

MEMBER MANUAL

Welcome to Highgate Forrest Park Playgroup! We just call ourselves Highgate Playgroup or HPG... ☺
We're so happy to have you join our local, vibrant community of members. We trust that you and your little ones will love your time with us and we look forward to you enjoying our facilities and services for years to come!

Our Committee is always available for questions, concerns and feedback – positive and constructive! We love hearing from our members and love it even more when our members want to contribute and participate to make our little playgroup a valued and cherished part of their weekly routine... So many of us have lots of ideas and enthusiasm and a desire to “give back”, whether it be time, energy, skills, professions... Our members are what makes us great!

It takes a lot of organisation to keep our playgroup running, and so there are some rules and guidelines in place to help. This document gives you all the information you need to know about being a member and outlines the rules, policies, procedures and guidelines that govern Highgate Playgroup, and which all our members must abide by. This ensures Highgate Playgroup remains efficient, organised, financially viable, and above all, fun for everyone!

Kind regards,

Highgate Playgroup Committee ☺

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1 Welcome to Highgate Playgroup

1.1 Our Philosophy

Highgate Playgroup is committed to providing a fun, safe, and nurturing environment for parents and children in our local community. It is for families to come together to socialise, share ideas and experiences, and support one another through this journey of early parenthood. We are dedicated to creating a village of families, a community of people coming together for both parents and their children to learn, grow, thrive and flourish.

Playgroup is for you to:

- play and learn together with your child
- meet other parents/caregivers to share ideas, information and experiences
- develop new friendships
- create a support network with other playgroup members
- become part of your local community
- have fun together

Your children will:

- have fun
- participate in new play experiences
- make local friends
- learn more about their world
- play with and among other children
- respond to other adults
- learn simple rules and routines
- increase their social and communication skills

Highgate Playgroup many families who meet weekly at our dedicated playgroup venue at Forrest Park. Playgroup sessions are available 3 times per day, 5 day a week but are not run due to minimum numbers for sessions. We operate all year round, including public and school holidays. Our facilities are also available for our members to hire for children's birthday parties and other social gatherings.

Our venue is divided into various zones with a wide range of activities for children to explore... Reading/Quiet Zone, Art & Craft Zone, Imaginative Play, Active Zone, Parents Zone and an outdoor playground. We have a wide range of toys, puzzles, dress ups and even an indoor trampoline and slide.

We are fully equipped and cater to the needs of new mothers' groups with comfy sofas for feeding, baby toys, bouncers, activity frames, baby change area and high chairs.

We aim to enrich the lives of our members by becoming a stable, familiar and fun part of parents' and children's weekly routine from infancy to pre-school age, and to foster friendships amongst our members that last well beyond playgroup.

Contact Details

Highgate Forrest Park Playgroup Inc.
Forrest Park, Harold Street, Highgate WA
PO Box 691, Mount Lawley WA 6929
Highgate.playgroup@gmail.com
www.highgateplaygroup.org.au

1.2 Our Rules of Association

Highgate Playgroup is an incorporated association, a member of Playgroup WA and affiliated with Playgroup Australia, an Australian government initiative. We are governed by our Rules of Association and have obligations under the Incorporations Act (WA). Our Rules of Association are the legal, constitutional rules for managing our association and are lodged with the Department of Commerce, as required under the Act. All members are provided with a copy of the Rules of Association at the time of enrolment.

This document, our Members Manual, outlines our policies, procedures and guidelines which govern the day-to-day operation of playgroup. It provides all the information needed for the efficient and successful operating of Highgate Playgroup. This document is referred to in our Rules of Association as a policy document that all members must abide by.

A successful playgroup is one where everyone is involved and helps out with the duties and activities required to keep us running. This results in a fun, organised, and efficient playgroup with everyone being a part of, and feeling connected to, our vibrant and dedicated community of members.

All members are required to comply with these documents and must acknowledge at the time of enrolling that they have read and understood these documents which are the terms and conditions that Highgate Playgroup operates under.

1.3 Our Committee

It is a legal requirement for the functioning of a non-profit organisation such as ourselves to have a committee. The committee members are empowered under the Rules of Association to manage the affairs of Highgate Playgroup. Without a committee we simply cannot operate. Our committee is made up of current members or community members who volunteer their time and energy to ensure the successful running of Highgate Playgroup. The current committee consists of the following roles:

- Chairperson
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Enrolments Officer
- Purchasing Officer

A contacts list of the current committee is placed on the noticeboard.

Any member of Highgate Playgroup, provided they are over 18 and not ineligible under the Act, can be a committee member. Being a committee member can be a very rewarding experience and way to give back to your local playgroup and put your professional skills to good use! We encourage all members, especially those with skills in management, accounting, marketing, secretarial and administration, IT/social media, or even just a keen organiser, to get involved with our committee. It can be the primary member who attends playgroup each week, or another person in the family who might want to get involved and volunteer skills and services, such as Dad or Grandparents. Remember, there are many ways to get involved that may not involve taking on a formal committee role, so if you're keen just ask and offer!

1.4 Committee Meetings

The Highgate Playgroup Committee meets quarterly to share ideas and make plans on how to make Highgate Playgroup an even better place to be. We like our meetings to be relaxed, engaging and fun. We keep it light and social, with a glass of wine and a cheese plate even on offer.

Meetings are held online or at Highgate Playgroup on a weeknight, starting at 8.30pm and usually finishing up by 9.30pm. Committee meeting dates and times will be posted on the noticeboard at the Centre and members will be emailed in advance asking for input and feedback.

A representative from each session is encouraged to attend committee meetings. By attending meetings you can keep up-to-date on Highgate Playgroup affairs, and provide feedback on what the members of your group need. Meetings are also an important way the Committee can disseminate information and expectations to all members, as Group Reps are required to communicate discussions back to their groups. Minutes of each meeting will be emailed to the Committee and Group Reps within 4 weeks of the meeting.

