



# St Catherine's

EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE



## NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2025

A warm welcome to all our families—both those returning and new! We hope you've had a smooth start to the year and that by now, you've met the wonderful team of educators in your child's room. Our educators are dedicated to providing the best possible care and learning experiences for your little ones, and we are excited for the year ahead.

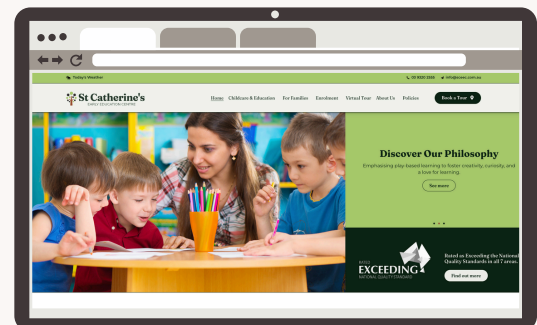
Felix is at the front desk, while Hiral and Jennie are in the back office—all ready to assist with general enquiries, enrolments, finance, and operations. For support with your child's learning, speak with their educators or our Educational Leader, Iris, who works closely with the team to uphold quality standards and drive improvements across the centre. For any safety, compliance, or workplace health and safety (WHS) concerns, Kate, our Compliance and WHS Officer, is here to help.

**We value open communication and always welcome your thoughts and feedback. Whether it's a quick chat at drop-off, a message via email, or a sit-down conversation, we are here to listen and support you and your child. If you'd like to arrange a time to meet, feel free to email us at [info@sceec.com.au](mailto:info@sceec.com.au).**

### DID YOU KNOW?

**We have a brand-new website! Visit it for the latest updates and information, and help us spread the word by sharing it with friends and family!**

[www.sceec.com.au](http://www.sceec.com.au)



*“AT ST. CATHERINE'S, WE SEE EVERY MOMENT AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO NURTURE KINDNESS, RESILIENCE, AND A GENUINE JOY FOR LEARNING.”*



## Connecting with Nature

This year, we have renamed our classrooms to **Bottlebrush, Eucalyptus, Sheoak, Mulberry, and Wattle**. Why these names, you ask? Each of these trees can be found right outside the classrooms, and we hope this small change sparks greater awareness of the nature surrounding us.

At St Catherine's, we recognise that being in an inner-city area means our children have limited access to natural environments. Yet, engaging with nature is essential for their holistic development. By naming our rooms after the trees in our own backyard, we aim to foster a sense of connection to the natural world—starting with what we can see and experience every day.

We are committed to creating meaningful opportunities for children to engage with nature, whether through our own outdoor spaces or by exploring what is available in our community and neighbourhood. Through these experiences, we hope to nurture curiosity, wonder, and a lifelong appreciation for the environment.

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, play, and learn—the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation—and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

# Coming Up

**27 Feb – Beginning of Ramadan**

**10 Mar – Labour Day (Centre closed)**

**11 Mar – Maslyana Pancake Week**

A Ukrainian festival celebrating the end of winter and the arrival of spring

**17 Mar – Beginning of Harmony Week**

**Children are invited to dress in their cultural attire**

**19 Mar – Wattle Room (4-Year-Old Kinder) Family Information Night**

**30 Mar – Eid al-Fitr**

**13 Apr – Water Festival**

Known as Songkran in Thailand and Maha Thingyan in Myanmar, this festival celebrates the traditional New Year.

**Please pack a wetsuit or an extra change of clothes for your child**

**18 Apr – Good Friday (Centre closed)**

**21 Apr – Easter Monday (Centre closed)**

**25 Apr – ANZAC Day (Centre closed)**





## REMINDER



### **Sun Safety: Protecting Little Ones from Harmful UV Rays**

Young children are especially vulnerable to the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which is the leading cause of skin cancer. Research shows that UV damage in childhood significantly increases the risk of skin cancer later in life.

Because UV radiation cannot be seen or felt, skin damage can happen without warning. That's why it's crucial to build good sun protection habits early on. Simple steps like applying broad-spectrum sunscreen, wearing protective clothing, and staying in the shade can make a big difference.

At our centre, we prioritise sun safety by encouraging children to apply sunscreen, wear hats, and play in shaded areas. To support this, we kindly ask families to apply sunscreen to their children before arrival.

For more information, please refer to our Sun Protection Policy in the policy folder located in the foyer.

