2017 Prep Handbook
Contents
Term Dates
Welcome
Sessions and Times
A Day in Prep
Daily Requirements
Uniform
Health Procedures
Food and Drink
Birthdays
Library
Fees
Excursions
The Early Years Curriculum
Building Partnerships
Prep Learning Portfolios
Parental Involvement
In Conclusion
The Beginner’s Alphabet
Correct Pencil Grip
TERM DATES FOR 2017:

School commences for all students on Monday 23rd January 2017

SCHOOL TERMS (students):

Term 1 (10 weeks) Monday 23rd January to Friday 31st March
Term 2 (10 weeks) Tuesday 18th April to Friday 23rd June
Term 3 (10 weeks) Monday 10th July to Friday 15th September
Term 4 (9 weeks) Tuesday 3rd October to Friday 1st December

Public Holidays:

Australia Day Thursday 26th January
Good Friday Friday 14th April
Easter Monday Monday 17th April
Toowoomba Show Holiday Thursday 7th April
Anzac Day Tuesday 25th April
Labour Day Monday 1st May
Queen’s Birthday Monday 2nd October

Pupil Free Days:

18th, 19th and 20th January (before Term 1 commences)

Three other Pupil Free Days are taken during school holidays – these will not impact on family arrangements.

Friday during term 3 Bishop’s In-service Day (Date to be advised)

16th October (third Monday of Term 4)
Welcome!

Welcome to St Monica’s Prep. We consider it an honour and a privilege that you have entrusted the care of your child to us. We look forward to working with you in partnership as we guide your child on their learning journey. We trust that your child will have a happy, exciting and productive year in Prep which we hope will be the beginning of a successful school life.

Sessions and Times

St Monica’s Prep operates full day, five days per week, Monday to Friday 8.45am to 3.00pm. Children will be supervised from 8.25 am. Teachers are preparing for the day’s lessons prior to this time. Please make an appointment to see your child’s teacher before or after school if you have an issue you would like to discuss or clarify.

Break times for morning tea and lunch will be advertised in the School Newsletter early in the year.

You (or another adult) is asked to bring your child into the Prep classroom at the beginning of the day and pick them up at 3pm. Please advise the school if alternative arrangements are made, such as your child being collected by a friend/relative or if they are to catch a bus.

We also ask that you advise administration or teaching staff if your child will be absent for the day. A telephone call to the school office (46911067) between 8:20am and 8:45am would be appreciated.
A Day in Prep…

On arrival at Prep each day, children:

1. Sign In
2. Put their bag and hat on their hook and use the toilet
3. Put their homework folder away
4. Put their drink bottles in the basket
5. Greet the teacher

We encourage children to perform their morning jobs by themselves to promote independence, self-confidence and responsibility.

Saying Goodbye – some suggestions:

- A quick hug and a smile
- Remind them that you will be picking them up at the end of the day
- Calmly and confidently say goodbye ensuring that they know it is time for you to leave
- Be assured that children are quick to adapt and if upset usually settle within 5 minutes of your leaving. If your child is persistently upset at drop off time the Prep teacher will talk with you about this.

Learning Sessions

Throughout the day, Prep students may be involved in:

- Focused literacy/numeracy sessions
- History, Geography and Science Lessons
- Social Skills lessons
- Inside/Outside Play
- Prayer/Religious Education
- Show and Share
- Perceptual Motor Program
- Specialist lessons throughout the week - Physical Education, Music, Technology, Drama and Languages other than English (Indonesian).
On leaving Prep each afternoon please:

- Place homework folder in bag
- Say goodbye to your teacher
- Please note that students are not allowed to play on the Play Fort after school.

Daily Requirements:

A water Bottle

The regulation school broad brimmed hat

A complete set of spare clothes including underwear

A school bag

A school uniform

A plastic Homework Folder

Items from the Prep booklist (which is issued closer to the starting date of Prep)

PLEASE NAME ALL YOUR CHILD’S BELONGINGS. (Don’t forget socks and shoes!) It is important that everything is clearly named so children do not become distressed when their personal belongings cannot be found.

Uniform

There is an official uniform for Prep which is the school sports uniform and is available for purchase from M & M’s Fashions, Campbell Street, Oakey or Oakey Craft and Saddlery, Bridge Street, Oakey.

White joggers are the required footwear.

Children wear the school’s broad brimmed hat outdoors as we are a Sun Smart School. This regulation hat is available from the school office.

Please apply sunscreen to your child prior to coming to Prep. Sunscreen is available within the Prep rooms for use during the day.
Health Procedures

For the protection of your child and other children in the group, please keep unwell children at home. If you are in doubt as to whether your child is well enough to come to Prep it is best for all concerned if he/she is kept at home.

Children with infectious diseases must be excluded from school. Information about exclusion times are available from the school office.