It is encouraged that all playgroup sessions are represented at each Committee meeting. Consistent failure to do so may result in suspension or termination of membership as allowed under the Rules of Association, and the group losing the session time to another group waitlisted.

1.5 Fees and Membership

Highgate Playgroup relies solely on the fees from members to operate. All funds received go back into Highgate Playgroup in order to ensure its ongoing viability and long term success. Fees have been calculated to cover the cost of operating our building lease and utilities, building maintenance, IT systems and website marketing, purchase of age appropriate toys, and maintaining stock of general consumables.

Memberships to Highgate Playgroup are set on an annual basis and are valid for each calendar year. Memberships must be renewed at the start of each calendar year, and are payable up front and in full.. Members joining throughout the year are entitled to fees pro-rated on a quarterly basis. Due to several administrative reasons, we are unable to offer “pay as you go” memberships.

Membership fees for Highgate Playgroup include membership to Playgroup WA, which gives many benefits and discounts around WA. It is compulsory for all members to be enrolled with PGWA and covered by insurance. The PGWA membership fee is not pro-rated or refundable but is transferable to other playgroups, provided the membership number is given.

Membership fees are non-refundable. Applications may be made to the committee at the time of enrolment for special circumstances, approval of which are at the committee’s sole discretion.

Highgate Playgroup is a community organisation existing only to serve parents and families in our community. No group has “exclusive” access to a session time and all members are required to be welcoming and open for new prospective members wishing to join Playgroup.

Highgate Playgroup’s Enrolment Procedure outlines the rules and guidelines on how enrolments and memberships are managed. See item 3.1 below

1.6 Insurance & Attendance Register

Highgate Playgroup is a member of Playgroup WA (Inc) who arrange for all our public liability insurance needs. It is compulsory for all members to have their PGWA membership in place. Membership fees to Highgate Playgroup include this cost and our Enrolments team arrange for your membership.

Insurance cover extends to all playgroup sessions. An important requirement of this insurance cover is that we can prove that a playgroup session was being held at the time of an incident. Therefore, it is a requirement of all members to sign the Attendance Register on the admin desk every time you enter and leave playgroup.

This insurance DOES NOT cover medical expenses normally covered by Medicare, but does cover for public liability against playgroup members, personal injury and various other costs.

The PGWA membership fee is transferable to other playgroups. This means that if a member wishes to leave Highgate Playgroup and join another playgroup then they are not required to pay the PGWA fee again. The Enrolments team can advise you of your PGWA member number if required.

1.7 Older children at Playgroup

Playgroup WA's policy, which Highgate Playgroup adopts, is that playgroup is for children aged 0 – 5 years old. Membership to Highgate Playgroup is for families with children aged 0-5 years. However we understand that on occasion (school holidays for example) older siblings may attend playgroup. Therefore, Playgroup WA has ensured that the insurance policy extends to cover children of registered member families up to the age of 18 years old. In order to be covered by insurance, all children attending playgroup sessions must be signed in and out of the Attendance Register.

It is important to be aware that the risk of accidents increases when older children are playing amongst smaller children. It is up to each session to ensure appropriate supervision is in place between multi aged groups, care is taken with older kids using baby toys, and that the "Appropriate Use of Toys/Equipment Policy" is adhered to (see item 3.4 below).

1.8 Playgroup Session Information

Playgroup sessions are available 3 times per day, Monday to Friday and on Saturday morning, all year round, including school holidays. Unlike other playgroup centres, our centre is dedicated to Highgate Playgroup and we organise the centre to suit our needs – we don't share the venue with others. Session times are organised for morning (9-11am), noon (12-2pm) and afternoon (3-5pm). Each session runs for 2 hours. Children's ages in each session vary and we will always try to place children of similar or the same age together.

We do not engage or employ teachers, carers or facilitators. Each group organises and runs their own sessions based on their individual needs and ages of their children. This ranges from structured activities such as arts and crafts, to free play, or a mixture of both. This allows parents to come together with their children in a way that suits their own group.

Each session is responsible for the opening and closing of the playgroup themselves. The lockbox code will be provided to the Group Representative and Alternate Group Representatives. It is up to the groups to communicate with each other (e.g. via sms, Whatsapp, email or Facebook) about attendance each week and ensuring access for other group members.

2 Member Expectations

2.1 Member Code of Conduct

Highgate Playgroup exists only to serve the local community, fostering relationships between parents and children. Our aim is to provide a fun, safe and nurturing environment that supports both parents and children during the early childhood years.

All members have the right to

- Be treated fairly, equally and with respect by the Association, its Committee and all other members
- Socialise in an environment free from all forms of harassment and discrimination.
- Privacy and confidentiality concerning records, documentation and any other communication containing a member's personal information, unless consent is otherwise provided or as otherwise required under the Act.
- Be informed and actively involved in all Playgroup events and offerings
- Voice their opinions, requirements and suggestions to the Committee.

Members must:

- Treat other members, guests, potential members, children and other visitors to Highgate Playgroup fairly, equally and with friendliness, respect and courtesy.
- Ensure that their child(ren) behaves in a manner that allows for the safe enjoyment of Playgroup by all.
- Take an active role in guiding their child(ren) in a positive manner, while encouraging them to share equipment and toys, and to get along with others.
- Maintain the Highgate Playgroup venue, its facilities, and its contents/assets, by treating it with care and respect, and ensuring that their child(ren) do the same.
- Behave responsibly and ensure they conduct themselves in a manner that will not harm the reputation of Highgate Playgroup.
- Not physically or verbally harass others
- Report any inappropriate behaviour to the Committee for action and follow up
- Abide by and uphold the Rules of Association, the Member Operating Procedures and the Code of Conduct
- Keep all membership details up to date, and pay any membership fees as and when they fall due.

2.2 Members Duty of Care

Parents and care givers have a duty of care to all other members, including children, whilst attending Playgroup.

Parents and care givers are fully responsible for the security, safety and discipline of their own children and/or those in their care, and they should take all necessary steps to minimise the risk of accidents. Children should be supervised at all times. Supervision of children should always be by a specific, responsible adult who has agreed with the parents to take care of the child. Child minding is not part of Playgroup. It is the duty of all individuals to ensure they protect the children in their care from injury.

