Holy Spirit School
Early Learning Centre

Holy Spirit School is a unique learning environment that includes both the Early Learning Centre and the Primary School. It is part of the Holy Spirit Parish.

Contact Details

Acting Principal  Mrs. Anna D’Amico
Acting Assistant Principal  Mr Cameron Tarrant
Preschool Director  Mrs Bronwyn Newth
Preschool Office Manager  Mrs Michelle Kingma

Telephone  02 6162 0488
Email  elc.holyspirit@cg.catholic.edu.au
Address  26 Kelleway Ave
            NICHOLLS ACT
            ACT 2913

Office hours  Monday - Friday 8:45 am-3:30pm Term time only
Before School Care  7.30am – 9.00am
Preschool  9.00am – 3.00pm
After School Care  3.00pm – 6.00pm
Red class  5 days a week
Orange Class  5 days a fortnight Mon, Tue and alt Wed
Yellow Class  5 days a fortnight alt Wed, Thur and Fri
Thank you for considering our Early Learning Centre as an option for your child’s preschool education. Holy Spirit’s Early Learning Centre is one of the ELC’s located in the Holy Spirit Parish. The Early Learning Centre accepts children who turn 4 years of age by 30 April of the year of enrolment. Catholic Education of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn oversees the centre and the Director is supported by the Principal.

At Holy Spirit School we understand that we are part of the wider mission of the Catholic Church. We are part of Holy Spirit Parish under the leadership of Father Mark Croker. We accept families from many faith backgrounds with the understanding that the families support the Catholic ethos of the school.

At Holy Spirit we enrol families, not individual children. We believe in the importance of families and the role they play in the development of children. The staff at Holy Spirit work to support families and view their role as a partnership with parents. Parents are always welcome at Holy Spirit.

At Holy Spirit we believe all children have the right to feel safe and happy and have a responsibility to keep others from being unsafe or doing things to make others feel unhappy. Bullying has no place in our school.

**Vision Statement**

Alive with the Spirit, we celebrate faith, learning and life.

**Mission Statement**

At Holy Spirit School we:

- Live our Catholic faith
- Inspire learning
- Exemplify best teaching practice
- Celebrate our achievements and successes
- Respect differences and embrace diversity
- Work collaboratively and build community
Aims

Holy Spirit Early Learning Centre aims to:

- Provide quality education for all its preschool students
- Build upon sound research by early childhood theorists such as Dewey, Erikson, Piaget, Vygotsky among others and early learning philosophies such as Reggio Emilia and Montessori
- Encourage independence and build confidence
- Support preschool children’s early learning
- Build upon common language and shared understandings about what is significant in children’s learning in the early years
- Base the curriculum on sound understandings and knowledge about the development of four year old children
- Ensure that the structures and settings within the preschool enhance each child’s individual learning across all areas of curriculum
- Recognize that children may develop at different races and make accommodation for this
- Understand progress varies across all areas of the curriculum
- Enable educators to map each child’s journey
- Build positive relationships with parents and caregivers based on mutual trust and open communication.
Preschool Program

The Preschool program is organised into three groups.

**Group one: 5 days a week - Red**
Monday – Friday

**Group two: 5-day fortnight – Orange**
Three days (Monday – Wednesday) in week 1 and two days (Monday – Tuesday) in week 2

**Group three: 5 – day fortnight – Yellow**
Two days (Thursday – Friday) in week 1 and three days (Wednesday – Friday) in week 2

**Administration**

**Fees-2016**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Fee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Before School Care</td>
<td>7.30am – 9.00am</td>
<td>$18.00/day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preschool</td>
<td>9.00am – 3.00pm</td>
<td>$63.00/day</td>
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<tr>
<td>After School Care</td>
<td>3.00pm – 6.00pm</td>
<td>$29.00/day</td>
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<td>Resource Fee</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excursion Fee</td>
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<td>$20.00/term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolment Fee</td>
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All fees are reviewed by Catholic Education and set in term 4 for the following year.

**Payment of fees**

Fees are charged fortnightly in advance (every Monday beginning in Week 1 of term). They are sent via email. We accept:
Cash
Cheque
Direct deposit – this is our preferred method

**A late Pick Up Fee of $10 per 5 minutes will be charged daily at the discretion for the director.**
Government family assistance

The Early Learning Centre is an approved childcare provider with the Family Assistance Office and you may be entitled to Child Care Benefit (CCB) and Child Care Rebate. You must register with the Family Assistance Office and provide us with you and your child’s Customer Reference Number (CRN) and date of birth.

