



St Michael's

Early Learning Centre



2026 Handbook

stmichaels.sa.edu.au

Our purpose-built centre, located adjacent to St Michael's Lutheran Primary School in Hahndorf, provides a warm and engaging environment where children can explore, play and grow, grounded in the values and learning principles of St Michael's.

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Key Contacts



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Early Learning Centre (ELC) Director

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St Michael's Early Learning Centre is located adjacent to the Primary School and provides care and education for children aged 3 to 5 years.

At St Michael's Early Learning Centre, we are committed to giving every child the best possible start to their educational journey.

We believe in the importance of nurturing each child's sense of self-competence, recognising them as capable, confident learners. Our learning environment supports individual growth in a safe, joyful, and engaging setting.

Positive, meaningful relationships with children are at the heart of our approach. These relationships empower children to inquire, explore, and take ownership of their learning, guided by our dedicated teachers and educators. Working in partnership with families, we share the responsibility of supporting each child's development and overall well-being.

Our outdoor learning area offers rich opportunities for children to develop environmental awareness, physical skills, and the ability to assess and navigate risks—fostering both curiosity and a connection with nature.

Through play-based experiences, we tailor learning to nurture each child's strengths, respond to their unique needs, and spark their emerging interests.

At St Michael's Early Learning Centre, we value strong, lasting relationships with every child and their family—creating a foundation for each child to thrive throughout their early learning journey and beyond.

Philosophy

At St Michael's Early Learning Centre, we place great importance on nurturing each child's self-concept, fostering their confidence and belief in themselves as capable, competent learners.

In partnership with St Michael's Primary, our ELC upholds and reflects the core values of the school, as outlined below.

CARING
COURAGE
CURIOSITY
INTEGRITY
TEAMWORK

In partnership with families, we provide each child with opportunities to build a positive self-image, strengthen social skills, develop emotional resilience, form meaningful relationships, foster independence, and cultivate empathy for others.

At St Michael's Early Learning Centre, we are committed to supporting the holistic development of every child. Through a wide range of rich and varied experiences, we nurture growth across all domains – social, intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual – recognising the interconnected nature of a child's development.

St Michael's ELC

- Delivers thoughtfully designed programs tailored for children aged 3 to 5 years
- Provides time and space for children to grow, explore, experiment, discover, play and express their individuality in a nurturing and stimulating environment
- Embraces families as valued members of our community
- Creates continuity between home and school by building strong partnerships with families, recognising that each child's learning journey begins at home.



A Vision for Childrens Learning



The Early Learning Centre (ELC) lays a strong foundation for the Junior School through a child-led, play based program inspired by the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF), the Reggio Emilia philosophy, and the International Baccalaureate (IB) Primary Years Program (PYP).

These educational approaches are applied within a long day care setting catering to children aged between 3 and 5 years

The ELC aims to:

- Create a secure, joyful, and caring environment that nurtures feelings of trust, acceptance, and belonging.
- Act as an extension of the family, supporting parents in the care and upbringing of their children, and encouraging active family involvement in the life of the ELC.
- Embrace and celebrate cultural diversity, recognising and valuing the unique backgrounds of each family and meaningfully incorporating them into our program.
- Foster emotional development and self-worth by encouraging the expression of thoughts and feelings, understanding boundaries, and promoting kindness, empathy, and fairness through the recognition of emotions in others.
- Empower children to take responsibility for their actions in areas such as self-care, health, safety, and relationships, while supporting appropriate independence.
- Promote physical development, both gross motor skills through active indoor and outdoor play, and fine motor skills through a variety of hands-on, manipulative experiences.

Learning

Play-based learning is essential to the healthy development of young children.

At St Michael's ELC, we nurture children's natural curiosity by providing opportunities for them to lead their own learning through experimentation, discovery, problem solving, and reflection. This child-centered approach fosters optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience.