All members have a responsibility to speak up and act immediately if they observe any unsafe toys, equipment, surroundings, behaviours, practices or actions, or any other situations or circumstances to be a risk to the safety and security of other members and children.

2.3 Role of Group Representative

The role of Group Representatives within Highgate Playgroup is extremely important, although not demanding. Throughout the year, new members will be added to many of our existing groups, and it is to the Group Reps that we send them. We ask that all Group Representatives do their best to make new members feel welcome and help them to settle in to playgroup.

Group Reps also provide the committee with an essential group contact, which helps us to organise playgroup and coordinate fundraising, volunteers and distribution of information.

These are some of the responsibilities of the Group Rep which will arise during the year. It is the responsibility of ALL members to know and to understand what the duties of the Group Rep are, and to provide support and assistance to their Rep at all times to ensure they are completed.

The duties of the Group Rep or Alternate Rep include;

- Being responsible for the keys and opening up/closing of the room for your session
- Making sure every member signs the attendance file every week
- Ensuring the end of session checklist is completed, and that the room is left in clean and tidy, with the checklist signed off
- Attending and participating in committee meetings and disseminating information back to your group.
- Ensuring that all members of your group are informed of upcoming events and encouraging members to participate in any fundraising efforts organised throughout the year
- Organising the completion of your group's rostered busy bee
- Ensuring that playgroup rules are followed, and that any issues arising within the group are dealt with.
- Providing the committee with a contact person, through whom we can communicate with the group, and responding to communication in a timely manner
- Welcoming new members and inducting them into how Highgate Playgroup operates.

2.4 Cleaning and Busy Bees

Highgate Playgroup relies on our community of members to chip in with keeping our facility clean and tidy to ensure that all members can freely and fairly use our wonderful facilities. We rely on members to take responsibility for cleaning up after each session to ensure the facility is "as you would like to find it", as it is too expensive for us to employ daily cleaners or care-takers to set up and clean up the facility after each session.

All members are required to pack away and clean up after each and every session. The "End of Session Cleaning Procedure & Checklist" has been provided to ensure expectations and standards are clear. This checklist can be found on the front of the sign-in folder and is attached in Appendices below.

"Busy Bees" are an important function in order to keep our costs down. Whilst we engage a professional cleaner to come fortnightly, their scope is limited to general cleaning and does not include the more in depth "spring cleaning" like inside cupboards and cleaning toys/equipment. Each session is required to complete their rostered Busy Bee within their scheduled month, usually only occurring for each session once or twice per year. It is designed to take 4 people approximately 2 hours to complete.

Each group can decide how and when to complete their Busy Bee (either during their session or at night with music, food and drinks!). The Busy Bee Procedure and Checklist has been provided to ensure expectations and standards are clear.

The Committee will send Group Reps a reminder when their allocated month is coming up.

2.5 Volunteering / Offering up Skills & Experience

Highgate Playgroup has a diverse membership group. Aside from being parents, we all have our unique and valued professions, skills, abilities, or knowledge that could be useful to the successful running of Highgate Playgroup. We hope that by creating a community of engaged parents, dedicated to seeing Highgate Playgroup thrive, our members will offer up their skills, experience, equipment etc to help us keep playgroup running. The more people that help out, the less work there is for everyone. Some examples of members who have helped us out with various professions and skills

- A dad is a partner in a law firm and helped with drafting and adopting our Rules of Association
- A dad owned his own IT/Web design company and helped us design and host our website & membership online system
- A mum is a marketing executive who designed our posters, flyers and other marketing material
- A mum & dad team are both architects who designed, project managed and executed much of our interior renovation
- A granddad is an excellent handyman and helped with cabinetry and other renovation work
- A mum is an excellent seamstress who offered to sew, fix and mend our dress ups

Offering skills and professions does not need to mean that you take a role on the Committee (although it is helpful if you are an accountant that you might take the Treasurer role for example!). It just means that you may have something that you can offer playgroup that could help make us bigger, brighter and better... And even if you don't have any particular professional skills, your time is always appreciated!

3 Operating Policies & Procedures

The Highgate Playgroup Committee is dedicated to ensuring that playgroup is kept running safely, efficiently, and in an organised and transparent manner for all our members. These policies and procedures are applicable to all members. Consistent failure to comply with these policies and procedures may result in the suspension or termination of membership as allowed under the Rules of Association, and the group losing the session time to another group waitlisted.

The Highgate Playgroup Committee reserves the absolute right in its own discretion to an immediate termination of membership where any member has deliberately or negligently caused, or had the potential to cause, a serious incident affecting the safety of other members and children, whether the issue is directly stipulated in these policies or not.

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Enrolment Policy

Highgate Playgroup Committee is dedicated to ensuring that all enrolment procedures are fair and equitable for all members and prospective members. This Policy has been adopted by the Committee to ensure that membership and enrolment procedures are clear and transparent for all.

Memberships to Highgate Playgroup are set on an annual basis and are valid for each calendar year. Memberships must be renewed at the start of each calendar year, and are payable upfront and in full. Members joining throughout the year are entitled to fees pro rated on a quarterly basis.

Highgate Playgroup does not offer “pay as you go” memberships.

Membership fees are non refundable. Applications for refunds may be made to the committee at the time of enrolment for special circumstances, approval of which are at the committee’s sole discretion.

Each session time must have a minimum of four (4) fully paid members to be considered viable. This is to ensure that costs are covered, session times are optimised as much as possible, and improve the sustainability of the group.

Once a group reaches between 12 and 15 families a consideration is made, in consultation with the Enrolments Officer, to classify that particular session as “full”. This number is used as a guideline only and each session is assessed on its circumstances. This becomes particularly important where families have more than one child attending, as some groups may have up to 17 children attending of varying ages.

