



# Mansfield Autism Statewide Services

Information about education at MASS 2025





# Welcome to our School!

We aim to provide a warm, friendly and individualised educational service that helps your child grow, learn discover, belong and connect with others and the environment. We are passionate about getting to know our students' strengths, interests, and motivators. We provide an active and engaging program that builds new skills within the classroom, the outdoors and within the life skills domains.

Mansfield Campus is an independent school from ages 5 – 18 years. We are passionate about our health and wellbeing approach, where we create opportunities to embrace healthy choices from diet to exercise, as well as the skills to strengthen a student's sense of connection and communication with others. We have a strong emphasis on understanding all of our students and families that are a part of our school.

We know how autism can impact on individuals and families in unique ways and we understand and respect the diversity that is autism. We are extremely proud of our program, and we celebrate all successes and achievements.

**We look forward to forming a genuine, open, and authentic partnership with you and your family.**



# About MASS

We are an independent not-for-profit organisation, which supports autistic young people and their families. We offer educational and NDIS supported services. Our services have been designed as a 'wrap around' model – each service complements and enhances the quality of care we provide our young people.

We are based in Mansfield in Northeast Victoria but offer a state-wide service to the whole of Victoria. Our local-based services operate within the heart of the Mansfield community, enjoying the idyllic location and warm community support. We also recognise the importance of working within the family home and provide an in-home service where we travel across Victoria to join in the lives of our families.

MASS is staffed by a group of professionals who are passionate about upholding and promoting the unique culture which is MASS. We aim to enhance a client's quality of life by building skills of independence through a strengths-based approach.

The service was started in 1968 by a parent, Dr Joan Curtis, who identified that 'the child's family are their most important teachers'. At MASS we seek to uphold this philosophy by working alongside families, education settings and service providers to instill understanding, confidence and determination to create the best outcomes.



## Our Philosophy

“The client with Autism’s family are their most important teachers, and we aim to give them the understanding, the confidence and the determination necessary for the successful parenting of their child/adult – That is our goal, and nothing less is enough.” Joan Curtis “Autism - a Family Affair”

## Our Mission

To empower and support autistic people to achieve their goals. We build capacity and confidence through our best practice services and supports.

## Our Vision

Autistic people reaching their goals and aspirations within their family and community.

## Our Culture

At Mansfield Autism Statewide Services, we believe our culture drives our success:



### Values

We are guided by our values: honesty, integrity, loyalty, dedication and a sense of fun



### Focus

As driven by our history, our focus is on the autistic person and their family. We work together to build their capacity and confidence. We willingly share our knowledge and work in partnership with other services.



### Goals

We set clear goals and have high expectations. We actively model our approach, are willing to take calculated risks and have a will to succeed.



### Wellbeing

We promote health, wellbeing and time spent in nature. Our service is built on exercise, healthy eating and sleep routines.



### Teamwork

Our staff work together, are open and willing to learn, support each other and are part of the bigger collective that is Mansfield Autism.



# Child Safe at Mansfield Autism Statewide Services

Mansfield Autism Statewide Services (MASS) takes Child Safety responsibilities very seriously and has a dedicated team of Child Safety officers who regularly check in with staff and clients. MASS supports the Victorian Child Safe Standards:

We welcome Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients and families and supports them to enjoy their rights and culture. We do not allow racism.

Child Safety is important to everyone at MASS. We document how we find, avoid, and stop risks of child abuse or harm.

We support our clients to know their rights to be safe from abuse.

We help families to take part in decisions that affect their child. We tell families and the community what we do to keep our clients safe from harm and abuse.

We understand that every child is different, and we make sure they can get the information and help they need in an autism friendly way.

We have strict policies about background checks for staff who work directly with our clients. Our staff are trained in recording, reporting, and sharing information about child safety.

Our clients, families and staff know how to make a complaint and what happens when a complaint is made.

Our regular Child Safe training helps staff know the signs of child abuse and harm and what to do if there are concerns about abuse or harm.

We are an IT-free environment for clients and students, minimising the risk of online abuse or harm.

We have clear risk assessment processes to ensure the safety of children when they use our settings, services, and activities.

We are always checking and improving the ways we keep children safe from abuse and harm.