## **Immunisations: Stay Up to Date!**

To ensure your child's continued enrolment and avoid issues with the Child Care Subsidy (CCS), please make sure their immunisations are up to date. You can find the current National Immunisation Schedule displayed in our centre, helping you keep track of your child's immunisation milestones.

If you have any questions or need support, please speak to our office—we're here to help!



### **Menu Review in Progress**

Our educators are observing how children engage with their meals and providing Chef Tran with valuable feedback. This helps us adjust the menu as needed to ensure a well-balanced and enjoyable diet for your children while in our care.

You can always view our current menu on the foyer notice board. Stay tuned for our upcoming autumn menu—we can't wait to share it with you!



JOIN OUR FACEBOOK  
PAGE FOR THE LATEST  
UPDATES!



## What is free play?

“THEY CAN CHOOSE EVERYTHING – THEY HAVE THE FREEDOM TO SELECT THEIR PLAY MATERIALS, INTEREST AREA AND EVEN THE PLOT.” - ZAMAN



Free play is when children have **the freedom to explore, create, and engage in play in their own way, without structured guidance.** It allows them to express themselves based on their mood, interests, and the world around them at any given moment. Every child is unique, and free play provides a space for them to develop their individuality, creativity, and decision-making skills.

At St Catherine’s, we ensure that materials and resources are readily available in every corner—indoors and outdoors—so children can make choices about how they spend their time. **Our educators carefully curate these spaces, observing children’s interests and developmental needs to provide an environment rich in possibilities.** This approach empowers children to take charge of their own learning, fostering independence, curiosity, and a deep sense of engagement in their play.

## Here are some great resources

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE VALUE OF FREE PLAY:

- [What is free play and why should you encourage it at home?](#) – UNICEF
- [Statement on Play](#) – Early Childhood Australia (ECA)
- [The Decline of Play](#) – TED Talk by Peter Gray





*“Our learning environment is designed to spark intrinsic motivation, curiosity, and a lifelong love of learning.”*

*- Centre Philosophy*



**FREE**

**PARENTING WEBINAR 3 MARCH 7:45PM:  
BALANCING THE NEEDS OF MORE THAN ONE CHILD**

Presented by the Maribyrnong City Council in partnership with Mums Matter Psychology, this online session is suitable for anyone with more than one child in their family, and will focus on current research, practical strategies. Scan the QR code to find out more!



# Growing Together:

## OUR COMMITMENT TO LEARNING AND COLLABORATION

At our centre, we believe that just like the children in our care, our educators are always learning and reflecting. We are committed to staying up to date with the latest research and best practices in early childhood education to ensure we provide professional, evidence-based teaching. We embrace each educator's unique experiences, culture, and knowledge, fostering a culture of shared learning. After all, **to educate young children, we must first model the values and practices we teach.**

As a long day care centre, one of our biggest challenges is finding dedicated time for our teams to sit down, reflect, and discuss as a group. This year, we have made a special effort to create more opportunities for educators to collaborate within their teams and across different rooms. By strengthening communication and teamwork, we ensure consistency and shared goals in supporting every child's learning and development.

Last June, we began the process of reviewing our centre philosophy, engaging in deep discussions to better understand one another personally and professionally. After months of reflection and collaboration, we are excited to share our updated philosophy—one that truly represents who we are as a team and what we strive to achieve. This statement will guide our work throughout the year, keeping our focus on what matters most: the children.



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UPDATES!



**FREE**

# PARENTING WEBINAR 5 MARCH 7:30PM: TRIPLE T - TIPS FOR TOILET TRAINING



Presented by the Maribyrnong City Council in partnership with Child Health Service, this online session is suitable for families with children 2-4 years of age and will focus on the toilet training journey, and provide great tips to encourage your child into toilet training. Scan the QR code to find out more!



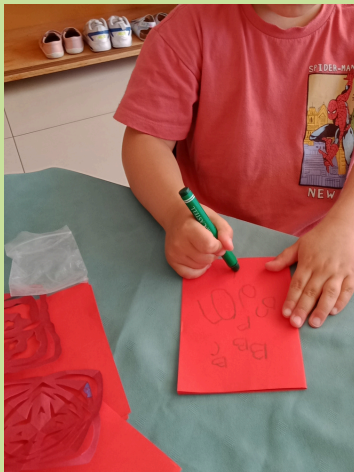
*“We create a safe and joyful learning environment where every child feels a strong sense of belonging. This is achieved through reciprocal relationships built on mutual respect and trust.”*

*- Centre Vision*





## The Year of Snake



*“We welcome and celebrate the rich diversity of the families we serve and take pride in creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and respected.”*

*- Centre Philosophy*



## Panagbenga Festival

Also known as the Flower Festival, is celebrated every February in Baguio City, Philippines, to honour nature's beauty, resilience, and cultural heritage. It began in 1995 to help the community heal after devastating earthquake, symbolising hope, renewal, and growth—just like flowers blooming after a storm.