Where groups have less than 12 financial members, new members will be encouraged to join these times, or groups encouraged to merge with other smaller groups. This allows full session times to be made available for larger groups wishing to join, and is particularly important at times when Highgate Playgroup is in high demand. Highgate Playgroup is a community organisation existing only to serve parents and families in our community. No group has “exclusive” access to a session and all members are required to be welcoming and open for new prospective members wishing to join Playgroup.

A waiting list may be established for high demand session times, such as the morning sessions. Priority over available session times will always be given to established groups wishing to move times before opening it to new groups joining Highgate Playgroup. Groups of babies & toddlers, up to approximately 15 months, will always be encouraged to secure the 12-2pm session time.

Fees are set each year at the Annual General Meeting. Members will be notified of the new Schedule of Fees for each new year. Highgate Playgroup fees will always include and disclose the compulsory Playgroup WA membership fee. It is compulsory for all members to be enrolled with PGWA to be covered by insurance (this will be completed by the Enrolment Officer on behalf of the member). The PGWA membership fee is not pro rated or refundable but is transferable to other playgroups, provided the membership number is given.

Prospective members are entitled to two (2) free trials, of different or the same session time. After this they must register and pay fees before attending again the next week, to continue attending Highgate Playgroup and to be covered by insurance.

Except in special pre-arranged circumstances, all members are required to complete their enrolment and make payment via our website registration system.

Cleaning & Maintenance Policy

The Highgate Playgroup Committee is dedicated to providing a clean, tidy and well maintained venue for our members to enjoy.

All members have a responsibility to ensure that the Highgate Playgroup venue is left in a clean and tidy state for the next session and that the End of Session Checklist has been completed.

All members must participate in the allocated Busy Bee roster and notify the Deputy Chairperson when it has been completed. The Committee shall inform the Group Representative and all group members in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the allocated month of their nominated month and rostered duties.

All members have a responsibility to immediately remove any risk, make safe and report to the Committee any broken toys and equipment or any building maintenance issue.

All members have a Duty of Care to themselves and to other members and children that, in attempting to fix any problem, another risk or hazard has not been created. No attempts to fix anything of an electrical, heavy or overhead nature should be undertaken without proper assessments and authorisations.

3.1 End of Session Cleaning Procedure

Every member must complete the End of Session Checklist at the end of each and every session. The latest checklist is attached in the Appendices.

This checklist may be updated from time to time. The latest version shall always be available at the front of the Attendance folder inside Playgroup.

3.2 Monthly Busy Bee Roster and Busy Bee Duties Procedure

All members must participate in the monthly Busy Bee roster.

The roster shall be published and all groups notified as and when updates are made.

The Committee shall distribute the monthly required duties to the allocated group in writing at least one month prior to the allocated month.

The Group Representative is responsible for ensuring that the Committee is informed once the busy bee is completed, along with any notification of maintenance issues.

3.3 Reporting of Maintenance Issues

All members have a responsibility to remove any risk, make safe and report to the Committee any broken toys and equipment or any building maintenance issue. This can be done by either disposing of the damaged item, or removing it from the area and clearly labelling/identifying the item and issue.

No member should attempt to fix anything of an electrical, heavy or overhead nature without proper assessments or authorisations.

The issue/s must be reported immediately to the Committee via the generic email address Highgate.playgroup@gmail.com

The Committee member as nominated, must action any building maintenance issue through the building lease holder, the City of Vincent.

Appropriate Behaviour Policy

The Highgate Playgroup Committee is dedicated to ensuring that all children feel safe and protected whenever at playgroup.

The following Behavioural Rules have been designed to ensure all members are aware of the standards and expectations of appropriate behaviour at playgroup.

Behavioural Rule #1 All children must be supervised by a parent or carer at all times.

Children under the age of 5 have very little self control, and while the purpose of Playgroup is to learn the important skills of socialising with others and sharing and experiencing new things, it can be challenging for young children to always exhibit appropriate behaviour during the learning process.

When behaviour issues arise it is essential that parents use the opportunity to discourage negative behaviour and demonstrate what behaviour is expected of the children. When more than one child is involved, both parents need to participate in the behaviour management process.

It is important for all children to see that issues are being dealt with consistently and fairly, to assist them in learning what behaviours are and are not acceptable at playgroup.

Occasionally a parent or carer may be busy with another child (eg nappy change) or in the kitchen (eg cutting fruit). In this instance it is important that another Playgroup parent steps in to mediate the disagreement. This helps children to learn that inappropriate behaviour will not be tolerated just because it was not seen by their parent.

Behavioural Rule #2 Children of different ages shall learn to interact in appropriate ways with each other.

In a multi-age or family playgroup there are usually children of all ages playing within the same space. It is extremely important that the behaviour of all children is managed in a way that allows every child to get the most out of their playgroup time.

Older children must not be rough or aggressive towards younger children.

This sort of behaviour can impact on the younger child's sense of security and can make them fearful of playing in environments with older children. It can also be extremely upsetting for parents to see their children victimised, and this can lead to negative feelings within the group.

Younger children must not be allowed to 'ruin' an older child's game or activity.

It is easy for us, as adults, to excuse a younger child's behaviour due to their age and lack of understanding. However, allowing small children to repeatedly 'ruin' an older child's game or activity can be extremely damaging to the older child's sense of self worth. Children can put a lot of effort into building a duplo house or a sand castle, and really feel like they have achieved something amazing. For another child to break it, and parents to shrug it off with a 'never mind, they're just little', undermines the value of their achievement, and can make older children resentful of younger children. This resentment can be expressed through negative behaviour.

The solution to both issues is supervision. Children of all ages can play beautifully together, when provided with the parental guidance needed to overcome difficult situations.

Behavioural Rule #3 We must share the toys.

The toys at playgroup are (within the appropriate age range) for everyone to share. It is important that children do not snatch or take toys away from others. If this does occur, it is important that a parent steps in and mediates the return of the item.

Sometimes there may be only one of an item at playgroup eg the trampoline. It is important that all children are allowed a turn on such items, and need to be guided on how to share with other members of the group. Children should be encouraged to sit and wait for their turn, have their turn for a set amount of time, then hop off to allow another child to have a go.