We have policies, posters and training programs about how we keep children safe from abuse and harm.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding Child Safety at Mansfield Autism, please feel free to contact Trish Wilks, Senior Child Safety Officer on 0428 784 600 or by email [patricia.w@autismmansfield.org.au](mailto:patricia.w@autismmansfield.org.au)

# Our School

We want students to find school a safe space that embraces neurodiversity, a place to connect with others, their learning and the environment. In our educational programs it's also important that we have fun, honoring childhood with opportunities for play, games, getting into nature and engaging in hands on and applied learning experiences.

## **Class Structure**

Classrooms generally comprise of up to six students (approx). We are an ungraded specialist school. Students are grouped according to developmental and educational needs. Teachers and teacher assistants work together in each classroom.

## **Teaching Philosophy**

We are committed to keeping up to date with best practice in both teaching pedagogy and neuro affirming practices. The autism CRC Guiding Principles help us to know what is most important when supporting autistic children / young people and their families. We aim to provide a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which is challenging, appropriate and differentiated for individual needs.

MASS School provides:

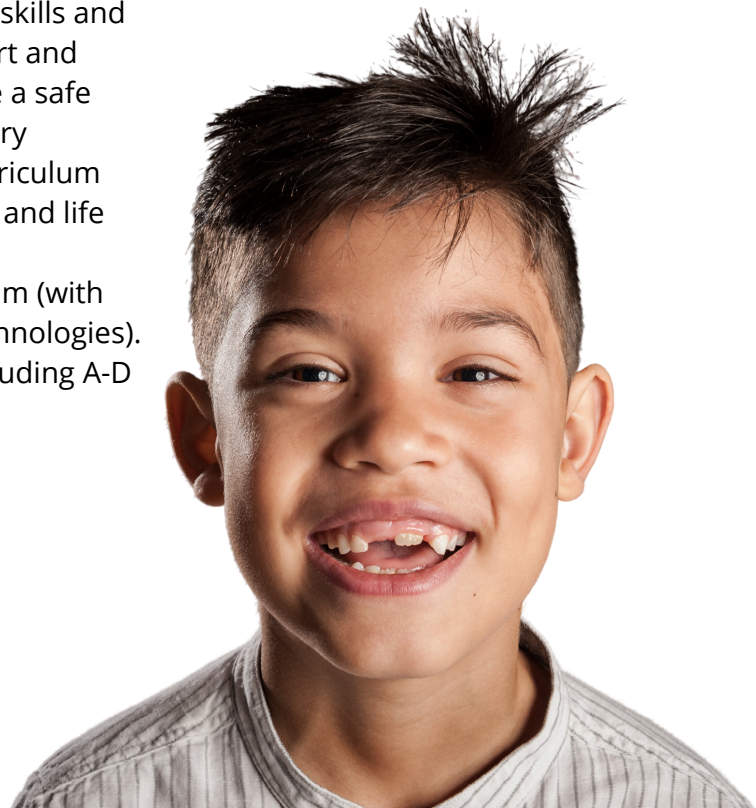
- The Victorian Curriculum
- ASDAN\* New in 2025
- Individual Learning Plans
- Autism-specific teaching practices
- Small group and individualised instruction

Community engagement

## **Younger Years Communication & Play**

Our Younger Years classroom/s are for our primary aged students. The classroom will have a range of physical, cognitive, social and emotional skills and abilities. Our inclusive classrooms respect, support and build on diverse strengths and needs. We provide a safe and secure environment, accessible toilets, sensory awareness, break out spaces. We balance the curriculum between cognitive, communication, play, sensory and life skills.

Students are taught within the Victorian Curriculum (with exemptions to teaching languages and digital technologies). The Victorian Curriculum encompasses levels including A-D and Foundation to Level 6.



## **Younger Years Transition Class**

Our Younger Years Transition Class offers a transition program to support our younger students with aspirations to re-engage with mainstream education. Many of our students may have experienced dysregulation and overwhelm in a traditional education setting. We provide a nurturing space to build self-esteem, confidence, self-regulation skills that can be transferred back into the traditional education setting. Students within this classroom may be dual enrolled with a local school whom we will work collaboratively with.

Students are taught within the Victorian Curriculum (with exemptions to teaching languages and digital technologies). The Victorian Curriculum encompasses levels including A-D and Foundation to Level 6. We provide a safe and secure environment, accessible toilets, sensory awareness, break out spaces.