Biel put together a beautiful and engaging display in the foyer in February to share the spirit of this floral festival from her home country with our community.



*“We are committed to deepening children's understanding of the world's oldest living culture while advancing reconciliation for future generations.” - Centre Philosophy*



## **“Educators Don’t Celebrate”**

- KOORI CURRICULUM

At St Catherine’s, we recognise that while Australia Day may be a joyful celebration for some, it is also a day of mourning and sorrow for First Nations People. As part of our commitment to reconciliation, we aim to educate rather than celebrate on this controversial day.

We believe in including children in these important conversations, allowing them to explore and express what feels right for them. As a centre, we choose to celebrate the vibrant cultures and colours of Australia in the month of June, reflecting on what makes this country truly wonderful as a community.





*“We value providing opportunities for children to connect with nature in our urban setting, nurturing a sense of care and respect for the land, and embracing our shared responsibility to a sustainable future.”*

*– Centre Philosophy*



# Strengthening Communication and Family Involvement

Term Program

Educators' Shift Time

Educators' Bio



Learning Portfolio:

Individual child's learning journey

\*Updates monthly

Floorbook:

What learning is happening in the classroom?

\*Updates weekly

Based on the family feedback survey we received at the end of last year, we have set our top priority for 2025: creating more opportunities for families to be involved in the centre while ensuring you receive timely updates on your child's learning. We take great pride in our face-to-face, present-focused approach, avoiding digital platforms to prioritise authentic interactions and play experiences with your child. However, we acknowledge that this sometimes results in delays in receiving learning documentation. To strengthen communication, we encourage you to:

- **Check the corridor displays (example above)** – Educators regularly update these with information about your child's learning and experiences.
- **Have a chat at drop-off/pick-up time** – While we always strive to provide insights into your child's day, we welcome conversations about their learning and development.
- **Email your child's room directly** – Each room has a dedicated email, and we encourage you to share feedback on your child's learning portfolio, observations from home, areas of interest, or even stories from your family's weekend—anything that helps us create stronger connections between home and centre.



## EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR EACH ROOM:

**Bottlebrush Room:** [bottlebrush@sceec.com.au](mailto:bottlebrush@sceec.com.au)

**Eucalyptus Room:** [eucalyptus@sceec.com.au](mailto:eucalyptus@sceec.com.au)

**Sheoak Room:** [sheoak@sceec.com.au](mailto:sheoak@sceec.com.au)

**Mulberry Room:** [mulberry@sceec.com.au](mailto:mulberry@sceec.com.au)

**Wattle Room:** [wattle@sceec.com.au](mailto:wattle@sceec.com.au)

# Maslyana Pancake Week

A TASTE OF UKRAINIAN TRADITION



Starting 11 March, we celebrate Maslyana Pancake Week, a Ukrainian festival that marks the end of winter and the arrival of spring. This is a time of joy, feasting, and of course—pancakes.

Our educator, Mariana, has shared a delicious traditional Ukrainian pancake recipe, “**Налисники з сиром**”—thin crepes filled with sweet cottage cheese. We invite you to try making them at home with your child.

## Ingredients

### For the pancakes:

- 2 cups (500 ml) of milk
- 3 eggs
- 1 1/3 cups (280 g) of flour
- 1–2 tbsp of sugar
- 1 tsp of salt
- 3 tbsp of vegetable oil
- Butter for greasing finished pancakes

### For the filling:

- 250 g of cottage cheese
- 2 tbsp of sour cream
- 3–4 tbsp of sugar
- 50 g of raisins (optional)
- ¼ lemon juice
- 1 tsp of lemon zest

## Directions

**Step 1:** In a bowl, mix eggs with sugar and salt. Add milk and whisk again.

**Step 2:** Add flour and oil, mixing well until you have a smooth, thin batter.

**Step 3:** Heat a pan with a little butter or oil. Pour in a ladle of batter, cooking each pancake for a few minutes on each side until golden. Set them aside while you prepare the filling.