Uniform

Girls and Boys:

- Navy blue polo shirt with three stripes and the Gungahlin parish logo
- School Wide brim style hat – Maroon
- Recommended – Maroon Jumper with Holy Spirit Logo

Term dates

Term One: Begins: Monday 30 January
Monday 13 March (Canberra Day Public Holiday)
Ends: Friday 7 April
Friday 14 April (Good Friday)
Monday 17 April (Easter Monday)

Term Two Begins: Monday 24 April
Tuesday 25 April (ANZAC day)
Monday 12 June (Queen’s Birthday Public holiday)
Ends: Friday 30 April

Term Three Begins: Monday 17 July
Ends: Friday 22 September
Monday 25 September (Family and Community day)
Monday 2 October (Labour Day)

Term Four Begins: Monday 9 October
Ends: Friday 15 December

Notice of withdrawal

A minimum of fourteen days’ notice in writing is required if your child is leaving the Early Learning Centres at any time throughout the year.
**Late payment of accounts**
While it is preferred that payment is received promptly, should you experience any difficulty paying on time, please discuss a payment plan with the Director. Any special arrangement will be treated confidentially. Non-payment of fees will result in loss of place.

**School Board**
The Holy Spirit School Board provides the opportunity for members of the school, parish and Archdiocesan community to support the mission of Catholic education in our school and provide leadership to the wider school community. Members are elected by the community each year and meet regularly during the year.

**Parents and Friends Association (P&F)**
The Parents and Friends Association (P&F) has a major role to play in our school by:
- providing a parent forum;
- helping to build a true spirit of community within the school;
- developing partnerships between parents and teachers; and
- Fundraising.

Meetings are held on a regular basis and elections are held at the Parents and Friends Association’s Annual General meeting which is generally their first meeting of the new school year.

To assist in keep our fees as low as possible we participate in a variety of fundraising events each year. All parents are welcome to join the Parents and Friends (P&F) committee.
What to bring

**School bag** - This can be the Holy Spirit bag or it can be any bag that will fit your child’s belongings in it.

**A piece of fruit or vegetables** - This will be cut up at school and shared among the children for ‘brain boost’

**Drink bottle** - Get your child familiar with drinking from a drink bottle and show them how to open and close the lid. Please only provide water in the bottle.

**Cot size sheet** - We will be having rest time during the afternoon. We will provide the mattress but please bring your own sheet.

**Library bag** – Every child will attend a weekly library session.

**A change of clothes** -(including underwear and socks) for changing after ‘messy play’ or in case of any accidents.

**LABEL EVERYTHING!** Show your child their full name written on their hat, jumper, bag, lunch boxes and drink bottles etc.

Each day at school your child will have brain boost, morning tea, lunch and afternoon snack. Practice having these three breaks! We suggest that you have ‘picnics’ where your child is encouraged to make selections from their lunch box.

In the first few weeks of school we ask that you place your child’s afternoon snack in a separate container. This is one way to stop your child accidentally eating all of their food in one go!

Please remember our ‘Risk MINIMISATION policy’ regarding NUTS and NUT PRODUCTS (e.g. Peanut butter, nutella and muesli bars).

Children are discouraged from bringing toys from home as these can be lost, broken or create a source of conflict.
Rhythm of the day
Each class has their own rhythm. While they are all similar the individual teachers are able to adapt their routines to suit the children. It allows for different classes to share the outdoor environment without all classes using it at any one time.

Throughout the day the children have long periods of time to allow them to be uninterrupted in their play and activities. Each class will have a variety of group times and small group activities. The children may be involved in group projects with children from other classes. There are often times for children to choose if they prefer to play indoors or outdoors during the day. The Catholic ethos is embedded in all aspects of preschool life. During the day the children will participate in prayer and reflection.

Each class visits the library once a week to have a library lesson and have the opportunity to borrow a book to take home for the week.

During the morning session ‘brain boost’ is available for the children if they are hungry. A bowl of freshly cut fruit and vegetables is usually set up on one of the tables. The children are encouraged to sit down and enjoy this at some stage during their morning.