## **Upper Years – Life Skills**

Our applied learning life skills program provides for learners to help prepare learners for adult life. The core curriculum is focused on life skills, functional academics, communication, personal & social relationships and health and wellbeing.

Students are taught within the Victorian Curriculum (with exemptions to teaching languages and digital technologies). The Victorian Curriculum encompasses levels including A-D and Foundation to Level 6. We provide a safe and secure environment, accessible toilets, sensory awareness, break out spaces.

## **Thrive – Applied Learning**

Our applied learning class aims to introduce students to the ASDAN short course modules. ASDAN short courses are flexible, portfolio-based programs designed to accredit up to 60 hours of activity and skills development across a range of topics and curriculum areas. Students will participate in pathways discussions using the myWay employability survey. The myWAY Employability was co-designed with autistic young people in consultation with Autism CRC.

In 2025 & 2026 we aim to introduce ASDAN short courses, Foodwise, Enterprise, Gardening & Volunteering short courses. ASDAN aims are to provide individualised, supported learning and training opportunities that foster essential a to achieve good life outcomes for all students in the following domains:

- Friends, relationships and community
- Employability
- Good Health
- Independent Living Skills

*(ASDAN – Four pathways - Preparing for Adulthood)*





# Our Learning

## Curriculum Framework – Victorian Curriculum

At MASS, we aim to provide a variety of engaging, hands-on, nature-based, and therapeutic programs aligned with the Victorian Curriculum.

### **Communication, Language, Literacy & Reading**

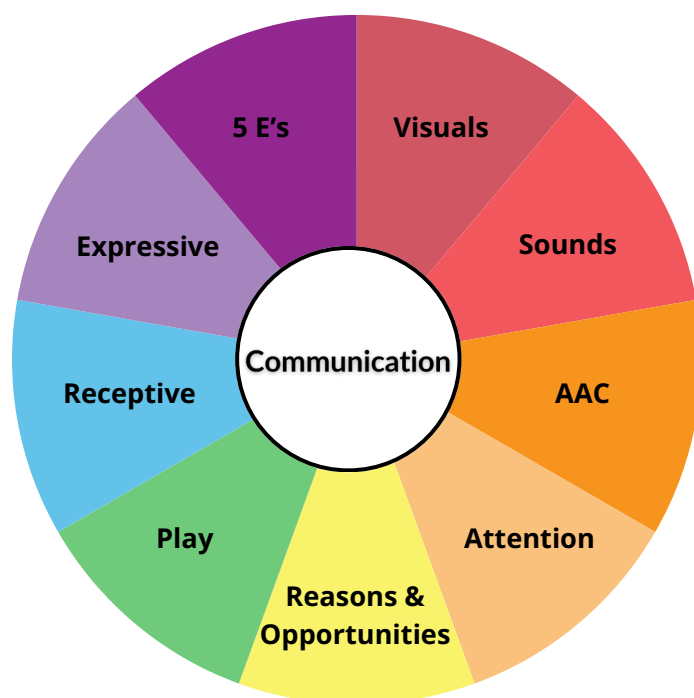
It is important to us that students are exposed to a language rich environment. We instill high expectations and a positive attitude towards an individual's ability to learn to communicate, read and write. Language, literacy and reading are a highly valued component of our curriculum.

In **English**, students:

- Develop the ability to listen, comprehend and respond
- Interact and communicate with others in a range of learning environments and social situations
- Make choices, obtain information, question and be actively engaged in learning activities
- Communicate ideas, develop and express creativity and imagination
- The English curriculum is presented in curriculum levels from Levels A-D and F-10.

Core communication goals within the curriculum at MASS are focused on making communication accessible and follow the mantra of the 5E's - *exposure, explore, every day, everywhere, everyone.*

Communication has many learning intentions based on the individual strengths and needs. Every individual will have different communication goals.



# Our Learning

## Mathematics & Numeracy

Numeracy aims to:

- Develop functional & useful mathematical and numeracy skills for everyday life
- Become confident, proficient, effective and adaptive users of mathematics
- Make connections between areas of mathematics and apply mathematics to real world problems
- Develop a positive regard towards numeracy and appreciate mathematics as a discipline (history, ideas, problems & applications)

## Health & Physical Education

Health and Physical Education is a key component of our curriculum. We aim to:

- Provide support for all of our students to develop and maintain their physical, mental, social and emotional health.
- Focus on the importance of quality of life, which includes a healthy lifestyle and physical activity.
- Develop individual motor skills, build strength, flexibility and endurance
- Learn complex movements and patterns and participate in team games.

