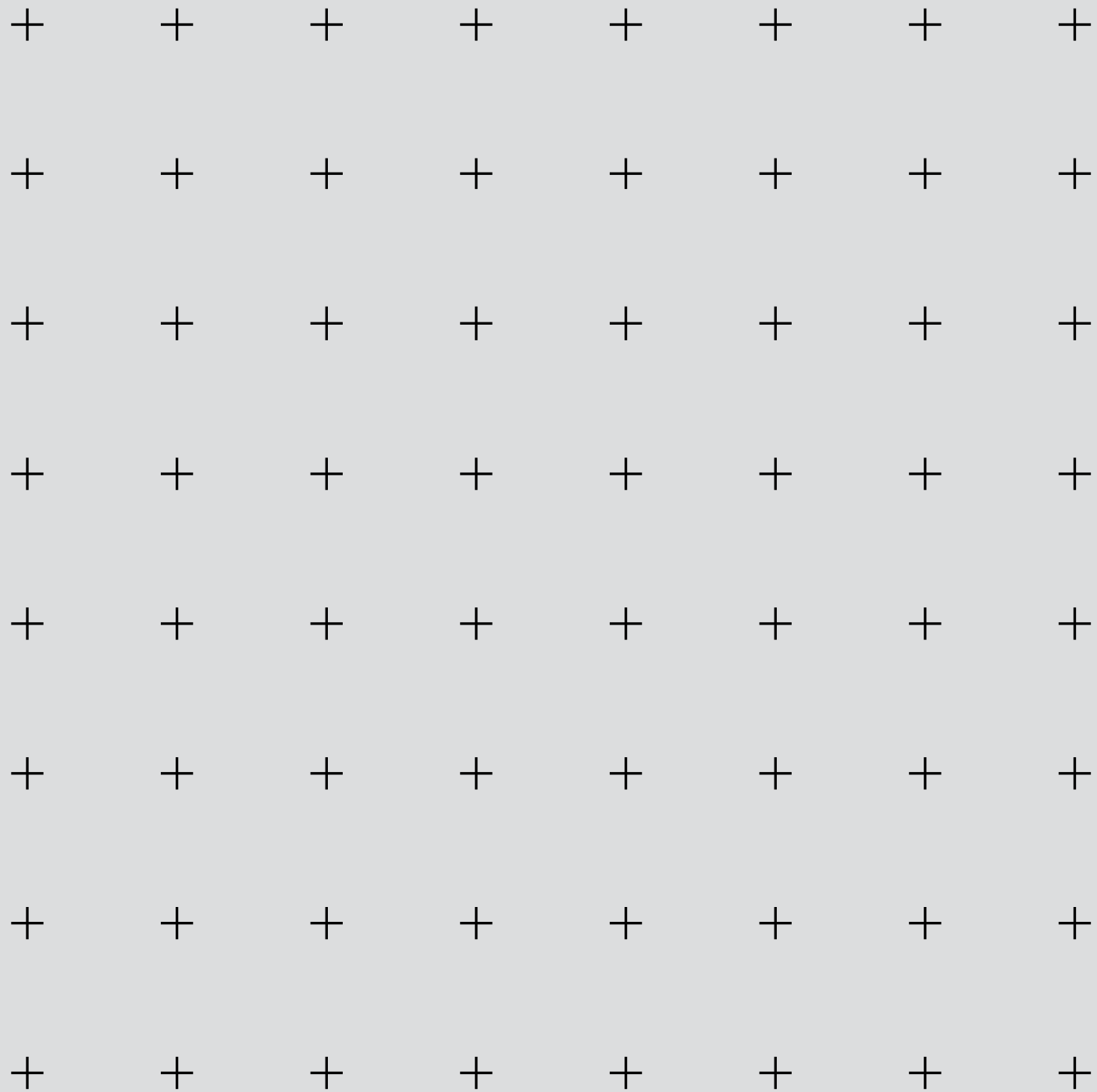


A black and white photograph of two young children walking away from the camera through a field of tall grass. The child on the left is wearing a dark hoodie, and the child on the right is wearing a dark t-shirt. They are holding hands, and the child on the right is placing a hand on the back of the child on the left. The background is a vast, open field of tall grass under a bright sky.

PARENT'S HANDBOOK

the
willows

EARLY LEARNING CENTRE



Welcome to The Willows



We believe family is everything. We welcome you
and your child into The Willows Whānau. We trust
The Willows will be an extension of your home.
Together we will celebrate as they grow.

