**Prep Handbook**

**Starting School in Prep**

Waterford West State School strives to ensure a wonderful start to your child’s education. We are committed to providing a quality Prep Programme, promoting a love of learning, celebrating success and establishing the building blocks for future learning.

Prep from 2012 will be a full-time, five-day-a-week programme, available to those children born between 1 July, 2008 and 30 June, 2009.

This information has been written for the families of these students so that you may gain a greater understanding of the Prep Curriculum and school policies and procedures.

**Prep Curriculum**

From 2012, Waterford West State School, along with all Preparatory Year classes, will implement the new Australian Curriculum for English, Maths and Science. Outlined below are some of the key Preparatory Year Achievement Standards.

**English:** By the end of the year, students accurately identify the letters of the English alphabet and know the sounds represented by most letters. They read short, predictable texts aloud with some fluency and accuracy, students write one or more simple sentences to retell events and experiences for a known audience. They handwrite most lower case and some upper case letters. In informal classroom settings, students communicate clearly and purposefully and engage in pair, group and class discussions and participate actively in group tasks.

**Maths:** By the end of the year, students make the connections between number names, numerals and quantities up to 10. Students are able to compare and sort shapes and objects. They make connections between events and days of the week.

**Science:** By the end of the year, students make observations of familiar objects and materials and explore their properties and behaviour. They suggest how the environment affects them and other living things.

Whilst the Australian Curriculum will eventually be developed for all learning areas, in 2012 teachers will plan for children’s learning using the new English, Maths and Science Curriculum in conjunction with three early learning areas of the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines:

- **Social and Personal Learning:** Children sustain relationships by acknowledging and negotiating rights, roles and responsibilities. They act with increasing independence and responsibility towards learning and personal organisation.
- **Health and Physical Learning:** Children build a sense of wellbeing by making safe and healthy choices and by using and extending gross motor skills and fine motor skills.
- **Active Learning Processes:** Children think and inquire by investigating technology. They experiment with materials and processes in creative and imaginative ways.

**Our Prep Programme**

It is through the curriculum outlined that our experienced Prep teachers and fulltime teacher aides will deliver a quality, play-based programme catering for each child’s interests, needs and abilities. It is our belief that inquiry-based learning and investigations are key elements of the programme.

During the Prep day, children may be involved in learning experiences such as:
- Construction using blocks, collage and manipulative equipment to develop early mathematical concepts and skills, such as sorting, patterning, size and colour.
- Writing stories and copying signs as part of their play, constructions and art.
- Engaging in dramatic play to build an understanding of the world around them.
- Actively participating in teacher-led reading, writing and maths sessions.
- Using computers to draw pictures, make signs, play educational games and find out about the world.
- Playing and investigating ideas independently, in small groups and as a class.
- Designing, constructing and negotiating obstacle courses to develop gross motor skills.

As the year progresses, the programme will become more structured as we strive to best prepare the students for year one. Teachers will adjust the daily timetable accordingly.

Below shows our session times and an example timetable.

8.40 am - First bell
8.45 am - 2 hour literacy block, ‘Class Max Time’ (no interruptions)
10.45 am - Supervised eating time
11.00 am - Eating time and playtime
11.30 am - Handwriting
11.50 am - Maths
1.00 pm - Smart moves – physical activity
1.30 pm - Supervised eating and playtime
2.00 pm - Afternoon session
2.45 pm - Home time

We ask that each student arrives at school by 8.40 am and that the accompanying adult or older sibling helps to organise his/her lunch box, school bag, water bottle and any other items. Students will assume greater responsibility for personal organisation as the year progresses.

Arriving at this time will also ensure that students are ready to start the school day. Research has shown that students are more receptive to learning in the first part of the school day. To maximise this time period, our school has adopted a ‘Max Time’ policy for all morning sessions. During this period interruptions are minimised to ensure that focussed and engaged learning may take place. This includes interruptions from both school staff and students.

There are two lunch breaks at Waterford West State School. At first break, we begin with 15 minutes of supervised eating time. Staff encourage students to eat sandwiches and healthy food items, such as yoghurt. After 15 minutes, the students are free to continue eating or to play within the boundaries of the Prep yard. At second break, play and eating time is combined. Later in the year, the students will transition to the Junior School play areas during breaks.

