

Variety Kids Xmas Party

Information Sheet



DATE OF PARTY – Thursday 5 December, 2019
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre

The Variety Kids Xmas Party is now in its 33rd year and has welcomed over 150,000 sick, disadvantaged or special needs children. Thanks to the generous support of our main sponsor, Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre, we will once again be opening the doors for hours of fun and games!

We hope to make the 2019 Variety Kids Xmas Party a happy and successful event and this can only be achieved with your help!

- Up to 5,000 children attend our Variety Kids Xmas Party every year.
- The first hour of the party is for children with mobility aids (wheelchairs/walkers etc.), sight or hearing loss, sensory issues with crowds and/or noise. By limiting numbers, it assists these children with reduced noise and more room to move, providing them with an opportunity to enjoy the party. These children can register from 9.00am for entry from 10.00am. Carers and any other children from this immediate group/family who collect their wristbands with the child who requires early access will also be permitted entry at the same time. Everyone else will register from 10am and enter the party from 11.00am.
- Santa will arrive at around 11.15am. Everyone is welcome to stay at the party until it concludes at 1.30pm. Registration and Entry doors will close at 12.30pm.
- There is a chill out room for any children (or carers) who need a quiet space to have a break.
- We are unable to cater for any dietary requirements.
- Entry into the party is via invitation only and is FREE. It is the responsibility of those attending to pay for any transport and parking costs.
- Photo boards - on request a selection of photos showing the possible activities from past years can be emailed to organisations to help prepare children for the party.
- Do not advise carers to call Variety to ask for more tickets or information. Due to privacy we will not discuss any lists received with anyone except the registered contact from your organisation. We will refer them back to you.
- Variety run a funding appeal to assist with funding this event. If you would like to help with fundraising please contact us.

REGISTRATION

- This is an invitation only event.
- All children are required to be registered for the party through their school or support organisation. Variety does not take registrations from individuals.
- Schools/Organisations can nominate a maximum of 100 children.
- If a child's name and number of carers is not on the list they cannot attend the party.
- It is very important to complete the Bus Parking on your organisation home page should you require parking for your bus/es on the day.
- All children attending as part of a group with a School/Organisation are required to wear a name tag to identify the group they are with and contact number should they end up in the lost children's area. We highly recommend that children coming have a name tag with contact details.

- Once your nominations are confirmed you will receive a PDF of your tickets to forward to your nominated families. The families will need to bring their tickets with them to be scanned at registration for wristbands and lunch vouchers.
- As this is a children's party we cannot cater for whole family groups such as grandparents, aunts, uncles etc. Carers: Please try to keep the numbers of carers to a minimum eg 1 carer per family We understand that some families will require multiple carers or for larger families or high needs children.
- Translators - please indicate in advance if you think your organisation will require a translator or if your organisation has a translator who can assist on the day.
- Children must be in attendance to receive gifts.
- The party is for the children, not the carers. Please do not send carers without children as they cannot attend the party or collect gifts without the children.
- Age groups this year will be from 1 day old to 13 years. Children 14 and over are unable to attend the party even if their intellectual age is less than 13.
- Carers/Parents must be over the age of 18.
- **SECURITY** – Please inform your families that bad behaviour/ violence will not be tolerated.

ENTRY

Via Concourse

- Volunteers will be scanning tickets to register children and carers upon entry. Upon tickets being scanned, you will receive wristbands and lunch vouchers.
- Adults/Carers will not be given wristbands unless they are with the child/ren. The exception is case worker/teachers/nominated representatives from organisations who have children attending who have contacted Variety prior to the day.
- All children must be sighted to receive their wristband.
- Children must remain orderly while waiting to register.
- We do not require identification when registering.

ENTRY

Via Loading Dock – Organisations requiring bus parking

- Entry via the loading dock is for buses who are parking for the duration of the event. If your bus will be dropping you off and returning later you will need to utilize the service lane at the front of MCEC. This is for OH&S compliance.
- We ask that you keep all the children on the bus until a volunteer comes to register your group. Please ensure that the children have their wristbands on. Please hand back any wristbands not required.
- Once everyone has wristbands the volunteers will assist you to move inside the party at the appropriate time.
- Please display the name of your school/organisation at the top of the windscreen on the bus. Please ask your drivers to leave a mobile number at the parking bay in case of an emergency or your organisation needs to leave early.
- Groups entering via the loading DOCK please note that entry time prior to 10am is for special schools only. Please note if you turn up early you will need to wait on the bus.

WRISTBANDS

- Schools/Organisations requiring bus parking in the loading dock will have wristbands mailed out 1 week prior to the party.
- Children and carers arriving independently will receive their wristbands once invitations have been scanned at the registration desk on the concourse.
- No wristband – no entry.
- All wrist bands are color coded to identify age groups, not gender, and must be worn to gain entry to the party. For children with sensory issues the wristband can be attached to wheelchairs or clothing or worn by a carer.
- The children's wristband will be removed in exchange for a gift at the end of the party.

PARTY

- The food provided is largely donated and varies from year to year. It is typical party food and drink. The types of things to expect - Sausage rolls, party pies, wraps/sandwiches, fairy floss, water, juice, soft drink, chips etc.
- Both children and carers are catered for, everyone will receive a voucher in order to receive a lunch pack.
- For those with dietary requirements please bring your own food and drink.
- There are carnival rides, interactive activities like wheelchair basketball, handball, fencing, craft activities etc. There is stage entertainment with dancing, singing, magic acts, etc.
- The present area will be set up at one end of the building for children to collect their presents when leaving the party. **MOST IMPORTANT: ONCE A CHILD HAS RECEIVED THEIR PRESENT THEY CANNOT RE-ENTER THE PARTY.**
- Please note there are no pass outs from the party.
- Over 400 volunteers donate their time to assist with this party.
- Roving entertainment - there are a large number of volunteers who come dressed up in costume. In the past we have been lucky enough to have Disney Princesses, Transformers and Star Wars friends and foes attend the Variety Kids Xmas Party.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Passing on information to families.** Please ensure that all families receive the same information that you, the organisations receive. Each year the Variety office receives calls from parents asking about transport, parking and time of the party – all of that information is in the ticket that will be sent to the person co-coordinating for your organisation.
- **Transport –**
Public transport – enter via Clarendon Street (opposite Crown) ptv.vic.gov.au or call 1800 800 007
Car Park – There are multiple options, please check rates as some charge by the hour (\$8 - \$10 per hour) and some charge a flat daily rate. For further information visit www.mcec.com.au/where-is-mcec/ Crown Casino is also across the road and has a flat rate car park www.crownmelbourne.com.au/general/parking
You can get directions from www.whereis.com.au
- **Variety's Charter** is to support children who are either disabled (physically or intellectually) or disadvantaged (financially or socially) and we do this in many ways including our Grants Program and through Variety@Work which hosts our Kids Xmas party.

- If you know of another school or organisation that may be interested, please contact the Variety office.
- When asked questions by parents/guardians do not ask them to call Variety. Please email any queries, for urgent enquires please call.
- If you have filled all your spaces and have additional children you would like to nominate please ask the parents/carers-
 - a) Are they involved with another support organisation? If yes, ask them to contact that group.
 - b) If they are not or that group has advised they have nominated the maximum, then email varietyatwork@varietyvic.org.au explaining the situation.
- ** Do NOT instruct the parent/individual contact Variety. All nominations must come from an organisation.
- Last day for any nominations or amendments is Wednesday 27 November unless we reach capacity sooner. There have been some years where places were all filled weeks before the cut off.

Thank you for your cooperation and we will see you on 5 December.



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