LUKE + SARAH DIXON, OWNERS

VISION + VALUES

The Willows – A place of Love, Laughter and Learning.



love

WE ARE WHĀNAU

We will model love, kindness and respect in our interactions with each other.



laughter

WE LOVE TO HAVE FUN

Our days at The Willows will be filled with laughter, adventure, challenge and play.



learning

TOGETHER WE GROW

Our learning spaces are peaceful, inspiring and full of opportunities. We feel nurtured and celebrated to learn and grow as individuals.

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OUR PROGRAMME

The team at The Willows aim to provide high quality early childhood care and education for young children and a supportive environment for parents and whānau.

YOUR CHILD'S LEARNING JOURNEY

At The Willows we offer a programme which celebrates individual children's interests and strengths in their journey of learning and development. Our teachers take the time to notice your child's individual interests. They will communicate with you about your aspirations for your child, and together we will create specific learning goals. From here our teachers will plan experiences that will help your child reach these goals, and communicate with you about your child's progress. Each child will be guided to develop at their own pace according to his or her unique, individual way.

Our practices are responsive to the identities, languages and cultures of our community. We recognise that early childhood education facilitates the development of confidence, independence, and an interest in learning for our children.

Play is integral to children's development. At The Willows, we will provide opportunities for both structured and spontaneous experiences. Indoor and outdoor experiences are an integral part of our programme. The spaces we have created are designed to meet the specific developmental needs of infants, toddlers and young children. Our outdoor environments provide a safe

but challenging space for children to be inspired, explore and discover as they grow increasingly capable.

We are committed to providing an atmosphere that is warm, welcoming and inviting to both children and their families.

EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM - TE WHĀRIKI

Our Centre will follow the Principles, Strands and Goals of Te Whāriki - He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa - Early Childhood Curriculum.

+ The Early Childhood curriculum will empower the child to learn and grow.

- + The Early Childhood curriculum will reflect the holistic way children learn and grow.
- + The wider world of the family and community is an integral part of the early childhood curriculum.
- + Children will learn through responsive and reciprocal relations with people, places and things.

Our aim is for children to grow up as competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society.

SETTLING IN

Settling your child into a new environment can be an exciting, but sometimes daunting, time for parents and children. Our aim at The Willows is to do everything we can to make this process as easy and enjoyable as possible. We will therefore invite you and your child into the Centre for visits prior to their start date. This gives your child the opportunity to trust that The Willows is a safe and fun place to be. It also gives you and your child an opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with the teachers in their room. We encourage open and honest

communication during this time. The more the teachers can learn about your child’s development, their interests, sleeping and eating requirements, as well as the things that make them unique or special, the easier it will be to support your child in their transition into The Willows.

This is the beginning of our partnership in working together to support you and your child throughout their time with us. We feel privileged to be sharing and celebrating your child’s journey here at The Willows!

**COMMUNICATION
WITH WHĀNAU**

Open and meaningful communication is an essential part of our programme. Parents are kept informed of Centre life and events through Storypark, newsletters, notices posted in the Centre and through our Facebook page.

Storypark

Storypark is an online communication tool designed to help parents and families share more of your child’s special moments at the Willows, as well as being able to be more involved in your child’s learning. It allows teachers to send you updates, photos and videos throughout the day. Through Storypark, you can expect to see, learn and

experience more of your child’s day at The Willows.

For more information go to:
www.storypark.com

Profile Books

As well as documenting learning on Storypark, your child will have their very own book which will be used to document your child’s learning goals, their achievements, magic moments throughout their time at The Willows, and even snippets of their artwork. The children love reading and sharing these special books, and they become a wonderful keepsake for families.

Special Events

Parent, Whānau evenings and special celebration events are an exciting opportunity to connect with your child’s teachers and to provide an opportunity to interact with the team outside of the busy pick up / drop off times. We hold these regularly throughout the year and welcome you and your whānau to attend.



BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Our child behaviour management policy is based on the importance of respect and dignity for the child, acknowledging and accepting children’s feelings and encouraging these feelings to be expressed. Steps that we take towards establishing good behaviour management include:

- + Ensuring the learning environment is set up with a range of experiences with which children of all ages can become fully engaged.
- + Ensuring the layout of the environment will facilitate supervision of children at all times.
- + Role-modelling and using positive interactions with children to support learning.
- + Using recognition of effort and praise as a positive reinforcement for children.
- + Explaining appropriate and inappropriate behaviours to children.
- + Encouraging children to express their feelings and to share and take turns.
- + Encouraging communication and listening skills with children.