Through intentional teaching strategies, we actively support and extend children's investigations of themselves, others and the world around them.

At St Michael's ELC we adopt inspiration from multiple Early Years pedagogies and frameworks such as:

- The Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)
- The International Baccalaureate (IB) – In the Early Years
- National Quality Framework

These frameworks and practices inspire educators to expand the scope of play-based learning for children, guiding them to implement a tailored curriculum that is pertinent to the unique characteristics of each local community and early learning environment.

The Learning outcomes from the EYLF developed in the ELC, acknowledge that children:

- Children have a strong sense of identity
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world
- Children have strong sense of wellbeing
- Children are confident and involved learners
- Children are effective communicators

‘When children feel free to play they feel free to learn. Early Years uses the power of play to spark inquiry-based learning. With a flexible and thoughtfully designed curriculum, Early Years encourages explorations along six transdisciplinary themes’.

IB in the Early Years

In the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, we embrace six play-based inquiries designed to cultivate young children's connection to their world and culture, while simultaneously developing essential learning skills that lay a foundation for lifelong learning.

1. Who we are
2. How we express ourselves
3. How the world works
4. How we organise ourselves.



Hours of Operation

The Early Learning Centre operates from 7:00am to 6:00pm. ELC children attend the program from Monday to Friday, for 49 weeks of the year. The ELC closes for 3 weeks over the Christmas and New Year Period.

Fee Schedule

The ELC fee schedule has three options to suit all families in the community.

Booking Type	Cost
9 hour day (PERMANENT BOOKING) 8:00am – 5:00pm	\$140
11 hour day (PERMANENT BOOKING) 7:00am – 6:00pm	\$145
11 hour day (CASUAL BOOKING) 7:00am – 6:00pm	\$150

Payment of Fees

Parents will have access to their parent statements through the XPLOR Home App or XPLOR Home website: home.myxplor.com.

Direct Debit Payment Requirements

Payment of Early Learning Centre fees are required by direct debit or credit card on a weekly basis. Parents can securely store their credit card or bank account details via the finance menu in XplorHome App or website. Payments will be processed on Thursdays to keep the account up to date. Please note that Debit Success charge a fee of \$19.95 for dishonoured payments. To avoid this default charge, please ensure funds are available in your nominated direct debit account 1 day prior to your scheduled direct debit.

Non-Payment of Fees

St Michael's Early Learning Centre maintains the right to suspend an ELC enrolment while any fees and charges are outstanding. Please speak to the ELC Director if you require any changes to your payment options or plans.

Notice Required if Leaving

Four weeks' notice of withdrawal of an enrolment from the ELC is required to be emailed to ELC Administration Office. Failing this, fees equivalent to your child's attendance over a 4-week period will be charged in lieu of notice.

Absences

Students are allowed 42 absent days per financial year while still receiving their Government benefit payments. Families exceeding the 42 absent days within any financial year will not receive their payments once the 42 days have been used. Any absences due to illness, where a doctor's certificate is supplied, will not be counted in the 42 "allowable absence" days provided per annual year. If your child is away due to sickness and you visit a doctor, please ask for a certificate and provide it to the ELC Administration Office so that a record of medically approved days of leave can be maintained.

This is important when calculating absences from the ELC and it will impact on rebate payments if not accurate.

School Holiday Bookings

The ELC Kindy Program holidays align with SA School Term Dates. Children enrolled in our 4 year old kindergarten program are entitled to school holidays off, free of charge. If you choose this option, written notice is required 14 days' prior to the end of each Term.

If your child is enrolled in our 4 year old Kindergarten Program and you do not choose to take school holidays off, their bookings will automatically continue throughout the holidays where we offer a holiday program.

All ELC children can take pre- arranged 'holiday leave' which requires 14-days' notice. This request needs to be made in writing via email. This request is to be completed two weeks prior to the holiday absence to receive 50 per cent discount off your gap for up to two weeks (pro-rata to the number of days your child attends) each financial year.