Where children play side by side eg the dolls house, parents may need to ensure that enough equipment is available for all children who want to play, and encourage them to play 'together', rather than trying to push others out of the way

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Behavioural Rule #4 There should be no dangerous behaviour at playgroup.

Children should not be allowed to behave in a way that is dangerous to themselves or to others. It is important to recognise that children of different ages, and with different natures, will play in different ways, however our highest priority is the safety of all members of playgroup, and therefore some behaviours, that may in fact be allowed at home, are not allowed at playgroup.

Dangerous behaviours include;

- Swinging or throwing equipment.
- Riding dangerously.
- Pushing.
- Riding or pushing toys onto (or off) the playground equipment.
- Playing with doors.
- Riding trikes or cars on or near the babies' floor mat area with babies nearby

If any parent believes a behaviour could result in injury to any child, it is essential that they step in, discourage the behaviour and explain to the child what is expected. If needed, the toy being used or child may need to be removed from the situation.

All children have the right to feel safe while at playgroup.

If a problem arises within your playgroup, please see the Dispute Resolution Guidelines to guide you in addressing the issue. For more information, consult Section 16 – “Managing Challenging Behaviour” of the Playgroup WA (Inc) Manual, pp 89-94, available online to all members. Note: Some of this information is directly from this manual

3.4 Appropriate use of Toys & Equipment Policy & Procedure

Parents are responsible for selecting the age appropriate toys for their children to use while at playgroup. This applies to toddlers using older kids' toys, as well as older kids using baby toys.

Baby toys (including the baby floor mat) are for use by babies ONLY.. No trikes or ride-ons are to be on the soft mat.

Big kids' toys are for older children, and should not be given to younger children to play with as they contain small parts.

In multi age family groups, parents and carers will need to supervise the use of the big kids toys very carefully, to ensure the safety of all children and that babies do not accidentally get hold of small parts.

All members are required to tidy up the toys after every use.

Toys shall be placed back into the correct labelled box, and placed neatly to the correct spot on the shelf in the toy storeroom.

If unclear as to where the toy belongs, please refer to the box labelling system to find the correct box. All boxes on the shelf are labelled numerically and are to be placed in order.

All larger toys, such as tonka trucks, trikes, cars, etc shall be first wiped down for any visible sand and dirt if they have been used outside before being placed back into the storeroom or their appropriate cupboard.

All walkers, toys, doll prams, trolleys etc shall be placed neatly and in an organised fashion inside the toy cupboard. There is ample space for all toys to be neatly placed in an organised way on the storeroom shelves and floorspace and still have walk-in access to the shelving.

All arts and crafts used during the session shall be cleaned away and tidied up after every use.

Children (and parents) are not allowed to throw, kick, stand on, pull off parts or in any way abuse the playgroup toys.

It is everyone's responsibility to ensure that our toys are maintained in a good condition so that everyone can enjoy them.

3.5 Dispute Resolution Guidelines

The Highgate Playgroup Committee is committed to providing a safe play area for all members to enjoy equally, fairly and to be treated with respect by everyone.

Playgroup is a no hurting zone. All members must be valued and respected. This means that children must be prevented, where possible, from hurting or intimidating others. Such behaviour is unacceptable.

Accidents, however, can happen - and accidents sometimes occur when parents may not be looking. Our suggested approach for the management of inappropriate behaviour is the following.

- If (for example), one child has pushed another over, and a dispute arises - both parents/carers must mediate the situation. Calmly ask each child to describe what happened. Call for witnesses if necessary. Ask the offender to apologise nicely; invite the other child to accept the apology graciously. Good manners can be learned early - these may as well begin in Playgroup.
- If event re-occurs, separate the children. Remove the offender to another corner of the room and distract with another activity.
- If a child persists with hurtful, destructive behaviour the parent/carer needs to remove the child from the vicinity of others for some 'quiet time' until he/she is ready to play once more without hurting others.
- If incident occurs yet again, parent/carer is responsible for removing child from Playgroup for that day.
- If child persists with hurtful behaviour over successive sessions and the parent in question is unable/refuses to moderate the child's disruptive behaviour, the issue should be raised with the Group Representative.

The Group Representative should:

- speak quietly and discreetly with both parties at the earliest opportunity, offering the support of the group
- assemble the facts - ensuring that all points of view are taken on board
- ensure the child is not victimised for their behaviour
- ensure that help is given to the parent/carer with younger children, so they can have closer interaction with the child for the time of the Playgroup session
- anticipate trouble before it happens (this requires keen supervision, but it's worth the effort)
- direct the child to activities that will provide outlets for energy

If disruptive behaviour persists and is upsetting other parents (and their children), the Group Representation can raise the matter with the Playgroup Committee. The Committee will make a decision and respond in writing outlining suggestions for resolving the grievance. If no resolution, a letter of warning (from the Committee) will be written. If there is still no change, the family will be asked by the Committee not to return. Any paid membership fees will be not be reimbursed.

For more information, see Grievance Policy in this manual, or consult Section 15 – “Dealing With Conflict” of the Playgroup WA (Inc) Manual, pp 85-88, available online to all members. Note: Some of this information is directly from this manual.

3.6 Grievance Policy

It is an unfortunate fact of life that grievances will periodically arise during Playgroup. Often the source of a grievance is inappropriate or challenging behaviour by either a child or adult that is causing harm to other members.

The process outlined below is to assist members in how to make a formal complaint, to whom it should be made, and how it will be handled.

To Group Representative:

It is tempting to hope that certain problems will simply 'go away', but sadly the reality is that unresolved conflict has the potential to cause negative feelings for years to come. Try to handle conflict sensitively and positively and arrive at outcomes that benefit everyone. This will serve to strengthen your group.

If you are experiencing difficulties resolving a problem in your session, please raise the issue with the Committee, who will then take the appropriate steps to address it. You can also contact the Playgroup WA Helpline if you are unsure of what steps to take.