MEAL TIMES

We believe in nourishing children both inside and out. We know the importance of providing nutrient rich food and the role it plays in the overall well-being of children. All of your child’s food is provided by the Centre and is included in your weekly fees. Our resident chef provides well-balanced, nutritious, tasty daily meals.

At The Willows, we have worked with a qualified dietician to develop a menu high in nutrients and low in sugar. It has been tried and tested by our children, and even the fussiest of eaters love it!

Just like family meals at home, mealtimes are a special time at The Willows. Children are encouraged to take time to enjoy their food. They are encouraged to serve themselves, clear their own plates, develop table manners and show appreciation and gratitude for their food.

We cater for a wide range of allergies, intolerances and cultural preferences. Any such requirements will be discussed with you upon enrolment, posted in the kitchen, and strictly followed.

A daily menu is available on the Centre noticeboard and a sample weekly menu is available on our website.

MILK

Prior to starting on solids, you will be asked to provide enough formula or breast milk for your baby’s daily requirements.

TOILETING

Routine toileting times are encouraged throughout the day to support children’s capabilities and independence. During toilet training at home, our knowledgeable teaching team will be available to support and give guidance. Please feel free to discuss any special needs with the team. Please make sure you send plenty of changes of clothes during this time, as a few accidents are unavoidable.

Please supply sufficient nappies for your child’s day. Cloth and disposable nappies are both welcome at The Willows.

SLEEP + REST TIMES

Your child will be offered the opportunity to have sleeps, rests or special quiet times during the day at The Willows. This enables them to re-energise and to be able to participate happily in the remainder of their day. It is our policy that if a child falls asleep, they are in need of a rest and will not be woken unless parents have requested otherwise.

PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL

It is our aim at The Willows to send children to school who are confident and competent in a wide range of skills and dispositions. As early childhood teachers we have a role in empowering children and their families by promoting the necessary knowledge and resources to make this successful. A large part of being ready for school is having the necessary social skills. New entrant teachers often talk about the importance of children being able to contribute to discussions, talk confidently and socialise in a positive way.

When your child turns four years old they are encouraged to gather together to participate in group experiences. This group-time is semi-structured and the experiences that occur are aimed at helping children develop dispositions, attributes and life skills that will be needed when they start school.

We hold close relationships with neighbouring schools, and encourage interaction between our children and our neighbouring school children. This can be in the form of reciprocal visits, performing arts presentations or more intimate interactions where primary students read to our children. These interactions assist in bridging the gap for your child’s transition into school.

OUR PEOPLE

It is the strength of our team and the collaboration with parents, whānau and our community that makes our Centre great.



OUR TEAM

At The Willows, we are committed to staffing our Centre with passionate, loving and caring people who want to achieve our vision and meet our values. We have fully qualified teachers, experienced unqualified teachers, and teachers who are in training on our team. They are supported by the owners, management and administration team. We also have a fully qualified chef on-site to cook and provide food for the children. All of our dynamic team participate in on-going professional development, to ensure that we continue to provide the very best in care and education.

You can learn more about our wonderful team on our website: www.willows.nz

CHILD RATIOS

Our adult to child ratio is regulated by the Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Education require a ratio of 1:5 for under twos and 1:10 for over twos. At The Willows we aim to provide lower

ratios by operating for the majority of the day at ratios of 1:4 for under twos and 1:8 for over twos.

STUDENTS, VOLUNTEERS + VISITORS

From time to time, you will see new faces at The Willows. Relief staff and volunteers are police vetted before participating in our daily experiences and must adhere to our philosophy whilst they are here. At no stage will a volunteer worker be left in charge of a group of children. However, they will interact with the children, giving help and attention as needed. Early Childhood teacher training students are also supervised at the Centre during the practical component of their course.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

We operate an open door policy, where parents and family are welcome into the Centre at any time. Parent participation sends strong positive messages to your child that you support them and their learning journey. The team sincerely

wishes for you and your child to be happy and feel welcomed at our Centre. We value a strong partnership between parents, caregivers and your child. Communication is a vital ingredient to the success of this partnership.

At The Willows it is our practice to undertake regular reviews to ensure that we are delivering high quality outcomes for children and their families. Throughout this process we value your feedback. Parents are asked to contribute to policy development, review and decisions concerning their child's care and education.



OUR PLACE

We have designed and built our Centre to enable children to have rich learning experiences, to express themselves creatively and to enjoy the wonder of play. We hope that The Willows will feel like an extension of home for children, their parents and whānau.