Child Care Subsidy (CCS) Scheme

St Michael's ELC is an approved care provider, enabling families to access Child Care Subsidy.

The Child Care Subsidy Scheme is designed to support families with children aged 0-13 years in sourcing financial assistance, while working, training, studying and volunteering.

The level of subsidy received by each family is determined by:

1. Combined family income
2. Activity level of both parents
3. Type of childcare service

When applying for the subsidy, families are asked to provide:

1. A combined family income that estimates the financial year.
2. The hours of recognised activity including work, training, study and volunteering.
3. The type of childcare used.

All childcare subsidy payments are given directly to the childcare provider, in this case St Michael's Early Learning Centre. Families are required to pay the financial difference between the subsidy and the fee charged. Please contact the Family Assistance Office (FAO) in 13 61 50 to register and receive a parent and child Customer

Reference Number (CRN), note that there are distinct CRN details for parents and children which are required at enrolment. For more information on this process, please visit www.education.gov.au/childcare.



Priority of Access

At times demand for long day care exceeds supply in some areas. When this occurs, it is important for services to allocate places to those families with the greatest need for support.

In accordance with The Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations, priority of access to long day care will be given to children falling in the following categories:

- Priority 1: A child at risk of abuse or neglect
- Priority 2: A child of a single parent who satisfies, or of parents who both satisfy, the work/training/study test under section 14 of the New Tax System (Family Assistance) Act 1999.
- Priority 3: Any other child.

Routines



The ELC routine is flexible following the children's ideas and interests. The day is divided into three separate blocks of time as outlined below:

Time	Activity
7:00am - 8:00am	Breakfast options are served during this time to those families who require it. Please note we stop serving breakfast at 7:45am. All children are combined at this stage.
8:00am - 3:30-pm	Our Intentional learning program with the children occurs during this time. This is a time for curiosity, exploration, scaffolding and wonder. Our Kindergarten Program also runs during this time.
3:30pm - 6:00pm	Our late care program with indoor and outdoor play with a late snack provided (at 5pm).

Settling in and Orientation

At St Michael's ELC, teachers and educators actively gather information from each family to support a smooth transition for children into the ELC. Our goal is to create a happy and positive experience, fostering strong and secure connections between home and the centre.

Parents are encouraged to bring their child to a series of orientation visits arranged for all new children prior to their official start date. These visits give children a chance to become familiar with the new environment while feeling secure with their family nearby.

Information about these events is communicated to all enrolled families through email.

Collection of Children

Children are only released to their parent/guardian or to persons known to the ELC staff team nominated with authority to collect. If someone else is to collect your child, please notify the ELC by email or phone.

On collection of your child, the individual will be asked to produce photo identification that will be copied and kept on file.

Parents or guardians of a child that has not been collected 15 minutes after closing time will be contacted via telephone. If unavailable, your nominated emergency contact person will be telephoned and asked to collect your child.

If the child has not been collected 30 minutes after closing time, educators will contact the Early Learning Centre Director and School Principal for further action. Additional fees will be charged every minute for a child that remains in the ELC after closing time.

Signing In and Out

Every child must be signed in and out of the ELC on each day of their attendance by using the XPLORE QR code or phone number and pin on the provided iPad. This is a legal requirement and the responsibility of the parent or caregiver. These records are used in case of emergencies and are necessary for the calculation of the Child Care Subsidy (CCS).

If a child is away, unwell or on holidays, the corresponding days will be recorded on XPLORE by ELC educators and later confirmed with parents/ guardians.

Contacting the ELC

If your child is unwell, or will not be attending the ELC, please advise the ELC office via email, phone or XPLORE (see page 3 for contact details)



Hair Policy

Children's hair must be neatly and conventionally styled and retain its natural colour. Long hair must be tied back.