At MASS students regularly participate in therapeutic and rhythmic activities, supporting anxiety reduction, building physical fitness, and encouraging our students to be outdoors, such as walking, yoga, massage and swimming.

Core breathing techniques are a lifelong skill for self-regulation. Breathing skills are practiced daily during relaxation sessions. At MASS we focus on building motor skills to support both classroom & daily living skills:

- Bilateral coordination.
- Crossing the midline.
- Balance.
- Motor coordination.
- Visual motor integration.
- Fine motor skills.
- Fundamental motor skills such as running, jumping, catching, and throwing as the foundation skills for sport-related movement skills.

We also engage a remedial masseuse who provides massage for our students for approximately 20 minutes on a weekly basis.

## Visual Arts

We encourage students to have fun and explore their creative capacities. The Arts enable students to:

- Explore ideas
- Make and share visual artworks
- To use cognitive, emotional, sensory and aesthetic ideas using different media.



# Our Learning

## **Integrated Studies**

Integrated Studies involves combining curriculum areas to increase general knowledge and understanding of a range of topics. Different areas such as history, geography, critical and creative thinking, literacy, numeracy and science may be incorporated into the themed unit of work.

## **Personal and Social Learning**

Personal and Social Capability is essential in enabling students to understand themselves and others and to self-manage their relationships and learning. The capability involves students learning to recognise and regulate emotions, develop empathy for others and understand relationships, establish and build a framework for positive relationships, work effectively in teams and handle challenging situations constructively.

Personal and Social Capability supports students in becoming creative and confident individuals with a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing, with a sense of hope and optimism about their lives and the future. On a social level, it helps students to form and maintain healthy relationships and prepares them for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members.

## **Excursions**

We support students physical and social development by connecting students with the community. We provide opportunities for our students to engage in community-based activities by exploring our beautiful natural landscape as well as building social and community connections. Students frequently head to the supermarket to buy ingredients for cooking, swim at Jamieson, walk the local rail trails and regional short walks. These excursions have life skills or a health and wellbeing focus.

## **Life Skills Program**

Students are engaged in various life skills activities in the classroom and community. Cooking and kitchen skills span all ages and abilities and may be used as an integrated unit:

- Healthy eating and nutrition
- Foods from different cultures
- Food reactions and scientific processes
- Seasonal food and fresh produce from the garden
- Food waste and food miles
- Gardening, growing and sourcing local fresh produce
- Hygiene and food handling skills
- Personal and social capabilities

### Daily living and life skills

- Reading a recipe – following instructions, executive functioning skills, decoding and processing language
- Following directions to source ingredients and equipment requires working memory and problem solving
- Fine motor skills are required for the use of utensils, cutting, scraping etc.
- Bilateral coordination is required to pour and scrape from a bowl, holding and cutting food, flipping food, opening containers.
- Cooking requires patience, attention to details, timing and organisation

# Our Classrooms

## Structured Learning Environment

Our routines and structures create a safe predictable space for students to thrive. We create rhythms throughout the day, where we support and integrate movement breaks, sensory circuits and physical exercise interspersed between cognitive activities.

Routines and organisation play a critical role in supporting our students in the classroom. We support all classroom routines with visual supports to lessen the auditory load and support receptive language skills. A predictable classroom with visual supports helps to:

- Lower anxiety as our students know what to expect and what is going to happen next
- Sets our students up for success through communication supports
- Sequence activities so that students know when a task is finished
- Promotes clarity regarding expectations

## Visual Supports

Visual supports may range from real objects, to photographs to words. Visual supports:

- Provide clear and explicit expectations regarding a task
- They can be referred to anytime during an activity
- Aim to reduce the reliance on adult prompts and encourage students to complete tasks independently
- Help to reduce anxiety

Visual supports may be used to help support instructions such as 'wait'. They may be used as conversation starters or to indicate the learner needs a break.

## Communication

Visual supports can be used to aid communication and expressive language. Expressive language may involve using a 'chat board' or exchanging or pointing to pictures to help get the message across. This type of communication supports our non-speaking community. However sometimes those who have good communication skills also need support with expressive communication. A student may be highly stressed or anxious and may find a visual is a good communication tool with words don't come easily.