**Step 4:** In a bowl, mix the cottage cheese, sour cream, and sugar. Blend until smooth. Stir in lemon juice, lemon zest, and raisins.

**Step 5:** Spoon 1 large tablespoon of the filling into each pancake. Fold in the sides and roll up tightly. These can be frozen for up to 3 months or kept in the fridge for 4 days. If eating right away, pan-fry in butter and oil until crispy.

**Step 6:** Serve with icing sugar, fruit, berries, sour cream, or jam.



Scan the QR Code to watch how to make it!



JOIN OUR FACEBOOK PAGE TO SEE HOW OUR PANCAKES TURN OUT!



# Join Us for A TASTE OF HARMONY

We warmly invite our families to join us for a special Harmony Week Afternoon Tea in our upstairs cafeteria—a wonderful opportunity for parents to connect, network, and celebrate our vibrant community!

To ensure a more comfortable experience for everyone, we have organised two separate dates for families in different age groups.



**14 March, 4–5pm:**

- Bottlebrush
- Eucalyptus
- Sheoak

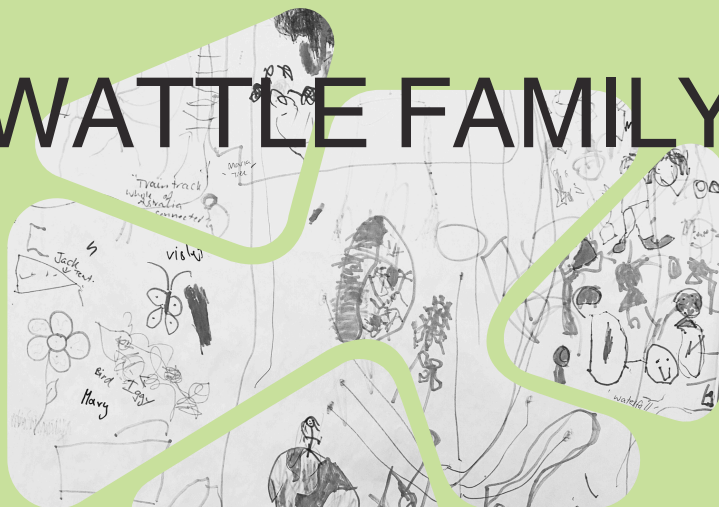


**21 March, 4–5pm:**

- Mulberry
- Wattle

This event is intended for parents only; however, if you'd like to bring your children along, please sign them out and ensure they remain under your supervision.

## WATTLE FAMILY



## Gathering

**19 MARCH  
2025  
6 PM – 7 PM**

**CAFETERIA AREA  
(UPSTAIRS)**  
ST CATHERINE'S  
EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE

**WATTLE ROOM  
PARENTS  
ONLY**

RSVP BY 14 MAR 2025:

[WATTLE@SCEEC.COM.AU](mailto:WATTLE@SCEEC.COM.AU)

**For more details about the events, please check our  
Community Board in the foyer or speak with us.**



“WHEN CHILDREN ENGAGE IN TINKERING, THEY ARE ENGAGED IN A PROCESS WHERE THEY ARE CONSTANTLY THINKING, CREATING, AND PROBLEM-SOLVING.”

- MITCHEL RESNICK

**CAN YOU HELP?**

## SEEDS OR PLANTS

FOR OUR GARDENS

We are growing our little garden and would love any spare seeds or plants to help create a green and inviting space for our youngest learners. Gardening encourages children to connect with nature, develop responsibility, and explore sensory experiences through hands-on care of plants.

We are looking for donations to enhance our learning environments and would love your support!

## BROKEN MACHINERY OR TOOLS

FOR OUR TINKERING STATION

Tinkering is a hands-on experience where children explore, invent, and experiment with real tools, helping them understand how things work. It supports learning through doing, developing fine motor skills, problem-solving abilities, and peer relationships. **If you have any old or broken machinery, tools, or small appliances that are safe for children to explore, we would love to repurpose them for our tinkering station.**



To help us reach out to more Families



# St Catherine's

EARLY EDUCATION CENTRE

If you love our centre, please spread the word! We still have spots available for new families and would love to welcome more children into our community. Thank you for your continued support!



(03) 9320 2555



[www.sceec.com.au](http://www.sceec.com.au)