3.7 Privacy Policy

The Highgate Playgroup Committee respects the privacy of all our members.

Any and all of the information collected will be kept strictly confidential and will not be sold, reused, rented, disclosed, or loaned.

Any information you provide will be held with the utmost care and will not be used in ways to which you have not consented or in any ways that contravenes the requirements under the Incorporations Act and our Rules of Association.

3.8 Purchasing Policy

The Highgate Playgroup Committee is committed to ensuring a fair and equitable purchasing policy is adhered to, and shall ensure full and open disclosure or any conflicts of interest. The Committee values our environment and our responsibility as a global citizen for socially responsible and fair trade. It is committed to ensuring that any products used at the facility are environmentally and socially friendly.

Highgate Playgroup provides a standard choice of tea, coffee, milk and general kitchen and bathroom/cleaning supplies for our members to use. There shall be a standard list of items, as approved by the Committee, which shall form the provisions supplied for members use.

The Purchasing Officer, or nominated Committee member, shall ensure that appropriate levels of stock are maintained.

All purchases made on behalf of Playgroup must be first approved by the Playgroup Committee and shall be supported by purchase receipts.

Any expense claims must be lodged to the Treasurer, and approved by the Chairperson, with the appropriate expense form and supporting receipts.

The Treasurer shall pay any approved expense claims in the next payment run, not longer than 4 weeks from submission of the claim, via direct EFT.

The Highgate Playgroup Committee is committed to supporting local business and, in particular, the businesses of our members. The Committee may, in its discretion, accept donations or discounted products or services to be used at Playgroup in exchange for promoting that business to our members. In these instances, the following rules shall apply,

- The business must be directly owned and operated by a current, paid member
- The products and/or services offered must be able to be directly used at or by Playgroup (eg, cleaning products). Highgate Playgroup will not endorse products or services that it does not have direct use or need for.
- The business values must be aligned with Highgate Playgroup's values on using eco and sustainable products.
- The member must submit to the Committee in writing its proposal for supplying products, including a statement about its company mission and values.
- The products may be donated, or purchased at a discount, and the arrangement shall be disclosed via signage on the inside noticeboard.
- Where there are multiple businesses of a similar nature, the Committee shall determine a roster or schedule, that ensures fair and equal treatment of each business.
- The business shall be promoted via the Facebook page (public and closed group) and through signage located inside Playgroup.
- If the member proposing their business holds a voting position on the Committee, that member shall disclose their conflict of interest and shall not be allowed to vote in decisions regarding their own business or take up of their businesses products (to the extent that there is a financial transaction with Highgate Playgroup)
- Highgate Playgroup is held harmless and is fully indemnified against all claims whatsoever and in whatever nature for dealings between any members and businesses promoted through playgroup.

Highgate Playgroup may from time to time send or post on Facebook information on products and service offers it receives from 3rd parties. It will be clearly noted that Highgate Playgroup does not endorse this product or service, it is merely passing information.

3.9 Fundraising Policy

Highgate Playgroup may undertake various forms of fundraising throughout the year to help support playgroup activities.

All members are required to assist and support fundraising activities wherever and however possible..

Highgate Playgroup is a not-for-profit association and does not align itself with any political parties or positions. Any donations received are accepted without any guarantees or promises for political support.

Likewise any members volunteering for Playgroup are representing Highgate Playgroup as a member family and shall not use the opportunity for any self promotion of businesses or political positions or anything of this nature.

The Committee may, in its sole discretion, approve the donation of products or services to be sold in fundraising activities in exchange for marketing and promotion to its members. For example, the donation of goods and services for a raffle where money raised goes directly to Highgate Playgroup.

3.10 Party & Private Function Venue Hire Policy

Highgate Playgroup is available for members, and member family and friends, to hire for private events, such as children's birthday parties.

The venue may only be hired by individuals for any reason of a "passive nature", such as children's parties, book clubs or community meetings. The venue may not be hired for profit-gaining businesses or other incorporations or associations (due to insurance requirements).

Any private hires shall be conducted around, and without interruption to, existing playgroup sessions, unless agreed by the affected session.

The hire fees and terms and conditions are set by the Highgate Playgroup Committee and are subject to review and amendment from time to time.

The Committee shall ensure that a nominated committee position is responsible for managing private function hires, including ensuring that the appropriate signed lease documentation is in place for all hires.

All applications to hire Highgate Playgroup venue shall be submitted to the Committee in writing who shall, in its own discretion, approve the hire, its price, and its terms and conditions.

Any playgroup sessions that immediately follow a private function are expected to report on the state of playgroup following a party and report back to the Committee. This report will be taken into consideration to determine the return of the Hirer's bond money.

4 Health and Safety Policy

The Highgate Playgroup Committee is committed to ensuring the health, safety, security and welfare of the playgroup environment for all its members, volunteers and visitors. We regard the minimization of hazards and risks as both a collective and individual responsibility.

The purpose of this policy is to ensure all Highgate Playgroup members are aware that as members of the playgroup they have a duty of care under associated legislation to provide and maintain, collectively and individually, so far as practicable, an environment that is safe and without risks to health.

Highgate Playgroup is committed to:

- Undertaking risk management activities to adequately assess and manage risks to members in the centre
- Ensuring that all toys, equipment and facilities are safe and without risk to health when used in accordance with standard operating procedures
- Providing a system to adequately manage emergency response and ensuring this system is displayed at the centre
- Regularly reviewing and evaluating Health and Safety Management systems, including audits and inspections of the playgroup premises

In the unfortunate event of an accident occurring during your playgroup session, please fill in and send the secretary an Incident Report Form (hard copy available in the Attendance folder or available via email) to record the incident for both insurance purposes and also as a matter for the Committee to follow up.

4.1 Security & Safety Guidelines

Every parent and caregiver attending playgroup must be responsible for the welfare and safety of their own children, but there is also a collective responsibility to ensure everyone can play safely.