We trust you and your child will enjoy the experience from the moment you walk through our doors.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Willows Early Learning Centre is proudly locally owned and operated by Luke and Sarah Dixon. As a licensed early childhood service we receive Ministry of Education funding. All details of the expenditure of Ministry of Education funding is available upon request for all parents.

The Education Review Office is a government department that reviews early childhood services and schools. They report on and evaluate the quality

of education and care for children in early childhood services and schools. There reports are available online at www.ero.govt.nz, or a copy of the report will be available in our Centre foyer once a review has been undertaken.

HOURS

The Willows is open Monday to Friday from 7.30am – 5.30pm. We will be closed on public holidays.

We ask for your co-operation in dropping off and collecting children within our operating hours, and within

your booked session times. If at any time you have an emergency and are going to be delayed, please contact the Centre. A late fee may apply if your child is collected later than the time specified on their enrolment form.

ATTENDANCE

All parents are required to sign their child in and out of the Centre every day on the form provided at the front door. This is a legal requirement by the Ministry of Education and can be audited at any time to ensure compliance with our roll returns (the

WHAT TO BRING

Parents need to bring the following items in a named baby bag / schoolbag.

1

Enough nappies for the day (4-8)

2

Breast milk or milk powder (including bottles) – enough for the day

3

Complete spare set of clothes and extra singlets

4

Sun/winter hat and warm waterproof outside clothes in winter

5

Special items that will support your child with settling or sleeping

bases of bulk funding). It is also a safety requirement in case of emergency evacuation of the Centre therefore a very important part of your drop off and pick up routine.

A responsible adult known to the Centre Manager and staff must bring children into the Centre. Only authorised persons (as indicated on the enrolment form) will be allowed to collect children from The Willows. Please notify the Centre Manager in writing of any changes to the adult. An adult other than one known to the Centre requires identification. Parents with custody orders must provide a copy to the Centre Manager.

The team are always concerned about your child’s welfare, so if you are aware of any intending absence could you please inform the Centre Manager.

Parents must give at least two weeks notice before withdrawing their child and at least one week’s notice if you wish to change your session days. Please ask the Centre Manager for the appropriate form.

CLOTHING

All clothing, shoes, cuddlies and bags must be clearly named. Because play and exploration can often be wet or messy, children should be dressed in

old or play clothes and a spare change should be packed everyday. In winter, rain attire and gumboots are essential, and in summer, sunhats are to be provided for outdoor play and we ask that you apply sun block to your child before the start of every day. We will apply it thereafter.

TOYS + OTHER TREASURES FROM HOME

We have chosen a wide range of developmentally appropriate equipment and toys for the centre. It would be appreciated if parents can explain to their children that the toys at The Willows are for everyone to share and that they cannot be taken home. It would also be appreciated if your child could be dissuaded from bringing in their own toys from home. Cuddly or security toys are welcome but need to be clearly named.

CAR SEATS

If different vehicles are to be used to transport your child to and from the Centre, you are welcome to bring a clearly named car seat inside to be stored.

LOST PROPERTY

At the Centre there is a container for unnamed and lost property. It would be appreciated if parents could check this

regularly as the amount builds up. Items that are still uncollected after a period are donated to a local charity.

EXCURSIONS / TRIPS

Excursions out of the Centre will be arranged from time to time as part of your child’s experience. Parents are encouraged to be part of these outings. Excursion slips outlining the trip, transport, cost and adult / child ratio will be given to all parents to complete prior to an outing. Children who are unable to attend the excursion will remain at the Centre. Children may be taken on small walks out of the Centre. Approval for these is given when completing the enrolment form.

your child's wellbeing

Your child's health and safety is of utmost importance to the team at The Willows. We are regularly reviewing our Health and Safety practices and encourage parents to actively participate in these reviews.

SAFETY

Centre policies on safety precautions are continually reinforced by the teachers and children. Such practices include:

- + Maintaining and updating a Centre Hazards checklist.
- + Checking the safety of sandpits and outdoor equipment.
- + Children's awareness of personal safety, i.e. not throwing equipment, walking inside.
- + The storage of hazardous products in locked cupboards.

All of our teachers are trained in first aid, and these certificates are renewed every two years.

EMERGENCY + EVACUATION PROCEDURES

In case of an unforeseen emergency situation, every effort will be made to contact parents to collect their child. The Centre is fitted with safety devices, which are maintained regularly.

Regular fire drills are necessary for regulation purposes. If you are present at a fire drill, you are required by law to participate. Emergency evacuation plans are displayed in the Centre. The team are familiar with evacuation procedures and policies. Parents and visitors to the Centre will be asked to make themselves familiar with the evacuation plan and where hoses and first aid equipment is to be found.