Morning Tea, usually around 11.00am is similar to brain boost in the morning. Children are encouraged to have a snack during the morning as they become hungry or in between activities and play. Children always have access to their drink bottles during the day.

Lunch is usually around 1.10pm and the children all have lunch together in their class group. They quite often join another class during this time.
**Sign-in/Sign-out Procedure**

Parents/carers **MUST** sign their child in upon arrival and sign out when they collect their child. This is a legal requirement. Please also record the name and contact phone number of the person collecting your child, and advise the staff of any special arrangements. We must have written authorisation from parents/carers in order for us to release a child from our care. It is also very important that your child is aware of any change in pick-up arrangements.

When entering and exiting the premises please ensure that only your own children leave with you.
**Timeliness**

Parents are required to be punctual with the drop-off and pick-up of their child. Parents are not to leave their child before 9.00 am unless they are booked into Before School Care. Always say ‘goodbye’ to your child, even if they are upset, as this ensures a sense of trust.

For those parents whose children attend After School Care, please ensure that you arrive 5 minutes before 6pm to ensure that you have picked up and signed out your child before 6pm.

The ELC reserves the right to charge a late fee to those parents who have not collected their child by the required time.

**Rest time**

We have mattresses available for rest time or quiet time after lunch. Please provide a set of cot sized sheet clearly labelled. This sheet stays at the ELC during the week and is returned at the end of each week for washing at home.

**Toilet training**

Children attending the Holy Spirit ELC are expected to be toilet trained. If this is not the case please let staff know as soon as possible to ensure we can be prepared to meet your child’s needs. It is also understood that accidents may occur with this age group.

**Special events**

Special events are held throughout the year e.g. sports carnivals, incursions and visits. If your child does not normally attend preschool on the day of a scheduled event, children are either invited to attend with parent supervision or alternative arrangements will be made.
Sunscreen

Please ensure that your child has had his/her sunscreen applied before arriving at Holy Spirit ELC. This will ensure that the required time has elapsed from application to possible exposure to the sun. Sunscreen is supplied and children will reapply regularly during the day.
Preparing for the BIG day!

After Preschool Orientation, your child will probably feel a great deal more confident about starting school. Please remember to talk to your child about going to school in a positive and enthusiastic manner.

It is important that you explain to your child that Holy Spirit ELC is a safe and happy place and that there is always a staff member close by if they feel frightened or upset. During this time you should start to encourage your child to be independent. Help your child learn to manage and take care of the things they will use on a daily basis at school. For example, discuss with your child how they will use the bathrooms (toilets) at school. It is important that you explain to them that they will be allowed to go to the toilet whenever they need to. They also need to wash their hands after they use the toilet. We encourage children to explore the environment and as a result please don’t send them to school in clothes that you don’t want to get paint or dirt on.

Encourage your child to put on their hat when going out to play and when they come inside, practice putting their hat in a designated place. Don’t forget to talk about the ‘No Hat, Play in the Shade’ rule. Remind your child that they need to wear their hats outside if they want to play. During the winter terms we encourage children to wear beanies as it can be very windy and cold. Children are able to wear any colour and style beanie. Preschool children only need to wear the Holy Spirit Pre-school t-shirt and hat. It is optional if you would like the jumper. When choosing clothes for your child please consider how easy they are for children to pull up and down when they need to use the toilet.

Please try to send your child with shoes with Velcro fastenings rather than shoe laces.
The first day at the Early Learning Centre

The first day is a very exciting event, but it can also be a little confusing! Please read the following carefully as it explains in detail what will happen and what you will need to do when you arrive on this special day!

The first day of school is Monday 30th January 2017 for Red Pre-schoolers, and Orange Pre-schoolers and Thursday 2nd February 2017 for the Yellow Pre-schoolers.

Upon arrival you will be directed to your child’s classroom. You will be asked to find your child’s name tag on their locker. Once found, place the bag in the designated space.

In the ELC you must sign your child in and out every day. We will show you where this is located when you arrive with your child.

You are welcome to sit with your child and do some activities and help them settle in. At about 9.30 we will encourage the children to come to the carpet area. This is the parents cue to leave.

Once your child is settled, we ask that you then leave the classroom.

If we feel that your child is too distressed and unlikely to settle we will contact you immediately. We have your child’s best interests at heart.