Sun Protection

St Michael's Early Learning Centre implements a "no hat, play in the shade" policy to prioritise sun safety. Both staff and children wear sun-safe hats designed to protect their face, neck, and ears. Teachers and educators monitor the UV rating using the Sun Smart App to determine when hats and sunscreen are necessary for outdoor activities. If a child does not have a sun-safe hat, they are encouraged to play in shaded areas such as under the verandah, in the shade, or indoors. When available, spare hats may also be provided. This proactive approach ensures the health and safety of everyone at St Michael's ELC.

We supply SPF50 broad-spectrum sunscreen every 2 hours when the UV rating is above 3. Sunscreen is stored in a cool, dry place and the use-by-date is monitored.

Notices

Families will be communicated information through several different ways. The ELC educators will communicate through Xplor with families sharing children's learning and inquires. A monthly newsletter will go out to families each through Xplor capturing important dates and learning and curiosities at the ELC.

Toy Policy

We kindly discourage children from bringing toys to the ELC as it can cause significant distress when they are forgotten, lost or damaged.

Nutrition and Food

Families provide their child morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea in the ELC.

Breakfast is provided by the ELC each day between 7:00am – 7:45am for children arriving during those hours. A late snack is provided at 5pm for those children who remain at the ELC.

The ELC encourages families to provide children with nutritious food that aligns with the National Dietary Guidelines. We also promote a “nude food” approach with lunchboxes, encouraging minimal packaging to reduce waste and support a healthier, more sustainable environment at the centre. By sending unpackaged or reusable food containers, families help us minimise the amount of rubbish generated, fostering environmental responsibility from an early age.

Please discuss any specific dietary requirements with your child's educator. When a child with a nut allergy or anaphylaxis attends the centre, St Michael's ELC operates as a nut-free environment. This policy will be clearly communicated to families through signage at the centre's entrance.

Sleep and Rest

The ELC daily routine includes rest time for all children. We also enable children to rest outside of this time if required. All children may rest on a cushion or sleep on a mat with their own bed sheets provided from families. Children are offered a rest, sleep or quiet activity unless other arrangements are requested by the child's parent or caregiver. Parents are asked to supply bed sheets for those children who require sleep.



ELC Uniform

All children are required to wear the full ELC uniform when attending.

Compulsory items include:

- ELC Polo top - purchased from ELC Campus
- ELC Broad Brimmed Hat - purchased from ELC Campus
- ELC Polar Fleece Jumper - purchased from www.eduthreads.com.au.



Each child also requires the following items (to be purchased from your own sources):

- Navy Pants/Shorts/Skorts
- A named 'nude food' lunch box and drink bottle
- Backpack
- Sandshoes
- Waterproof suit (winter months only)

Please ensure that everything your child wears or brings to ELC is clearly labelled with their full name.

Behaviour Guidance

The Early Learning Centre establishes a safe, secure, caring, and stimulating environment that fosters cooperation, enhances self-esteem, and encourages positive interactions. Acceptable behaviour is actively promoted and reinforced through positive encouragement.

When a child constantly displays unacceptable behaviour, parents or guardians are consulted and invited to work collaboratively with the teachers, educators, and the ELC Director. This partnership ensures behaviour guidance is clear and consistent. Through effective communication and cooperation, this collaborative approach seeks to address and support positive changes in challenging behaviours.

In the ELC, we encourage positive, co-operative behaviour by:

- Building trust and confidence between adults and children.
- Considering the individual stage of each child's development.
- Taking into account the unique interests, strengths, and abilities of every child.
- Demonstrating sensitivity to the child's background.
- Investigating the reasons behind behaviours that require redirection.
- Utilising positive, clear, and developmentally appropriate language for each child.
- Maintaining consistency with behavioural expectations.
- Providing clear alternatives that enhance children's decision-making abilities.
- Acting as positive role models for the children and employing calm communication.