## Sensory

Everyone has a unique sensory style. Our classrooms support those with sensory processing differences which are unique to the individual. Sensory supports can help a student learn and engage in activities. We might modify the environment when the environment and the student's sensory style are not aligned. Some experiences lead to sensory avoiding or sensory seeking behaviours. We provide regular breaks and alternate activities when needed. Some students may need access to headphones, fidget toys, cushions, movement breaks and space and time. We provide students with coping mechanisms in how to read and express signs of discomfort and the need to withdraw or take a break.

# Our Learning Program

This is an example of the timetable at the Mansfield Campus for our day students:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning Walk	Morning Walk	Morning Walk	Morning Walk	Morning Walk
Literacy - All About Me	Personal and Social Capabilities	Numeracy	Personal and Social Capabilities	Literacy - Social Stories
Morning Tea: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence	Morning Tea: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence	Morning Tea: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence	Morning Tea: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence	Morning Tea: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence
Sensory Activity	Sensory Activity	Sensory Activity	Sensory Activity	Sensory Activity
Literacy	Literacy		Dance	Numeracy
Functional Skills/ Independence	Functional Skills/ Independence		Functional Skills/ Independence	Functional Skills/ Independence
Lunch: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence	Lunch: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence	Community Access - Excursion Geography	Lunch: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence	Lunch: Nutrition, Social Skills, Games, Independence
Relaxation	Relaxation		Relaxation	Relaxation
Health/Personal Capabilities	Health/Personal Capabilities			Fun Friday! Social Skills Games Music
Physical Health and Wellbeing	Physical Health and Wellbeing		Physical Health and Wellbeing	
Independence Skills / Pack up & Goodbye	Independence Skills / Pack up & Goodbye	Independence Skills / Pack up & Goodbye	Independence Skills / Pack up & Goodbye	Independence Skills / Pack up & Goodbye

Cognitive Skills & Knowledge

Health/Physical Wellbeing Skills & Knowledge

Self-Regulation Skills & Knowledge

Relational Skills & Knowledge

Independence Skills

# Further Information

## **School Hours**

The school hours are 9am to 3pm. MASS does not provide before and after school supervision. Parents are provided with school drop off and pick up times and locations. This ensures good communication between home and school is maintained as parents and teachers can provide daily feedback. Parents are expected to drop clients off and pick up at the agreed times and locations. Parents will not drop their child off unless a staff member is present, and a handover has occurred. If a parent is late, teachers will not leave until the student has been picked up or alternative arrangements have been made.

## **School Uniform**

Mass school does not have a uniform. We encourage comfy sun smart clothing. Students should wear shoes that are suitable for walking and exercise.

## **Student Support/Care Team Meetings**

Parent teacher meetings are conducted twice per year, in Term 1 and Term 3. Parents can contact staff at Mansfield School regarding any day-to-day queries. We encourage a collaborative approach and have regular communication with our parents.

## **Feedback, Compliments & Complaints**

Any feedback, compliments or complaints may be given through the website [www.autismmansfield.org.au](http://www.autismmansfield.org.au) or by emailing [feedback@autismmansfield.org.au](mailto:feedback@autismmansfield.org.au).

## **Policies**

Our annual reports, strategic plan and a copy of our policies can be found on our website: [www.autismmansfield.org.au](http://www.autismmansfield.org.au).

## **Food**

Students are required to bring their own fresh fruit snack, lunch and water bottle. To keep in line with our health and wellbeing focus, we request that students be provided with a nutritious lunch. We have kitchen facilities available for students.

## **Uniform**

There is no uniform at our school. We encourage practical clothes and sneakers for walking.



# Further Information

## **Disability Standards for Education 2005**

The Disability Standards for Education articulate the rights of students with disabilities; and the responsibilities of the school or 'standards' and 'measures of compliance' in the areas of enrolment, participation, curriculum accreditation and delivery, student support services and harassment and victimization.

The School must take reasonable steps to ensure that a student with a disability can access the same or comparable opportunities and choices provided by the school 'on the same basis' as those opportunities and choices offered to a student without a disability. This may necessitate the determination and implementation of 'reasonable adjustments'.

