any booked day, the centre must be informed prior to their anticipated arrival. So please ensure the centre is informed prior to changes so stress and disruptions to centre activities are not caused due to lack of prior notification.

Fees are still payable for booked days regardless of Child's attendance, unless you have provided two weeks written notice of the absence. A cancellation fee of 25% may apply.

Damage to Equipment or property

Parents are expected to reimburse the centre for deliberate damage caused by their child to centre property or equipment.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CHILDREN

Behaviour:

Children are encouraged to understand and participate in the development of the centre rules including the planning of positive behaviour strategies and consequences for unacceptable behaviour.

The centre rules will be displayed in the centre. Children are expected to observe the simple rules of the centre at all times.

The centre ensures that all children are safe and secure and that the dignity and rights of the child are maintained at all times and that behaviour management strategies and rules are consistent.

Behaviour management practices

When a child displays inappropriate behaviour staff implement the following procedure:

- A discussion with the child about the rules and alternative behaviour
- Time out (if necessary)
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement.

For serious incidents: Serious incidents are very rare and are often resolved by a little extra combined staff and parent attention.

- The child will be given a warning and the incident documented and discussed with parents and child.
- After the third warning the child's parent will be contacted and enrolment may be suspended. The staff is committed to working with parents towards re-inclusion of the suspended child in centre activities.
- Corporal punishment is never used.

Personal Possessions

Staff are unable to assume responsibility for children's clothing, toys or other personal possessions. Game Boys, scooters, roller blades and skateboards are not appropriate for use at the centre and should not be brought / ridden at the centre, unless otherwise stipulated.

Stay within the boundaries

Children are shown their vacation care centre boundaries. Children are not permitted to leave the vacation care centre grounds unless escorted by an authorised adult. Children are to ensure that they stay within sight of staff at all times.

Unsupervised play or wandering around the vacation care centre grounds is not permitted during centre hours due to safety considerations.

Sun Protection

The centre aims to encourage protection from the sun through a NO HAT, NO PLAY policy. The City of Ryde Sun Protection policy is available to all families via the City of Ryde Vacation Care webpage and is also in the policies and procedures handbook.

Illness and accidents

If your child has an accident or becomes ill while attending the centre the following procedure will be implemented:

- The child is kept under adult supervision until the child recovers or until the child's parent/ guardian or other approved person takes charge of the child.
- If the child requires immediate medical aid whilst participating in City of Ryde holiday programs, all reasonable attempts are taken to secure that attention and to notify the parent / guardian of the accident.
- In the case of medication being required in an emergency without the prior consent of the parent or guardian, every attempt is made to secure that consent from a registered medical practitioner.
- In the cases of serious injury requiring ambulance, or hospitalization, suitable procedures for transportation of the child to hospital are implemented.
- A record of the children accidents and illnesses during the program is kept until the child is 24 yrs age.

Medication

- Medication will not be administered to a child unless the child's parent / guardian has given written consent authorising the administration on a City of Ryde authorisation form.
- In an emergency where a child's parent / guardian are unable to be contacted, medication will only be administered with the permission of a registered medical practitioner.
- If staff administers any medication during the childcare service, records are kept detailing the medication used, the date, time and dosage of administration and the person who administered it.

Head Lice

Head Lice outbreaks occur in schools and can be present in holiday programs. It is extremely important that we act fast when head lice outbreaks occur. If a head lice outbreak occurs, the centre will inform you and we ask that you to please check and treat your child's hair promptly to avoid further outbreak.

Complaints and Compliments

We believe that parents have an important role in the centre and we value your comments. We aim to ensure that parents feel free to communicate any concerns they have in relation to the centre, staff, management, programs or policies, without any negative consequences. Our priority is to do everything possible to improve the quality of the service. If you wish to comment on any aspect of the service, please talk with the team leader at your centre or contact the Children's Activities Coordinator.