Parents are requested to notify their child’s teacher of the incidence of infectious or contagious illnesses in their family.

In the event of a child becoming ill at school, the school will attempt to contact parents or emergency contacts. Therefore, it is imperative that parents inform the school of any changes in telephone numbers and emergency contact persons.

If your child suffers an injury of concern we will endeavour to contact parents or emergency contacts promptly.

Staff at St Monica’s regularly participate in First Aid Training.

Please note that staff are not permitted to administer non-prescribed medications like Panadol and “over the counter” cough medicine. Prescribed medication can only be administered by staff after parental permission is obtained through completion of the relevant medication form. These forms are available from the School Office or from the school website. Medications should be brought to school in their original labelled packaging.

Food and Drink

Children at St Monica’s are encouraged to eat healthily. We ask your assistance in packing a lunch box with nutritional items like fruit, vegetables, sandwiches, cheese, pasta, rice or yoghurt. Please AVOID snacks such as lollies, chips, chocolate and rollups. These foods contain high levels of sugar and/or salt and have minimal nutritional value.

On Mondays St Monica’s children are able to purchase their lunch from the Tuckshop. The children’s order and correct money for Morning Tea, Lunch and ice blocks should be placed in separate named paper bags. Tuckshop menus are sent home regularly.
Birthdays

Birthdays are a very special time. You are most welcome to send along a birthday cake or cup cakes for your child to share with his/her class mates. This can be on the actual birthday, or the nearest school day to their birthday. If you are planning to bring a cake, please discuss this with the teacher a few days before, so we have time to organise alternatives for children with allergies.

Library

The children are read to regularly and encouraged to look through books on their own, as they develop the motivation and skills to read and write. At Prep the children borrow from the school library once a week. Please find time to read to your child the books they have chosen and return them to the library box so your child is able to borrow other books on their next visit to the library. To avoid the books becoming lost or damaged, please keep the book in the school library bag in a special place at home.

School Fees

Accounts are issued three times per year (at the beginning of Terms 1, 2 & 3). It is requested that fees are paid by the due date. There are a number of payment options available including fortnightly or term payments.

Any concerns regarding fees should be addressed to the Principal.

Excursions

Parents will be notified if the children are to go on an excursion or outing. Permission slips for each excursion must be signed by the parent before departure.
The Early Years Curriculum

Understanding Children

Children are the focus of the Prep curriculum. Early childhood teachers value the uniqueness and special abilities of each child.

Each child comes to Prep with a range of skills and different levels of understanding about themselves and the world. The Prep program is designed to help each child to build on these understandings.

Research shows that a curriculum which develops children’s learning by providing a broadly based, integrated program is most likely to provide foundations for success in later learning.

Contexts for Learning

The teacher creates five main contexts for learning and development. The five contexts for learning are:

1. Play
2. Real Life Situations
3. Investigations
4. Routines and Transitions
5. Focused Learning and Teaching

Play

In the early phase of schooling the purpose of play is to support children’s learning and development. It provides a powerful context in which children learn as they actively engage socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually with people, objects and representations.

Through play, children develop thinking and problem-solving strategies. They use and extend oral language capabilities, learn literacy and numeracy practices, explore a range of ways to symbolise experiences and develop imagination and creativity. Play-based experiences provide children with opportunities to build their personal identities as successful and responsible learners. In play, children are able to learn through all their senses, make connections with their prior knowledge, practise and master learning, sustain concentration and take risks in enjoyable and non-threatening contexts.

Play, however, also involves children in role-playing challenging life experiences as they seek to make sense of their world. For children, play is a way to develop relationships or organise and make sense of their world. When children engage in play, they bring diverse background experiences, developing identities and perceptions about their own and others’ social and cultural experiences. They draw
on their own experiences and perceptions of others to create contexts in which to play.

When children learn through play and are actively engaged in learning, new understandings, capabilities and dispositions are more likely to be sustained and extended over time. With experience, children's play changes to become more socially and intellectually complex.

Play occurs in both indoor and outdoor environments. Children are required to collaboratively plan and reflect on their play sessions as this extends children’s learning and makes it more meaningful.

**Real Life Situations**

Real-life learning situations enable children to build connections between their home, community and classroom experiences.

These connections are built as family and community members come into the school environment to share knowledge and experiences and children go out into their communities on excursions, investigations and celebrations. Real-life situations are particularly important as they provide opportunities for children to understand how, where and why people use spoken language, literacy and numeracy in their everyday lives.

**Investigations**

Investigations generally involve children in interacting with people, objects and representations, as they inquire, explore relationships and test ideas. Investigations in the early phase of learning provide opportunities to explore ways to communicate; investigate social, natural and built environments; and experiment with artistic, scientific, technological and mathematical ideas and processes. Investigations arise from the questions children ask, from ideas and events that arouse their curiosity or from the need to collect further information for something they want to do.

