



# 2020

# PARENT

# HANDBOOK

## AN INTRODUCTION TO PREP



***We welcome you to St Mary MacKillop Primary School as we commence the journey into your child's formal schooling in a Catholic-centred learning environment.***



### **At St Mary MacKillop we:**

- ◆ value God as central to our daily lives;
- ◆ value a school in which children are at peace and have a sense of belonging to church, parish and wider community;
- ◆ value an environment where children grow and develop as individuals, secure in their world;
- ◆ value a sound primary school education in which children achieve their potential.

*This booklet has been produced to assist you in settling your child into Prep.*

*We look forward to our year together.*

*The Prep Teachers.*

## INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S FIRST YEAR OF SCHOOL

The Preps attend school Monday to Friday each week. School begins at 8.25am and concludes at 2.55pm. In the first weeks of school, from 8.15am to 8.30am you are welcome to spend time with your child in his/her classroom. The normal morning routine will begin in week three.

### The First Day



The first day of school is one to celebrate! It is an important milestone in the lives of your child and your family. Listed below are some hints to help you and your child adjust to Prep.

# There will be a mix of emotions on the first day of school - excitement, apprehension and a few nerves. You will probably find that your child will be up nice and early and be dressed in their uniform and raring to go! Please make sure that you are on time for the first day, and that your child has had a good breakfast for the busy and exciting day ahead.

# Try not to build up your child's expectations too much. Many children think they will learn to read and write on the first day. They may then become worried or disappointed when they don't. Talk to them about reading and writing, but let them know it takes time.

# Once the classrooms are open, bring your child into the room and help them find an activity. Take this time to have a look around the room, and to introduce your child and yourself to the teacher and the other parents.

# When the bell has rung, give your child a kiss and a hug and then leave. If your child is upset, please don't linger outside the room. It is best if you leave and allow the teachers to get the day under way without distractions.

# Reassure your child that you will be there at the end of the day to pick them up. Please don't be late picking your child up. A few minutes can seem like a long time when you are four or five years old and all the other children have gone home.

# It is important for a smooth afternoon transition so please wait in the undercover sports court area after school, we will walk the children to you for collection.

As a parent, the first day of school can be an emotional experience for you too! Congratulations! Be proud of the many achievements you have made as a parent in the lead up to this day. You will find we are a nurturing community at St Mary MacKillop, so please have faith as we guide your child on the next stage of their life journey.



*Prep students meet their Year 6 buddy within the first few weeks of school.*

### **What to expect in the first few weeks**

Starting school is a very important time for every child and can be very emotional for many (including parents). To ensure a smooth transition, school should be an environment in which your child feels comfortable and supported.

Most children are very enthusiastic about starting school and most will continue to feel that way. However, some children lose that enthusiasm quickly and parents of these children may become discouraged. Please understand this may be part of your child's settling in process, please encourage positive thoughts.

The first term is hot, humid and very busy. There is lots happening; learning new things, meeting new people, and trying to be "very good" all day. Expect your child to be very tired after school. It will be important for you to be very understanding, very calm and listen to your child when he/she wants to talk.

Crying can be a very natural emotional reaction to the initial adjustment to school life. Tears can be a common occurrence during the first few weeks. If this happens, don't allow your child to see that it is upsetting you.

Positive reinforcement, patience and time are the best ways to overcome this stage. Teachers are experienced in these situations, so please have faith in them, as they also have your child's best interest at heart.

"I don't like school!" "I don't want to go!" Don't be surprised if you hear these words in the first few weeks of school. During this time it is best to support your child by showing love and understanding.



Using the Australian Curriculum and the Religious Education Archdiocese of Brisbane Curriculum, Prep planning and assessment is based on the achievement standards and expected learning outcomes at the Foundation Year Level. We begin by getting to know our learners so we can meet their needs.

### ENGLISH



### MATHEMATICS



### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



### SCIENCE



### RELIGION



### HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION



### THE ARTS



### TECHNOLOGIES



## How do we teach the content to our students?

A quality early childhood program is delivered here at St MMK. Students are encouraged to actively learn, problem solve, effectively communicate, create and meet social needs. Children's long-term success in education and citizenship are developed and supported through these experiences.

Throughout the year students will participate in a variety of learning experiences supported by a variety of different ways to learn. These include:

- Discovery learning
- Inquiry based learning
- Play/Hands on experiences
- Real-life situations
- Investigations
- Routines and transitions
- Focused learning and teaching



***Students at St Mary MacKillop enjoy a range of learning opportunities that support and foster a child's intrinsic desire for learning.***

***The various styles of learning offered allows all students to engage in different ways and caters for different abilities.***

## How is the Australian Curriculum delivered at St Mary MacKillop School?

The implementation of the Australian Curriculum began in 2011. This curriculum emphasises the importance of knowledge, understanding and skills of learning areas, general capabilities and cross-curriculum priorities as the basis for a curriculum designed to support 21st century learning.