Infectious Diseases

The centre reserves the right to temporarily request children and staff stay away from the centre when suffering from infectious illness such as measles, diarrhoea, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, etc. A doctor's certificate may be requested when the child returns to the centre (inline with Health Department Guidelines). Please see the policies and procedures manual for detailed information about illness and exclusion periods.

Where information is provided about the occurrence at the centre of an infectious disease, that information shall be available to parents / guardians of children in a way that is not prejudicial to the rights of individual staff or children.

The centre aims to ensure that the appropriate health and hygienic practices are observed, and that staff have access to current information provided by relevant authorities to minimise the health risks to children.

Policies and Procedures

A series of policies and procedures for the service have been developed. The policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are kept up to date with community expectations. A copy of these are available online at www.ryde.nsw.gov.au or at the centres for parents to view. The document includes guidelines and procedures on:

- Enrolment
- Fees and charges
- Delivery and collection of children
- Accidents, illnesses and medications
- Child protection
- Excursions policy and procedure
- As well as other issues

National Standards for Out of School Hours Care

City of Ryde adheres to the standards outlined in the National Standards. National standards provide our service with a baseline standard from which we work.

Quality Assurance

In July 2003 a Quality Assurance System (QA) was introduced into all Out of School Hours Programs which attracted a child care benefit from the federal government. Continued provision of this benefit is conditional on services undertaking the QA process.

In December 2005 our service was accredited. The service is required to undertake its next self study in consultation with all staff, families and children in February 2008.

Conditions of Enrolment

City of Ryde aims to provide a quality, caring and safe Holiday Programs care environment for your child/ren. We seek your co-operation by complying with the conditions set out below. Your signature on the enrolment form indicates your acceptance of these conditions.

1. The enrolment form and agreement must be completed prior to your child/rens first day of attendance at the centre. Forms can be submitted in person at the Civic Centre or via mail
2. All children who attend City of Ryde Holiday Programs must be booked in prior to care. Parents and guardians will be contacted and asked to collect their child/ren if this has not been done.
3. Accounts must not fall behind in payment, unless prior arrangements have been made.
4. Casual use of the centre is dependant on whether there are spaces available on the days required. Please contact City of Ryde on 02 9952 8222 to make bookings and/or enquiries.
5. Children MUST be dropped off and signed in on arrival and signed out on departure each day. The centre holds no responsibility for children who are not signed in.
6. If children are not attending the service for whatever reason, on a day they are booked, the centre must be notified. The contact number is 9952 8222 or inform your team leader. (Please leave a msg.)
7. Only persons nominated on the enrolment form are able to collect children. Written permission or in and emergency verbal permission by telephone or e-mail is required if someone else is to collect the children. If someone is prohibited from visiting the centre or collecting your child THIS INFORMATION MUST BE INCLUDED ON THE ENROLMENT FORM. A copy of the relevant court order must be provided.
8. A late fee of \$1 per minute WILL be charged for children who are collected late from the centre after closing time (6pm). Please inform your centre if you think you are going to be late so that children can be informed.
9. The program cannot cater for children who are unwell. If a child becomes ill while in care, staff will notify parents and the child is to be collected as soon as possible afterwards. Please make sure your contact numbers are current.
10. No medication will be administered to children unless the following steps have been followed.
 - a. Medication form is completed stating time, dose and the medication name to be administered
 - b. The medication needs to be in an original bottle with the child name and dosage marked on it.
 - c. Medication is not to be left in childrens' bags for them to self-administer (Asthma puffers are excepted)
11. Details of any medical conditions, special needs or family circumstances that may assist staff in working with your child are to be included on/attached to the enrolment form. All changes to enrolment information must be provided.
12. If a child's behaviour is such that it endangers the safety of themselves, other children or staff, your child's behaviour will be reviewed in consultation with parents.
13. Non compliance of any of the above conditions will result in the attendance of the child/ren at the centre being reviewed.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IS CONFIDENTIAL AND USED FOR BEFORE AND AFTER PURPOSES ONLY.