We will have tea and coffee for the parents and you are invited to stay and chat to other new parents. This will be served in the school staffroom.

We are more than happy to give you a call later in the day to let you know how your child is going. Please let your teacher know if you would like us to do this. You are also welcome to call the school and check how your child is.
Parent help

Parent/carer volunteers
At Holy Spirit the community is based on partnerships, which aim to provide the best possible outcomes for students. Parents are encouraged to visit classrooms to work with students and share any talents. Parents may also assist with excursions, working bees and more formally through the Community Council and Council sub-committees.

Child Related Employment Declarations for Volunteers
All volunteers must have a Working with Vulnerable People card. Parents must have this card if they wish to help in the classroom or on excursions. Application forms are downloadable from http://www.act.gov.au

Visitors
All visitors to the school during school hours will be required to wear a visitor’s badge or collect a pass to identify themselves to school staff and administration. Visitors must report to the ELC Office and sign the in/out visitor’s book before being issued with a visitor badge.

Immunisation
In accordance with ACT Public Health Regulations, Holy Spirit ELC does not exclude any child on the basis of his or her immunisation status, however you may not be able to claim CCR and CCB if your children is not immunised. In accordance with ACT Public Health Regulations, parents will need to provide the Holy Spirit ELC with a copy of their child’s immunisation records. Unimmunised children will be asked to leave the premises in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease. If your child acquires a communicable disease, you are required to notify the director/teacher immediately, so that all measures can be taken to prevent the spread of the disease.
**Sickness**

In the case of infectious diseases, the child/parent/carer/teacher must not attend until medical advice has been sort and they have been informed that it is safe to do so.

It is expected that parents notify the ELC of any absences their child may have. This can be done via email, Schoolbag app or a letter during the absence or upon your child’s return to school.

Staff will contact parents if the child is deemed to be too sick to be at the ELC. In the interests of your child and the group as a whole, please refrain from sending your child to the ELC if they are unwell.

The Exclusion Schedule provided by the ACT Department of Health, Communicable Diseases Office, which is posted in the ELC foyer, will be followed in the event of an outbreak of an infectious disease.

**Medication**

It is preferable if your child requires medication to administer it yourself before or after Preschool. If the child requires medication during Preschool then a ‘Permission to Dispense’ form must be completed and signed. Medication must be provided in their original packages with the doctor’s directions for administering clearly printed on the label. This needs to be given to staff upon arrival in the morning and not stored in your child’s bag.

**Bicycles/scooters**

Bicycles or scooters ridden to school are to be walked in the school grounds and can be left in the fenced area by the ELC front door. Students are expected to wear a helmet.

**Asthma**

If your child is asthmatic and you wish the Preschool to hold their medication then a copy of the Asthma Action Plan provided by your doctor will need to be given to the Director at the beginning of the year. A ‘Request to Dispense’ form will need to be completed and signed and medications will need to be provided in their original packages with the instructions for use clearly shown.

**Contact Details**

Please ensure that the school has up to date contact information about your address, email address and your phone contacts – home, work, mobile and emergency contact person if you are not available.
**Head lice**
In the event of head lice, the child will be excluded until appropriate treatment has been carried out, and the head lice and eggs have disappeared. Please inform the ELC director if you discover head lice in your child’s hair.

**Nutrition & allergies**
We encourage the children to bring nutritious food to Holy Spirit ELC. Healthy snack choices include: sandwiches, fresh fruit, crackers, cheese, dried fruits, etc. Only water should be in the water bottles and the bottle should be washed and refilled each day. The ELC does not provide food or drink. The children are encouraged not to share food due to food allergies and hygiene. The ELC staffs are unable to re-heat food and it is not possible for lunch boxes to be refrigerated, therefore parents are asked to ensure they place an ice brick in their child’s lunch box. **PLEASE NOTE THAT HOLY SPIRIT ELC IS A NUT AWARE ENVIRONMENT.**

**Hats**
A school hat must be worn outside in according to *Sun Smart* guidelines.

**Hand washing**
Hygienic hand washing practices using soap and water are followed with the children, volunteers and staff, upon arrival at the school, before and after handling food/eating, after toileting and nose wiping and when otherwise necessary. Hand sanitizer is available in the event that soap and water is not available.