The Australian Curriculum describes a learning entitlement for each Australian student that provides a foundation for successful, lifelong learning and participation in the Australian community. It acknowledges that the needs and interests of students will vary, and that schools and teachers will plan from the curriculum in ways that respond to those needs and interests. The Australian Curriculum acknowledges the changing ways in which young people will learn and the challenges that will continue to shape their learning in the future.

The Australian Curriculum sets out what all young people should be taught through the specification of curriculum content and the learning expected at points in their schooling through the specification of achievement standards (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2011). Please visit [www.acara.edu.au](http://www.acara.edu.au) for any further information.

Below are the concepts that will be covered within these curriculum areas in Prep.

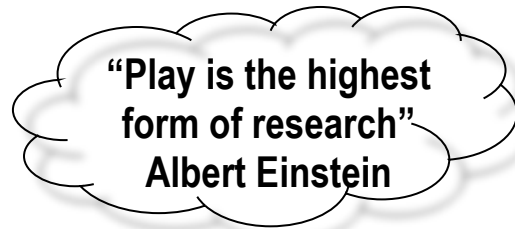
<b>Religion</b> -Prayer and celebration -Jesus' family -Creation -Relationships	<b>English</b> -Concepts of print -Language features -Oral language -Text types -Reading -Writing	<b>Mathematics</b> -Number and place value -Patterns and algebra -Measurement -Shape/Location -Data and interpretations	<b>Science</b> -What living things need to survive -Forces of energy -Weather -Materials
<b>Humanities and Social Sciences</b> -Personal history -Past, present and future -People live in different places	<b>Health &amp; Physical Education</b> -Staying safe -Healthy living -Learning through movement	<b>The Arts</b> -Media -Visual Arts -Music -Dance -Drama	<b>Technologies</b> -Digital technology -Design and technology: plants and animals give us food, clothing and shelter

## How do we deliver this content?

At St Mary MacKillop we aim to nurture students as active, capable and responsible learners. We understand that each child has different interests, abilities and ways they learn best. Therefore by providing students with a variety of learning experiences and teaching strategies we aim to cater for each individual child. Below is a breakdown of the different teaching methods we adopt and support within our Prep Program.

**Teaching through Play** - Play is a term used widely in early childhood literature when discussing how effective curriculum for young children is enacted. Play involves both cognitive and physical activity. Through play children bring thoughts into action and express ideas and realities in response to external stimuli or internal motivation. For children, play can be their way of looking out at the world, testing understanding of adult roles, exploring theories and predicting possibilities.

*Teachers support student's learning through play by acknowledging the intrinsic need for children to work through ideas and possibilities using materials and objects. Teachers recognise play as a strong motivator of children and support learning through considered questioning and interactions.*



**Teaching through Discovery Learning** – Discovery Learning is when teachers know of an upcoming topic students are to learn about. Tables and areas within the classroom are set up with resources, books, learning materials and items to match this particular area of learning. Students are then given time to 'discover'. During this time students play with, talk about, experiment with, record findings and discuss with fellow students what they believe the learning is going to be about.

**Teaching through Inquiry Learning** – Inquiry learning is where a question is posed to students and they are given the time, means and knowledge to uncover or discover the answer/s.

*Teachers support students through this process by using open ended and guiding questions, delivering content that can enhance understanding in this area and embracing the student's own ability to drive their learning.*

**Teaching through Visible Learning** – Visible Learning is where students are made aware of the learning intentions of lessons and experiences. They also consider success criteria by discussing what successful learning looks like.

*The teachers role in Visible Learning is to ensure student's know what they are learning about, why they are learning it and what they can know, understand or expand on to ensure the expected outcomes are met. Teachers check children can answer these 5 key questions: What are you learning? How are you going with that learning? How do you know? How can you improve? What do you do when you get stuck?*



## Religious Education

**At St Mary MacKillop, we value a school in which children are at peace and have a sense of belonging to church, parish and the wider community.**

Religious Education is integrated through four key areas. These are:

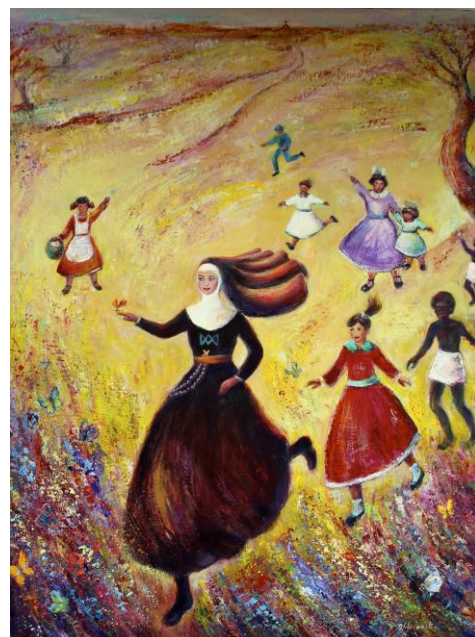
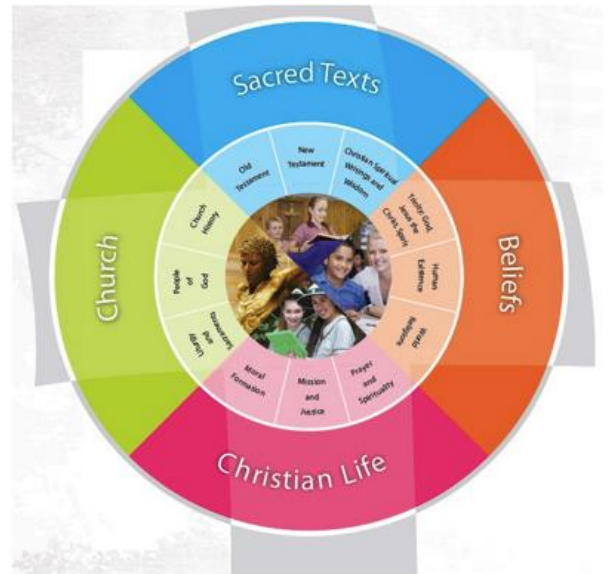
- Sacred Texts
- Beliefs
- Christian Life
- Church

During the first year of school, the curriculum will provide opportunities for your child to develop an understanding of the teachings of Jesus. Your child will be immersed in a culture that fosters Gospel values and builds upon their own faith journey.

In 2012, Brisbane Catholic Education released a new Religion curriculum that focuses on developing student's understanding of the Catholic faith and its history, his/her own spiritual journey and the importance of prayer.

During the school year, students will participate in and witness liturgies, class and whole school masses, school sponsored weekend masses, feast day masses and prayer assemblies. Through participating in the religious life of our school, students will be experiencing the presence of Jesus, which is the foundation of our faith.

Within the classrooms, students will participate in morning prayer each day. A special element of this prayer is when it is shared with parents. Opportunities will be provided during each term, for parents to join their child for morning prayer.



## The Prep Uniform

The Prep uniform consists of green sport shorts with the school logo, maroon shirt with tartan collar and sleeve cuffs, black shoes (prefer joggers with Velcro), white crew length socks and a green school hat which is available in two styles, bucket hat and broad brim hat. School shoes will be worn at all times during school hours for safety reasons. School policy requires children to wear their hat at all times when outside.

## How lunch times work at St Mary MacKillop

Healthy food is encouraged. A healthy snack of fruit or vegetables to have between breaks should be included in their lunch box. We call this "Munch and Crunch" time. The children require lunch, snack and munch & crunch. Children will need a drink bottle, a named lunch box that is easy to manage, and a special smaller named container for munch and crunch.

We have an early lunch at 10.30am to avoid playtime in the harsh midday sun. This is the time the children eat their sandwiches and yoghurt or fruit. Snack is our second break and is at 1.15pm. Chocolates, lollies and chips are discouraged in keeping with our healthy food policy. Ordering tuckshop for Prep students will commence in week 3.

It is beneficial if you discuss with your child each day what you have given them for lunch. Make suggestions about what they could eat at each break (or even have food separated into two different containers).

## Children with allergies

We may have children in our Prep classes who have life threatening nut and egg allergies, so these products are **not allowed** in Prep lunchboxes. More information will be made available at the start of school.

## School arrival and departure times

It is extremely important that you have your child at school each day in time for the 8.25am bell. (If your child is at school at 8.15am it gives them time to see their friends, go to the toilet and get a drink etc.) Please do not send your child to school too early in the mornings as before school supervision only begins at 8.05am. We would ask that all parents leave the designated waiting area by 8.25am so that the school routine can begin smoothly. Children who arrive after the bell will be required to go to the office to sign in. Children departing school for any reason during the day will be required to be signed out by a parent or guardian at the office.



## The importance of staying up-to-date and involved!

Staying involved in your child's education is the key to a successful year. Engage your child in conversation about his/her day, but know that children won't always give out much information. This is where our weekly communication becomes vital as it provides information about what is happening inside the classroom and these can be conversation starters. There will be opportunities for parental involvement in the classroom, and if this is an option for you, it is a good chance to see first-hand what is going on in the classroom.

Children will be very tired at the end of the day. Some will come home and not stop talking about school; others will need to wind down before they are ready to talk. Instead of saying "What did you do at school today?" (the answer is often "nothing!") take notice of the classroom at drop off/pick up and make observations so you can say, "Oh, I see you're learning about....what did you find out?"