Every effort will be made to make evacuation procedures enjoyable rather than stressful events for the children. Regular emergency procedures give the children an opportunity to become familiar with the routine and planned evacuation.

In the event of an evacuation our Civil Defence Post is **Wairakei School**.

ILLNESS

We ask that any child who is unwell be kept at home so illness does not spread throughout The Willows. The Centre Manager may at her discretion refuse to accept any child deemed unwell enough to attend the Centre. Children with severe coughs or colds, vomiting,

diarrhoea, conjunctivitis, rashes or raised temperatures cannot be brought into the Centre.

If a child has had vomiting or diarrhoea, they must remain home for 48hrs after the last episode.

If symptoms develop during the day the parent will be contacted to arrange for the immediate collection of their child.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES

We ask parents to please advise the Centre if your child has contracted a notifiable or infectious disease so that other parents can be advised. The child should be kept away from The Willows for the required length of time as per the Infectious Diseases chart which is on display here at the Centre.

Common Infectious Diseases:

- + Measles
- + Mumps
- + Chickenpox
- + Whooping Cough
- + Rubella (German Measles)
- + Hand, Foot and Mouth

Common Contagious Parasitic Conditions:

- + Headlice
- + Threadworms
- + Scabies

Infectious Skin Conditions:

- + Impetigo
- + Ringworm

MEDICATION

Please advise the staff if your child is taking any medication. All medicines will be kept in the kitchen. The medicine book, which is kept in the classrooms, must be filled in before we can administer any medication. Only medication that has a label stating your child's name and expiry date will be administered.

The Willows keeps a first aid kit, which includes some non-prescription and homeopathic medications for emergencies. Please advise the Centre Manager if you would prefer these were not given to your child.

IMMUNISATION

We are required to keep an up-to-date list of all children at The Willows and their immunisation status. Please remember to bring your Well Child

Book and a copy of your immunisation certificate with you when you enrol your child with us.

If your child is not immunised a letter confirming this needs to be attached to your enrolment form. In the case of outbreak of such a disease your child will be asked to stay away from The Willows for the duration of the outbreak.

CLEANING

We pride ourselves on the cleanliness of our Centre. As well as daily cleaning of The Willows itself, we schedule regular cleaning of the toys and equipment in order to keep the spread of any infection to a minimum. We also disinfect all surfaces when any serious outbreaks occur. Our daily cleaning is completed by qualified and experienced commercial cleaning companies.

OUR ENVIRONMENT

Our facilities are high quality and purpose built for preschool children. We have an ongoing commitment to maintaining our facilities in a high quality manner to ensure we continue to have the best possible environment for your child and our team.



fees + subsidies

Your child will benefit from our outstanding facilities, our highly qualified teaching team and educational programme, low child:teacher ratios, and nutritious daily meals.

FEES

Please refer to the Fees Schedule that is available from Reception. Invoices are issued weekly. For the smooth running of the Centre, it is very important that your fees are kept at least one week in advance. All overdue fees will be sent to a debt collection agency and the parents will be responsible for all fees charged by this agency.

20 HOURS FREE

The Willows offers the Free 20 hours subsidy which is provided by the Ministry of Education to all 3-6 year old children. To be eligible you must complete an Attestation form which confirms your attendance and that

you are not attending another Early Childhood Centre at the same time as you have applied for funding here. If you change your enrolment hours you must complete another form. You may apply for this subsidy from more than one Centre, but you must indicate this on your form. You may apply for the Free 20 hours subsidy and receive money from Work and Income, but we recommend that you discuss this with your case worker.

CHILDCARE SUBSIDY

Work and Income operates a subsidy for parents whose children attend The Willows. The subsidy is subject to an income qualification. Contact Work

and Income for further information and forms. Full payment of fees is the caregiver's responsibility and will be required until a subsidy has been approved.

CONTACT DETAILS

Address 248 Wairakei Road, Christchurch

Phone 03 351 1904

Email manager@willows.nz

Website www.willows.nz

concerns +
complaints

Parents should feel free to discuss any queries or problems with the Centre Manager.

A policy for dealing with complaints is displayed on the parent’s notice board. If you have any concerns or complaints relating to the operation of The Willows, please refer the matter to:

The Willows Early Learning Centre
248 Wairakei Road, Christchurch
or phone 03 351 1904 and speak to Melissa.

Your feedback is valued and will help to ensure your family enjoys their early childhood experience.