The school day finishes at 2.45 pm when we invite parents and care givers to come inside. Upon seeing you, the teacher will personally dismiss each child from the carpet area. We ask that you arrive promptly as late arrivals may cause distress for your child.
**Specialist Lessons**

Prep students will participate in Music, Cultural Studies, Library and Physical Education Specialist Programmes. The regular classroom teacher aide will accompany and support students during these lessons.

**Special School Events**

As the year progresses, there will be several special school events, such as parades, ceremonies, incursions and our Sports Day. As each event approaches, information will be provided to families via the newsletter, our prep webpage and/or class letters.

**Communication**

Communication is essential to ensure a strong partnership between school and home. We offer a variety of communication methods, including:

- A comprehensive school website.
- Parent information sessions.
- Informal conversation before and after school.
- Mutually suitable appointments.
- Parent/teacher conferences.
- Showcases.
- A school newsletter.
- Digital portfolios.
- Report cards.
- Reporting.

Informal assessment of students is ongoing and takes place throughout the year. Teachers provide parents with information and feedback on student progress at parent teacher interviews that are conducted towards the end of terms 2 and 4. Accompanying these interviews will be a student report card.

Throughout the Prep year your child’s work samples, experiences and learning success will be recorded digitally using a portfolio program. You will receive this special record of your child’s learning on CD at the end of Semester 2.

**Preparing for Prep**

What will my child need to bring?

- A school bag large enough to fit a lunch box, water bottle, a change of underwear and other items such as art work or a jumper.
- Healthy Food only, foods such as a sandwich, yoghurt, cheese and fruit. We pop yoghurts and other cold food items in our classroom fridges. Please don’t forget to send along a spoon if it is required.
- A wide-brimmed hat as our school policy is ‘No Hat, No Play’.
- A water bottle filled with water only.
- Clearly named lunch boxes, water bottles and clothing.

**What resources will I need to supply?**

Our Prep enrolment package includes a booklist.
Families are provided with two options:

Option 1: Purchase booklist items from local shops and our school uniform shop.

Option 2: Pay a one-off contribution of $80 and we will supply your child with all necessary items, including art resources, play materials, a school hat, a school library bag, a portfolio folder and a CD to record the digital portfolio.

**What will my child need to wear?**

Prep students are required to wear Waterford West’s full school uniform. The boy’s uniform consists of our school shirt and shorts. Girls wear the school shirt and culottes or our dress uniform. Both boys and girls are required to wear joggers or closed-in footwear. Children without appropriate footwear may not be able to participate in certain school routines and activities due to Workplace Health and Safety regulations. During the winter months, students are required to wear blue jumpers and track pants. Uniforms can be purchased from our school uniform shop. Please see your enrolment package for details including pricing.

**How can I help to prepare my child for Prep?**

Families can support the transition from home to Prep by helping and encouraging your child to:

- Recognise his/her name in print.
- Pack, open, close and carry a school bag.
- Identify personal property.
- Open lunchboxes and food items.
- Open and close water bottles.
- Wash hands properly.
- Use the toilet independently.
- Listen to family members read stories regularly
- Recognise some letters of the alphabet, especially those in his/her name.
- Identify basic colours, shapes and some numbers from 0 to 10.

**How can I help in my child’s classroom?**

Teachers welcome parent help. In the first weeks of Prep, you may be keen to prepare materials at home while the students are busy settling into Prep. Toward the end of term one, a parent roster will be displayed asking for help with a range of activities, including reading with individuals, playing literacy games with small groups or preparing materials, such as cutting up collage materials. The children thoroughly enjoy having family members in the classroom and we do too!

**Prep Parent Information Session**

It is our hope that this information will help you to prepare your child for Prep in 2014.

Enrolment packages are available from the school office. If you are wishing to enrol immediately, please bring along your child’s original birth certificate.

We will hold a Parent Information Session from 1.45 pm to 2.45 pm on Tuesday, 8 November. Our Principal, Di Carter, and our Prep teachers will provide you with further insight into our school’s routines, procedures and Prep Programme. Other members of our school community will be there to explain the workings of our tuckshop, uniform shop and P&C Association. We hope to see you there!