### **Children who require medication**

Please contact the school office if your child requires medication to be administered at school.

### **School newsletters and notes**

The school newsletter is emailed to parents on Tuesdays. It is also available via the Parent Portal and the BCE Connect App. Each child will receive a named blue homework satchel, which will be used to bring notes to and from school each day. Replacement homework satchels can be ordered through the Uniform Shop.

### **Meeting with class teachers**

All parents are welcome to attend the Parent Information Evening held in the first term to inform you of classroom program and procedures. Should you wish to meet the teacher at other times please make an appointment with them to do so.

### **The Reporting Process**

Formal reporting to parents will take place at the end of Term 2 and Term 4 in the form of written reports which are available via the Parent Portal. At the end of Term 1 and Term 3 parent/teacher interviews will be offered. We will be using the Achievement Standards from the Australian Curriculum to monitor and assess your child's progress.

### **Parent Involvement**

Parents are always encouraged to become regularly involved in the Prep program. When volunteers are required, rosters will be drawn up. One of the ways in which you can become involved is to volunteer for brain games or motor program. Parents will be also welcomed into the room to share prayer and the learning throughout various stages of the year.

### **Prayer in the classroom**

This is an important part of our day. Eventually we will invite parents to join us each fortnight for our prayer mornings. This is a very quiet and reflective time during which we ask you to supervise your toddlers and ensure they don't interrupt this special time.

### **Sun Safety**

Outside of the classroom all children must wear a hat. Parents are asked to assist by their own example and provide 30+ sunscreen and apply it well before the children come to Prep.



## Our Teachers

Teachers are people too. They are dedicated to helping children progress at their individual rate to reach their potential. Please respect and co-operate with their decisions and professional recommendations.

## Have Trust and Foster Good Communication

Trust that your child will be able to cope without you whilst they are at school. Over protectiveness stifles children's development and self-confidence. Trust the teachers – they have your child's best interests at heart.

Communication between home and school is extremely important – please approach your teacher if you have any concerns. If you find it easier, you are welcome to email your child's teacher. Please ensure your email address is always up to date via the Parent Portal.

## Remember to wait, stop and enjoy this time!

It's important to wait for your child to develop. Children's development proceeds in "fits and starts" so don't expect a smooth road! This development cannot be rushed and varies from child to child.



*Children are like butterflies in the wind.  
Some fly higher than others.  
Though all fly the best they can.  
Why compare one with another?  
Each is Special  
Each is Beautiful!*



## How to get your child ready for Prep!

Knowledge of formalities such as hello, goodbye, please and thank you. Is your child confident?

- in toilet use and personal hygiene. (blowing own nose, washing hands, fully toilet trained)
- with being left, trusts that Mum or Dad will return.
- to open and close their lunchbox
- to pack/unpack their school bag including zips & clips
- to put on and take off socks/shoes
- to write and/or recognise their name

## Ideas to Help Prepare Your Child:

**Rhyming:** is a very important skill you can practise with your child. Read lots of books that have rhyming words in them and remember to teach nursery rhymes to your child. A child's ability to rhyme is a good indicator of future reading success.

**Games:** Visual perception activities are important too. Try games such as Spot the Difference; Find "the hidden picture" e.g. "Where's Wally?" and "I Spy"; Pick Up Sticks; Balloon patting/bouncing; Lotto games; Bingo (pictures/shapes) and Puzzles.

**Establish Routines:** In the weeks leading up to the start of school take your child to school and walk around the grounds. Show them the classrooms, the toilets, office, church etc., so that they gain familiarity with their new surroundings. Even if they have older siblings at St Mary MacKillop, it would be a good idea to do this.

**In the New Year:** Begin to establish a routine for bedtimes and mornings, as this will help your child prepare for getting ready for school on time.

Initially it can be very daunting for your child trying to find their school bag on the shelves. Please label your child's school bag in some unique way (key ring, small toy, ribbon etc.) to make it easier for them to identify.

Read picture books at bedtime each night. One story which you might like to try and find, which we will read to the children at school, is "The Kissing Hand" by Audrey Penn. This is a wonderful story which addresses the nerves and excitement of this important time.

### YOUR CHILD NEEDS:

- Prep uniforms
- A St Mary MacKillop school bag
- A suitable lunch box – clearly named
- A named drink bottle filled with water
- 1 spare pair of socks and 2 spare pairs of underpants (a spare pair of shorts would also be of benefit)
- A small cushion or pillow
- A St Mary MacKillop school library bag available from the Uniform Shop.
- A St Mary MacKillop school homework satchel.



**Please name every item your child brings to school in lower case letters not capitals.**  
e.g. Susan White not SUSAN WHITE



**WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOL!**