At MASS typical adjustments to learning include personalised modifications to learning programs and activities, intensive individualised instruction, highly structured learning programs, learning activities specifically designed for the student, highly structured approach, high supervision and communication supports.

## **Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD)**

Every year, all schools in Australia participate in the Nationally Consistent Collection of Data on School Students with Disability (NCCD). The NCCD process requires schools to identify information already available in the school about supports provided to students with disability. These relate to legislative requirements under the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and the Disability Standards for Education 2005, in line with the NCCD guidelines (2019). Information provided about students to the Australian Government for the NCCD includes:

- year of schooling
- category of disability: physical, cognitive, sensory or social/emotional
- level of adjustment provided: support provided within quality differentiated teaching practice, supplementary, substantial or extensive.

This information assists schools to:

- formally recognise the supports and adjustments provided to students with disability in schools
- consider how they can strengthen the support of students with disability in schools develop shared practices so that they can review their learning programs in order to
- improve educational outcomes for students with disability.

The NCCD provides state and federal governments with the information they need to plan more broadly for the support of students with disability.

The NCCD will have no direct impact on your child and your child will not be involved in any testing process. The school will provide data to the Australian Government in such a way that no individual student will be able to be identified – the privacy and confidentiality of all students is ensured. All information is protected by privacy laws that regulate the collection, storage and disclosure of personal information. To find out more about these matters, please refer to the [Australian Government's Privacy Policy](#) can be found on the [NCCD Portal](#).

# 2025 MASS School Term Dates

TERM ONE	
Staff Training – Student free day	Tuesday 28th January
Staff Training – Student free day	Wednesday 29th January
New School Planning – Student free day	Thursday 30th January
New School Planning – Student free day	Friday 31st January
Term 1 Starts – Students commence	Monday 3rd February
Ssg Meetings – Student free day	Thursday 6th March
Labour Day – Public holiday	Monday 10th March
Term 1 Finish – Student’s last day, 2pm finish	Friday 4th April

TERM TWO	
Staff Training – Student free day	Tuesday 22nd April
Term 2 Starts – Students commence	Wednesday 23rd April
ANZAC Day – Public holiday	Friday 25th April
Report Writing Day – Student free day	Wednesday 28th April
King’s Birthday – Public holiday	Monday 9th June
Term 2 Finish – Student’s last day, 2pm finish	Friday 27th June (3 week holiday)

TERM THREE	
Term 3 Starts – Students commence	Monday 21st July
Ssg Meetings – Student free day	Wednesday 6th August
Whole Staff PD – Student free day	Thursday 21st August
Whole Staff PD – Student free day	Friday 22nd August
Term 3 Finish – Student’s last day, 2pm finish	Friday 19th September

TERM FOUR	
Staff Training – Student free day	Monday 6th October
Term 4 Starts – Students commence	Tuesday 7th October
Report Writing Day – Student free day	Monday 3rd November
Melbourne Cup – Public holiday	Tuesday 4th November
Term 3 Finish – Student’s last day, 2pm finish	Friday 12th December



# Further Information

## Schedule of School Fees 2025 - Day Students

	Enrolment	Annum Fee	Term Fee
<p>Fees are invoiced at the beginning of each year. They can be paid up front or families may opt for a payment plan.</p> <p><b>*Fees cannot be paid through NDIS</b></p>	5 days	\$5000	\$1250
	4 days	\$4000	\$1000
	3 days	\$3000	\$750
	2 days	\$2000	\$500
	1 day	\$1000	\$250
<b>Additional Costs</b>	Some additional costs may occur. For example, excursions and certificates (food handling, barista etc). These fees will be added to invoices.		
<b>Fee Assistance/Special Circumstances</b>	Some families may be eligible for Fee Assistance. This is a separate application.		

***The information outlined in the table above is effective as of 1 Jan 2025 but may be subject to change. For further information, please contact MASS.***

As the parent(s)/guardian(s) it is important you are aware that you are entering into a legal contract and therefore legally bound jointly and severally to pay all fees and charges for the enrolled child. When circumstances dictate that full payment is not possible, the obligation remains on the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss this with the relevant MASS representative at the time of enrolment.

Subsequent to enrolment, a change in circumstances does not absolve the signatory(s) from their obligation for payment. Any change impacting the financial commitment of the signatory(s), should be communicated to the MASS Office immediately.





**Contact Us:**

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