

# THE KIDS COTTAGE

# TERM 1 NEWSLETTER

Term 1, 2023 | Issue 1 | Date: February 2023



## Term 1 Updates

**Spring Vacation Care Program:** The vacation care dates for April are Tuesday the 11<sup>th</sup> to Monday the 24<sup>th</sup>. The program will be sent out to families in week 7. The age groups for April Vacation Care will be Kindy, Year 1 + 2, Year 3 + 4, Year 5 + 6.

**Harmony Week:** Will take place in week 9 of the school term. This is a week where we recognise diversity and promote a high sense of belonging.

**Gecko Sport:** We will have Gecko sport sessions running on Monday afternoons at Cottage. This is an extra-curricular activity that promotes physical development, team building, and fun!

**The Biting Truth:** We will have the Biting Truth come in on Thursday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February to teach our Kindy's and Yr. 1 children the importance of nutritious eating.

**Public Holidays in April:** Please be aware we have three public holiday closures in April. These dates are: Friday the 7<sup>th</sup>, Monday the 10<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup>.

## Director's Message

Welcome to all our new and returning families to Kids Cottage for 2023. January Summer vacation care was successful, and jam matched full of fun for us and all the children who attended. Our group leaders are currently planning our April Autumn Vacation care programs, so if you have any ideas for an activity or place to see feel free to let us staff know.

This year we have some changes to our permanent staffing team, with Katrina Sparkes stepping down as Assistant Director to focus on her studies and Imogen Faux replacing her. We also have a few changes to our group leaders. With Adam Brown now our Junior Group leader and Sarah Medway as co Assistant Junior Group leader. We are very excited to have Imogen in the management team and Adam and Sarah to lead the Junior group.

This year we welcome 39 new families to the service, along with 28 new kindy children. We are excited to meet you all and to get to know your families. We see The Kids Cottage as kids home away from home and we create a fun, creative, active, safe and supported environment for all children.

Thank you to all the parents who joined us on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> February for our Welcome breakfast. Our staff enjoyed getting to meet the new kindy parents and their children. We look forward to having more opportunities for all families to join us at the service for meet and greets, community events and activities throughout the year.

We currently have full availability for Before and After School Care, if you need any permanent or casual bookings please contact us via email or phone. Please note that all permanent bookings require 14 days written notice to cancel and all casual bookings require 24hrs written notice to cancel. Vacation care bookings also require 14 days written notice.

# Term 1 Reminders

**SEARCH FEE:** If you have failed to let us know that your child/ren will be absent before 3pm on the day of attendance you will be charged a search fee of \$10 on top of the normal After School Care booking. You can let us know your child will be absent via email, over the phone or you can inform of their absence via the Xplor Home app. You just head to the bookings tab, select the booking your child/ren will be absent for and then select mark as absent.

**HOMEWORK:** Did you know you can sign your child up to our homework list for after school care. From 4:50pm we provide a dedicated space and Educator to monitor the children whilst they complete their homework including access to our Windows Notebooks for online learning. If you would like to put your child/ren's name down, please send us an email and we will put their name down.

**SUMMER:** As we continue our summer months at Kids Cottage it is still hot weather and extreme UV ratings, we require all children to be wearing hats and sunscreen when outdoors. This is in both morning and afternoon sessions. We please ask that you send your children with their Cottage hats for their attendance. As our Sun Safe Policy states "We are a sun smart centre, and we aim to ensure that all children attending the centre will be protected from the effects of UV radiation. All staff are to enforce the safety and sun protection policy "no hat, play inside or use a spare Cottage hat"."

## January Vacation Care Highlights

Our Juniors enjoyed another awesome Vacation care in January. One of the best excursions of the Summer was My First Gym. This activity taught them some fun gymnastic skills in an enthusiastic, and fun way. The Juniors also went to have a delicious meal at pancakes on the rocks. It was a great community lunch.



Year twos had their own program this Vacation Care and had an action-packed program. Some highlights included the Australian Museum. Here the children were amazed with all the things the museum had to offer. The best part was the dinosaur room where the children spent an hour being amazed. They also had a wonderful day at Featherdale Wildlife Park.



The Seniors had a brilliant Vacation Care program over the summer school holidays traveling all over the city for excursions. They headed to Aquatopia and exhausted themselves on the massive obstacle course floating on the water. Another hit was the Hunger Games Day which saw them competing in survival challenges and a school wide hunt.



Kids Club had some amazing adventures this school holidays. One of the best days was the combined day of Hijinx Hotel, Holey Moley, and Archie Brothers. Here they got to work on their teamwork skills whilst completing fun and challenging activities. This was followed by a fun session at Archie Brothers Arcade! Kids Club also went up to Gosford and participated in the Aqua Splash where they took on the inflatables at Gosford Lake and jumped, bounced, and slid through the course. A super fun Vacation Care!



## Spare Clothes Needed

We are currently in the search for any old and spare clothes that you are no longer in need of. This is to help our children when accidents happen, during vacation care when children get wet or dirty from vacation care incentive activities and a change of clothes is necessary.