Children are scaffolded (supported) through the investigation process by teachers asking questions, posing problems, challenging thinking, modelling, explaining and suggesting alternatives and involving children in decision making. Children are supported to plan and follow through investigations and draw conclusions from their investigative process. Children also work collaboratively to test ideas, solve problems, represent findings and consider alternative ways of understanding and knowing.

Children’s engagement in investigative processes may be shaped by their social and cultural backgrounds, special needs, talents or gifts, gender, and race. Teachers are there to monitor the language and/or interaction patterns if needed.
**Routines and Transitions**

Routines and transitions provide important opportunities for meaningful spontaneous and planned learning. Because routines within the classroom usually differ from home routines, children are supported to gain familiarity with classroom cultures and practices.

Organisational routines are particularly valuable for developing independence and personal identities. They provide opportunities for children to use symbols for real purposes, such as locating belongings and resources. Routines such as meal times provide opportunities for teachers to scaffold learning as children share jokes or views about characters in the media, categorise the types of foods they eat, take turns, share and learn to be responsible and independent.

Transitions provide learning experiences while also facilitating children’s gradual movement from one learning context to another. Transitions often take the form of musical, language or conceptual games that allow two or three children to move from a group experience to a different activity (for example from indoors to outdoors).

**Focused Learning and Teaching**

Focused Learning and Teaching sessions provide the teacher with the opportunity to lead the children in investigating specified content that they might not otherwise explore. These may take the form of guided Science lessons, Literacy and Numeracy skills or Introducing Historical or Geographical content. These may also be negotiated and responsive to children’s emerging interests.

**The Australian Foundation Curriculum**

The Australian Foundation Curriculum addresses the areas of English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography. As a Catholic School, in Prep we also study Early Religious Understandings.

**The Early Years Learning Areas are:**

- **Religion** – During the Prep year, students discuss their ideas and feelings about God and God’s creation, and God’s plan for people to live safely and happily together. They also explore Jesus’ teaching about love, compassion and forgiveness.

- **English** – In Prep there is a strong emphasis on Oracy and Listening as a precursor to developing reading and writing skills. In this area, children construct, communicate and interpret meanings for a range of purposes and in a range of contexts.

- **Mathematics** – In Prep children are provided with experiences to explore and express their understandings of Foundational Mathematical Concepts. The Mathematics Activity Guidelines as a Diocesan resource provides a variety of hands on activities and materials aimed at developing mathematical understandings in a fun context.
- **Science** - The ACARA Science Curriculum explore concepts such as life, materials, weather and energy and force.

- **Geography** – In Geography students recognise and describe the features of familiar places and their representations on maps and models.

- **History** – The History curriculum in Prep has a focus on families and how they commemorate special events, and events of the past.

### Building Partnerships

As a parent you are the first and most important teacher in your child’s life. Studies have shown that parental interest and support in their child’s education correlate with higher achievement. Staff at St Monica’s value parental input and work with significant others within the school, parish and wider communities for the benefit of each individual within our care.

### Prep Learning Portfolios

On a regular basis, observations of your child at Prep and work samples will be placed in your child’s portfolio. These portfolios will be sent home for parent perusal throughout the year.

Prep children also receive a Prep report card at the end of each semester and parents are offered two opportunities to meet with the class teacher for formal interviews throughout the year.

### Parental Involvement

Parents and care-givers can support the development of effective partnerships by:

- ☑ Sharing insights and information related to your child. This information is always confidential.

- ☑ Reading your child’s portfolio and discussing it with your child.

- ☑ Being involved in Prep activities when requested.

- ☑ Contributing ideas and resources (for example, junk materials for collage).

- ☑ Read the school newsletter and notice boards carefully.

- ☑ Being punctual - particularly on your child’s first days. When leaving say goodbye and leave promptly.

- ☑ Attending P&F meetings and supporting their endeavours. Watch the newsletter for details.
In Conclusion

Your child’s entry into Prep marks their entry into a new and exciting phase of their life. Many important attitudes towards school are formed and the foundations for learning are established during these early childhood years. We look forward to working together with you to ensure your child has a happy and valuable experience at St Monica’s School. If you have any queries regarding the prep program, the school or your child, please don’t hesitate in coming to see us.
The Beginners Alphabet

Please try and use the beginner’s style alphabet when writing your child’s name. The first letter of the name is a capital, followed by lower case. As a general rule, we place the child’s name in the top left corner of the page. This develops left to right and top to bottom progression. The beginner’s script follows.

Full page versions are available from Prep.

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z
A B C D E F G H I J K
L M N O P Q R S T U V
W X Y Z
Correct pencil grip needs to be reinforced constantly in the early years of schooling.