Please ensure the following:

- You maintain caution when arriving and leaving the playgroup in and around the Forrest Park Clubrooms carpark – this includes whichever method you use to transport your children (car, bikes, prams, walking and holding hands, etc)
- You keep the security door locked when everyone is playing inside.
- You adequately supervise your child, this includes when they go to the toilet.
- You are careful with fences, gates and doors, to ensure no children are put at risk of having doors closed on them or fingers jammed in hinges, etc
- You maintain appropriate safety in the kitchen are careful with hot drinks, knives, etc
- You have read this manual and the policies and procedures which are included in it
- You know where to find emergency numbers for fire, the First Aid Kit, and the Incident Report Form

All members must note that the playground immediately outside Playgroup is a public playground open to the community, not dedicated to Highgate Playgroup.

All members are entitled to keep the doors locked and are under no obligation to let any strangers or non members inside the venue for whatever reason (such as to use toilets or kitchen etc) if they do not feel comfortable doing so.

4.2 Immunisation and Infectious Diseases Guidelines

Children should not attend Playgroup if they are unwell.

Symptoms which should exclude a child from attending Playgroup:

- Children with known or suspected communicable diseases. eg. measles, mumps, etc.
- Children should not attend playgroup until the incubation period recommended by their doctor has passed.
- Infected skin or eyes, or an undiagnosed rash (including conjunctivitis)
- Children should not attend playgroup until the prescribed drops/cream or treatment is completed or the incubation period recommended by the doctor has passed
- Severe itching, dry skin of either body or scalp if caused by head or body lice or scabies. Children should not attend playgroup until the prescribed drops/cream or treatment is completed or the incubation period recommended by the doctor has passed
- Unexplained diarrhoea or loose stool (may or may not be combined with vomiting). These symptoms may indicate a bacterial or viral gastrointestinal infection, which is very easily passed from one child to another. The child should not attend until all symptom have fully ceased for 48 hours
- Nausea and vomiting may be early signs of illness. The child should not attend until all symptom have fully ceased for 48 hours.
- A common cold, with listlessness, green runny nose, watery eyes, persistent cough or sore throat. Once the child's temperature, wellbeing and energy have returned to normal, the child is no longer contagious, and may be able to attend Playgroup while coughing; clear runny nose may persist. Generally, a person who catches a cold can spread it for one day before symptoms appear, and about 5 days after the cold symptoms (above) begin. If the symptoms (runny nose and eyes, coughing) are caused by an allergy (eg. hay fever, asthma) the child is not contagious and can attend
- Difficulty in breathing, wheezing or a persistent cough. The child should not attend playgroup until the symptoms have fully ceased or the child is diagnosed as not contagious
- Fever accompanied by symptoms such as listlessness or sluggishness may be a sign of an illness. The child should not attend playgroup until symptoms have ceased or the child is diagnosed as not contagious
- Sore throat or trouble swallowing. The child should not attend playgroup until symptoms have ceased or the child is diagnosed as not contagious
- Pain - any complaint of unexplained or undiagnosed pain (not including complaints such as teething). The child should not attend playgroup until symptoms have ceased or the child is diagnosed as not contagious

All members will be informed equally if it becomes known by the Committee that any child from any session has been diagnosed with a contagious illness that may pose a risk to other children.

For questions regarding specific communicable diseases it is important to contact the Health Department to receive the latest information and current policies.

Health Direct is a 24-hour hotline for health information from the Health Department. Telephone: 1800 022 222. For general information go to the WA Health Department at www.health.wa.gov.au/home

Strategies to prevent transmission of infection:

- Hand washing with soap and water for at least 15 seconds before preparing or eating food, after using the toilet, changing nappies, after blowing your nose with a hanky or tissue, and after any contamination of the hands with body fluids such as blood and vomit.
- Effective cleaning with detergent and water, followed by rinsing and drying will remove the bulk of germs from environmental surfaces
- Use of appropriate cleaning tools and use of protective personal equipment (gloves, masks) are important and should be easily accessible to clean up spills immediately, to prevent further environmental contamination.

These strategies are general recommendations, however, if you are concerned about individual children who present with an infection, contact your health provider to discuss and agree on a plan of action.

4.3 Smoking Guidelines

Highgate Forrest Park Playgroup is a non-smoking venue, therefore smoking in or around the premises is not permitted. This includes within the playground perimeters.

4.4 SunSmart Guidelines

It is important to take precautions when children are playing outdoors. Avoid permanent damage to the children's skin because of over-exposure.

Consider the following:

- Encourage children to use shaded areas
- Avoid exposure to the sun during the hottest part of the day (10am to 3pm)
- Dress in shirts with collars and long sleeves
- Wear legionnaire style or wider brimmed hats to protect the neck, face and ears
- Adults and children should comply to a "no hat no outdoor play" rule
- All members are encouraged to use a broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen that is at least 30+ and apply every two hours to those parts of the body that cannot be covered, including hands and feet
- Adults model SunSmart practices
- Provide water for drinking; cordials and sweet drinks do not quench the thirst as well as water, and may attract European wasps

Contact the Cancer Council WA for further information at www.cancerwa.asn.au or on 08 9212 4333

4.5 Hygiene Guidelines

Children learn a great deal through observation of behaviour of their parents/caregivers and other children. The best way to teach children about good hygiene is to make sure we practise good habits ourselves.

Hand Hygiene (using water and soap or a waterless hand rub) should be practiced:

- At the start and end of every play session
- Before preparing/serving food
- Before and after assisting children to eat
- Before and after assisting a child in the toilet , or changing a nappy
- After blowing your nose, sneezing or coughing
- Before and after touching any cut, wounds or rashes (yours, or the child)
- After handling dirty items , e.g. handling rubbish
- After handling/patting animals
- When your hands are visibly dirty

For more information on Hand Hygiene, please refer to <http://www.hha.org.au/home.aspx>.