We are looking for jumpers, t-shirts, leggings, shorts, long sleeve shirts, and tracksuit pants. We are also looking for any old school uniforms as well, preferably the shorts and t-shirts. We are looking for any clothes from size 4 to size 10.

If you have any of these items in used but good condition, we would love you to bring it in for us to use at Cottage. Please not used underwear or socks. Thank you!

# STAFFING SPOTLIGHT

We wanted to start the term by introducing you to a few new faces at Kids Cottage and a few team members who are sadly leaving us to take the next step in their lives. Some of these team members have been at Kids Cottage for many years and will be truly missed by both the children and the team.

- Katrina Sparkes has been Assistant Director since February 2020 and an employee of Cottage since 2017. She has recently stepped down from her position and is now a very experienced casual employee, whilst she focuses on further studies. We'd like to thank her for her time as Assistant Director and are glad she will still be involved with the children.
- Imogen Faux has worked at Cottage since 2018 and been Junior Group Leader for a lot of her time. She has stepped up into the Assistant Director role and we look forward to seeing her flourish in this new leadership role.
- Jenna Anderson has been at Cottage since October 2022 and has been Assistant Group Leading the Juniors and the year 2s for vacation care. Jenna has recently been offered a position as a Topdeck Tour Guide and will be leaving Kids Cottage in March to pursue this adventure.
- We have had many new Casual Educators join the team since the end of 2022. These are Taylor Howlett, Josh O'Donnell, Olivia Davies, Sasha Bell, Mia Anderson, Felicity Martin, Ruby Renauf, and Ben Hondros. Some of these staff will only be around for vacation care as they work as SLSO's in schools or attend university out of state. Feel free to say hi and welcome to these staff members.
- We are currently looking for a permanent part time employee looking to do a traineeship for a Certificate IV in School Age Education and care. If you know anyone who may be interested, please let us know either in person, via phone on 02 9056 1113 or email [info@kidscottagemiddleharbour.com](mailto:info@kidscottagemiddleharbour.com)

## Kids Cottage Mission Australia Bake Sale

This term the Kids Cottage will be hosting a bake sale on the Tuesday 21st of March for Mission Australia between 2:30pm and 5pm. Mission Australia are an amazing charity who are dedicated to serving people and communities in need in line with their values of compassion, respect, integrity, perseverance and celebration.

We would be extremely grateful for any baked goods donations that we would be able to sell on this day. We are also taking donations of clothes and food which we know will be extremely valuable for this charity. Don't forget as well if you can't bake or donate feel free to send your child/ren to school that day with a few dollars to enjoy some yummy treats.

If you have any questions about this event, please do not hesitate to ask.

Here is the link if you would like to donate online:

<https://act.missionaustralia.com.au/fundraisers/thekidscottagemiddleharbour>

We once again thank you for always supporting our charity events that take place here at Kids Cottage.

### Child Safe Standard 3:

*Families and communities are informed and involved.*

Through implementing the Child Safe Standard 3 we are ensuring our families and communities are informed and involved in child safe practices.

This term we will be focusing on cyber safety with ThinkUKnow. ThinkUKnow Australia is an evidence-based education program delivered nationally to prevent online child sexual exploitation.

We will be looking at hosting a 'ThinkUKnow' presentation sometime in Term 1 2023. We encourage all parents, carers, and teachers to attend but would first like to gauge interest in the program.

Please let us know if you would be interested using the link provided. <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ThinkUKnow>

### QIP Development:

Our Quality Improvement Plan is a self-assessment tool that guides us to assess our performance in delivering quality education and care helping us plan for future improvement.

It is updated annually allowing us the opportunity to reflect on the improvement plan set from the year before and then create a new plan for the year ahead.

Part of our QIP development is gaining feedback from families. This term we would like feedback from families on our cycle of planning.

Our cycle of planning involves observations, assessments, plans, implementation, and evaluation. This cycle can be seen through our program and the observations published on the playground app.

If you have any feedback on how we could improve this, please let us know.

### Community:

The Kids Cottage Middle prides itself on its connection to its community through excursions, fundraisers, and relationships with families. This year we will be connecting with Koori Connections. This is a company who focuses on the importance of teaching students about the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and their culture.

Koori Connections aim to teach Activities such as artefact handling, traditional games, and bushfood cooking will give the students a practical, educational experience that compliments what they are learning in class.

We will be doing an incursion each term this year with Koori Connections which we are very excited about.

## Extra Curriculars

**Music Lesson:** If your child will be attending a music lesson from Kids Cottage during a session, we will now require the teacher to pick up the child and sign them out. If the child is then returning we ask that they sign them back in. This is to hand over duty of care from us to the teacher as they will not be in our care for the duration of their lesson. Any question please feel free to ask.

**Term 2:** In term 2 we will be doing a gymnastic workshop run by No Limit Sports. We will be sending more information later in the term regarding these sessions.

**Local Sporting Club Connections:** We are always looking at expanding our community connections and would love to get in touch with some local sporting clubs to potentially set up sessions for vacation care or after school sessions. This can be any sport such as cricket, AFL, netball, jiu jitsu just to name a few. If you have any connections please email us with information.