**Animals in School**
All members of the school community are asked not to bring any pets onto the school grounds at any time to ensure the health and safety of all school members. Should you walk your dog to school please tie them up outside the ELC fenced area.
Behaviour

Every child attending Holy Spirit ELC has the right to feel safe and to be treated with respect. The children are encouraged to:

- Be safe
- Be happy
- Be friendly
- Have fun

They are freely guided to appropriately manage their own behavior by observing simple guidelines such as:

- walking inside
- keeping the sand in the sandpit
- listening when someone else is speaking
- Telling other children and adults if they have a problem, rather than expressing their anger/frustration physically.

As four year old children are still developing their language and social skills, it is inevitable that some age appropriate behaviour will occur as they share materials, space and adult attention.

Exclusion

Holy Spirit ELC retains the right to exclude any child from the program on health or behavioural grounds or whose parents persistently disregard the policies and/or regulations of the Holy Spirit ELC. It is understood that appropriate communication between families and the ELC will have first been exhausted to remedy any problem.
Accidents and emergencies

In completing the enrolment form, parents have declared the medical history and health status of their child. This also includes a consent form for any emergency medical treatment that may be needed.
All staff at Holy Spirit ELC is trained in Senior First Aid. In the event of a minor injury, staff will administer first aid and comfort. If the injury requires medical attention the parent will be contacted.

Accident and illnesses register
Any accident or illness occurring during preschool will be recorded in the accidents/illnesses register. The parent will be notified and will be asked to sign the register.

Emergencies
In the case of an emergency, medical assistance such as an ambulance will be called and the parent and/or emergency contact listed on the application form will be contacted.

Holy Spirit ELC emergency evacuation procedure
The Holy Spirit ELC’s emergency evacuation procedure is prominently displayed at Holy Spirit ELC. Please make yourself familiar with this on commencement.
Fire/emergency drills are conducted at various times of the year.

Reporting

At Holy Spirit ELC we provide both formal and informal reporting on your child’s social, emotional and educational progress. These will be provided through face to face interviews, written reports and learning journeys.
We regularly observe each child and use those observations to assess the individual progress of each child.
We have formal times throughout the year to meet with your child’s teacher. However you are more than welcome to arrange a meeting or request the teacher to phone you at any time. At Holy Spirit we value open partnerships with parents.
Parent communications and concerns

Holy Spirit ELC actively seeks parental involvement and feedback to improve its service. Any ideas, comments, suggestions or concerns you have can be directed to your child’s teacher or the Director.

School assembly
School assemblies are held regularly each Wednesday at 9.15am. Parents are welcome to attend. Awards are presented at this time. Any child receiving an award will be listed in the preceding week’s school newsletter.

Newsletters and Parent Update and Conversation Starters
Each afternoon class staff will send out conversation starters via the ELC Schoolbag app. These will give parents and carers a brief overview of the activities their child has taken part in during the day. The ELC will also send out a newsletter at the end of each term with a roundup of what has been happening in each class, and a parent update will be sent out every Monday with weekly reminders, diary dates etc. The newsletter and update will be sent out via the Schoolbag app and also email.

Interviews
Please feel free to make an appointment to talk to your child’s teacher regarding their progress. Open lines of communication assist both parents and teachers and ultimately benefit the child. Quite often a word from a parent can help teachers understand marked changes in behaviour and attitude.

Interviews with teachers may be arranged before or after school hours, by writing a note to the teacher or by phoning the ELC. The ELC Director is available for interview by appointment.

All questions or issues to do with your child, or any educational aspect can be discussed in the first instance with your child’s class teacher, or the ELC Director.

For all comments and concerns to do with the enrolments, fees and other organisational aspects of the Holy Spirit ELC, parents are encouraged to contact the ELC Director.
**Complaints**
If you feel your concerns have not been dealt with, please contact the School Principal in the first instance, or the Catholic Education Office.

**Limited Access**
It is the obligation of the parent/s to bring to the attention of the ELC Director any limited access or court orders regarding their children and to update them on any changes.

**Mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse**
The Staff at Holy Spirit ELC are mandated to report suspected child abuse under the current ACT legislation.

**Contacting Holy Spirit ELC**
To contact Holy Spirit ELC you can phone on 6162 0488

Or email elc.holyspirit@cg.catholic.edu.au.