Please also ensure you are:

- Mopping up a variety of kitchen spills, paint and glue spills, etc. with different cloths or sponges than used on food preparation surfaces
- Using the appropriate bins for disposal of used tissues, soiled cloths, and nappies
- Cleaning up blood, vomit and faeces with disposable gloves and tissues or paper towels
- Adequately washing and storing crockery, cutlery, plastic bowls
- Adequately washing toys that have come in to contact with any bodily fluids
- Sweeping, mopping and vacuuming after every session

- For more information, please refer to Section 12 “Health and Safety” of the Playgroup WA (Inc) Manual, pp 67-78, available at <http://playgroupwa.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/PGWA-Online-Manual.pdf>.
- Food Handling and Food Safety Guidelines

Highgate Playgroup is a nut-aware environment. This is due to the high incidence of nut allergies and potential anaphylactic reactions within our playgroup community. Therefore, we highly recommend no nuts (or food products containing nuts) are brought into the playgroup.

It is up to each group or session to discuss amongst themselves the practices they are comfortable with in regard to sharing food amongst children (eg shared morning or afternoon tea). All members are asked to be conscious and aware of the potential of food allergies within their group and to bring appropriate food.

All members should ensure to wash their hands and ensure all utensils are clean prior to cutting/preparing food for the children.

All food should be removed from the premises after every session.

All parents and carers are responsible for the food safety requirements when sharing food amongst children. Highgate Playgroup assumes no liability or responsibility for any food or food products brought onto the premises.

5 Emergency Procedures

5.1 Responding to Threatening Individuals

At no time should any member undertake heroics that may endanger themselves or act in any way to compromise their own safety.

- Remain calm and focused
- Obey the intruder's instructions where safe to do so
- Observe as much as possible e.g. height, clothes, nationality, speech, mannerisms, complexion, hair, eyes, distinguishing features
- When everyone is out of danger contact the Police and then advise the Chairperson
- After everyone has been cleared from the immediate danger area undertake a roll call for all children, parents/carers, and visitors using the Attendance Register
- Seek debriefing and counselling support for any persons affected/traumatised by the incident and support children as required

5.2 Fire Evacuation

The muster point for Highgate Playgroup is the Forrest Park oval directly in front of the entrance doors, on the other side of the playgroup equipment.

- If you are the first person to come across the fire, call 000 immediately.
- Remove everyone from the immediate danger area (check outdoors/indoors, toilets, and kitchen) and if possible close the door to contain the fire
- After everyone has been cleared from the immediate danger area undertake a roll call for all children, parents/carers, and visitors using the Attendance Register
- If anyone is missing report to the Fire Brigade Officer in charge
- Maintain control, stay calm, keep children calm, provide reassurance, and supervise assembly area until the arrival of the appropriate authorities
- Under no circumstance are children or parents/carers to re-enter the building unless approved by the Fire Brigade
- Seek debriefing and counselling support for any persons affected or traumatised by the event

5.3 Earthquake

If Indoors:

- Take shelter under tables or in a door frame
- Stay away from the windows
- Remain indoors until emergency has passed unless directed otherwise by emergency personnel

If Outdoors:

- Move into the most open space available (middle of Forrest Park oval) away from buildings, trees, power lines or anything else that could fall
- After the earthquake stops, parents/carers to look after children and follow directions from emergency personnel
- Render first aid to those injured and rescue anyone trapped IF SAFE to do so
- Evacuate the building only if necessary and safe to do so. Evacuate well away from buildings, trees or power lines that could fall. Check exit paths and external parts of the building before evacuating
- After everyone has been cleared from the immediate danger area undertake a roll call for all children, parents/carers, and visitors using the Attendance Register
- Be alert for aftershocks
- Seek debriefing and counselling support for any persons affected or traumatised by the event

6 **Appendices - This section is to be updated each year with current information.**

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6.1 2023 Key Information

6.1.1 2023 Contacts List

Chair	Annie Chacha-Gan hpgchair@gmail.com	0413 277 343
Secretary	Kristina Markoski highgatepgsecretary@gmail.com	
Treasurer	Eleanor Penny hpgtreasurer@gmail.com	
Enrolment Officer	Mayuka Juber highgate.playgroup@gmail.com	
Purchasing Officer	Vacant hpgpurchasing@gmail.com	

General Email highgate.playgroup@gmail.com

Website www.highgateplaygroup.org.au

Facebook www.facebook.com/highgateplaygroup (public page)

Address Forrest Park, Harold Street, Highgate WA 6003; PO Box 691, Mount Lawley, 6929

City of Vincent 9273 6000 www.vincent.wa.gov.au

Playgroup WA 9228 8088 www.playgroupwa.org.au

6.1.2 2023 HPG Committee Meeting & Key Calendar Dates

The following are the calendar dates for HPG activities in 2024.

13 September Q3 Committee Meeting

22 November Q4 Committee Meeting & 2017 AGM (1 Jan – 30 Jun 2017)

2 December Annual Christmas Party

6.1.3 2018 Cleaning & Busy Bee Roster

For the latest rosters please refer to the following documents, copies of which are posted on the noticeboard and kept in the Attendance Register folder.

Daily Cleaning Roster 2018

Busy Bee Roster 2018

Busy Bee Jobs in Detail 2018

6.1.4 2023 Schedule of Fees

Highgate Playgroup Fees

Annual fee \$145

The membership fee is per family and is applicable for 1 child attending playgroup once per week.

Memberships expire 31 December 2023.

Optional extra charges,

\$15 per year per child for every additional child attending Playgroup

\$15 per year per family for attending unlimited playgroup sessions per week.

Memberships are pro rated by quarter for members joining throughout the year.

Insurance

Compulsory fee of \$35 per year for Playgroup WA annual membership.

Payable in full by all members upon enrolment. This fee is not pro rated.

Venue Hire Fees

Members \$100 hire fee for 4 hours use of Highgate Playgroup

Non-Members \$200 hire fee for 4 hours use of Highgate Playgroup

\$250 refundable bond is applicable for all hires.

In recognition for their contribution to HPG, Management Committee position holders receive complimentary annual Highgate Playgroup membership & 1 complimentary party hire per year of service.

6.2 End of Session Cleaning Checklist

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