National Quality Framework

National Law and National Regulations set the 'National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care'. 'The Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), oversee this 'National Quality Framework' (NQF). Long Day Care, Family Day Care, Pre-School Kindergarten and Out of School Hours Care in all states and Territories (other than WA) are required to comply with the National Law, which gives effect to the National Quality Framework.

The National Quality Framework comprises Seven National Quality Standards (NQS), utilised by services to self-assess their current practices, identify areas for quality improvement, and strategically plan for effective implementation of these enhancements. Ongoing assessments of each service are conducted by Regular Authorities, who bear the primary responsibility for service approval, monitoring, and quality assessment.

The Quality Areas are:

- Educational program and practice
- Children's health and safety
- Physical environment
- Staffing arrangements
- Relationships with children
- Collaborative partnerships with families and communities
- Leadership and service management.

Significant Concerns

To view a copy of our Grievance Policy for addressing matters of significant concern, please see the ELC Director.

If you have a grievance, the initial point of contact is your child's educator. If the issue cannot be resolved at this level, more formal procedures may be appropriate. The overarching goal of any grievance procedure is to discuss and resolve matters within a framework of cooperation, emphasising resolution and the prevention of further disputes through the cultivation of positive relationships.

In cases where the grievance is deemed serious, subsequent steps may be bypassed, and the matter can be escalated to the attention of the ELC Director, Head of Junior School or College Principal.

All grievances are treated with utmost seriousness, and dedicated efforts are made to resolve them. The outcomes of the resolution process are thoroughly discussed with the concerned parents.



Evacuations & Invacuations



Regular fire evacuation and invacuation drills are held at St Michael's ELC. In an evacuation children are evacuated across the ELC grounds to the ELC carpark or school oval. In an invacuation, children go to their learning spaces and all doors, windows are locked as well as all other doors and windows in the ELC. In the event of an evacuation or invacuation, each child's presence is checked against the attendance list on Xplor on the Ipads. This highlights the importance of parents and caregivers signing children in and out each day on Xplor.

Health

Precautions against the spread of colds, viral infections, and contagious diseases are essential.

Parents are required to keep children home if they are running a temperature or showing any signs of sickness. Children who have had vomiting or diarrhoea should remain at home for at least 24 hours after the last episode.

Medication

Medication should be scheduled out of ELC hours, wherever possible. If medication is required during ELC hours, please complete a 'Request for Medication Administration' form available from the child's educator or ELC Director.

Medication must be stored in original container and clearly labelled with the students name, identification of medicine, required dosage and instructions from a doctor or pharmacist for administration.

Infectious Diseases

The ELC aims to minimise the spread of potentially infectious diseases between children, their families and staff by excluding children who may have an infectious disease or who are too unwell to attend the ELC. We do so by:

- Maintaining accurate and up to date immunisation records.
- Ensuring staff and families are aware of our 'Infectious Diseases Policy'.
- Informing staff and families of outbreaks of infectious diseases and notifiable diseases.
- Informing the Commissioner of Health at SA Health Authorities, if an outbreak of a notifiable disease occurs.

Please notify the ELC Administration Office or ELC Director if your child contracts an infectious disease.

Immunisations

The South Australian Public Health Act (2011) states that children cannot enrol in or attend early childhood services unless all immunisation requirements are met.

Your child's Immunisation records will be required during the enrolment process before your child can attend the Early Learning Centre. An approved immunisation record must be an 'Immunisation History Statement' which is downloaded from the Australian Immunisation Register (AIR). A letter from a GP, overseas immunisation record, or the South Australian Child Health and Development Record (blue book) are not considered approved immunisation records.

The Child Care Subsidy (CCS) applies to children who are fully immunised. This initiative ensures parents are reminded of the importance of immunising their children at each of the milestones.



St Michael's

Early Learning Centre

Realise the wonder within

Enrolment Enquiries

If you have questions or want to know more about our ELC and enrolment intakes, get in touch.

Phone: 08 8388 7228

Email: rhill@stmichaels.sa.edu.au

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