Waterford West
State School

Learning for Life

Prep
Handbook
Waterford West State School
Learning for Life

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Monday to Friday 8.00am – 4.00pm
A Note from the Prep Teachers

Dear parents and carers,

We are very happy to welcome you and your child to our school.

At Waterford West State School we strive to ensure a successful transition to school for your child. We are committed to providing a quality Prep program, promoting a love of learning, celebrating success and establishing the building blocks for future learning.

This handbook has been written for families so that you may gain a greater understanding of the Prep Curriculum and to help you and your child prepare for their first year of school.

After reading this book, if you have any further questions you are very welcome to contact one of us, or the school administration team.

Best wishes,

Waterford West Prep Teachers
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**Starting School in Prep**
Prep is the first year of school and provides the foundation for your child's education. It is a full-time program where children attend Monday to Friday, from 8.45am – 2.45pm.
Children must be 5 years old by 30 June in the year they commence school.
To determine when your child can commence their prep year, use the prep ready reckoner (http://www.qld.gov.au/education/earlychildhood/prep/pages/enrolments.html) calculator.

**Enrolling your child in Prep**
Parents intending to enrol their child in Prep are encouraged to contact the school office the year prior to commencement of school.

Information about the school’s enrolment process and documentation is located on the school’s website (https://watwestss.eq.edu.au) under the enrolments tab, or at the office.

Waterford West State School has an enrolment management plan (http://education.qld.gov.au/schools/catchment/plan-w/waterford-west-ss.html) in place, which means enrolments are managed according to the policy.

You will need to bring an original copy of your child’s birth certificate on enrolment. Children will not be able to enrol until this documentation is provided. We recommend if you don’t currently have an original birth certificate, to order one as soon as possible so that there are no delays for your child.

**What resources will I need to supply?**
Parents and carers are encouraged to pay a one-off $100 contribution that will cover the costs of your child with stationery, art resources, construction materials and a school hat.

You will need to provide a school bag (big enough to easily fit lunch box and homework folder), lunch box and water bottle.
Dress Code
Prep students follow the school’s dress code. The boy’s uniform consists of our school shirt and shorts. Girls wear the school shirt, culottes or shorts. 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 or red jumpers and blue track pants.

Information about the school’s dress code, uniform shop opening hours and pricing is located on the school’s website (https://watwestss.eq.edu.au) under the enrolments tab and the uniform shop tab. This information can also be obtained from the office.

Prep Procedures at Waterford West State School
Prep Drop off and Collection
Prep children need to be dropped off and collected in the classroom by an adult or responsible older sibling. If you are unable to do this, please make arrangements for another adult to drop off and collect your child, or alternatively, book your child into before and/or after school care. You need to inform the office if someone different to the nominated persons on your child’s enrolment form will be collecting your child.

On arrival
We ask that each student arrives at school by 8.30 am and waits with the accompanying adult. Arriving at this time will ensure that students are ready to start the school day. On arrival please encourage your child to organise his/her lunch box, school bag, water bottle and any other items rather than doing it for them. At the beginning of the year they will need more support and reminders as they learn the school routine.

First Bell: 8.40am (warning bell, time to line up/get ready)
Second bell: 8.45am (start of learning time)
If your child arrives after the second bell at 8.45am, you must collect a late slip from the administration office.

On departure
School finishes at 2.45pm. Please be prompt when collecting your child from the classroom.

Medication
Department of Education and Training has strict guidelines concerning the administration of medication to students. These guidelines state that medication can only be given to a student when it is:

- Accompanied by a school medication form completed and signed by the parent/carer
- In the original packaging, with the student’s name, and pharmacist instructions printed on it.
- Children who use asthma inhalers regularly should complete a long term medication form for the year

All prescribed medication is administered at the office by admin staff. Medication is registered and signed off for each child and their dosage noted.
Health
Children with infectious diseases must be excluded from Prep for specified times. In cases of minor ailments (e.g., cold or headache), parents are asked to exercise good judgment about whether or not their child is well enough to benefit from attending school.


Getting set for Prep
Starting school can be an exciting but stressful time for you and your child. For some children, it may be the first time that they have been away from their parents. They may be going into a strange environment with unfamiliar people and things around them.

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

Work with your child to develop his or her communication skills. Help your child to:
- make his or her own needs known
- use appropriate greetings
- respond verbally when spoken to.

Information and strategies about supporting your child’s transition to Prep can be found at https://www.qld.gov.au/education/earlychildhood/prep/pages/preparing.html
Making the First Week a success
There are some simple steps you can take to make your child’s first week at school more enjoyable and relaxed. Be prepared. The best thing you can do is to make these first days as stress-free and relaxed as possible.

Before the first day:
- Make sure you have uniforms, school bag, lunch box, water bottle and a change of clothing. A school sun safe hat will be provided for your child as part of the Prep levy.
- Familiarise your child with the school environment and routine by driving or walking by the school a few times so that the school becomes a familiar place.
- Attend our prep transition program and open day so you can meet our staff and see the classroom.
- Visit the school, if possible, when other children are there so that your child can get used to the number of children, the playground and the movement of children around school grounds.
- Make sure all possessions are clearly labelled with your child’s name.
- Check with your pre-Prep provider (kindy, childcare) about how they can help children make a smooth transition to school.

The day before write a list of all you’ll need to organise, such as food and a change of clothing. Stick the list to the fridge and tick each item off with your child as you complete it.

On the day:
- leave plenty of time to get ready.
- make a nutritious breakfast — this is essential for sustained energy and concentration.
- talk through the daily routine — start, lunch and finish times.
- talk through a few simple self-help ideas — for example, asking teachers for help or directions.
- be positive and encouraging about your child’s attendance at school.
- be flexible in the early days of school, children may take a little while to settle in.
- When dropping off your child, say goodbye and leave quickly so that they can settle.
- Don’t worry if your child becomes upset. We will call you if they don’t settle.

Packing the school lunch
Being at school is hard work, so by lunchtime your child will be hungry and thirsty. They will need a nutritious and filling lunch.

When packing your child’s lunch:
- provide healthy food and drink in realistic quantities for morning tea and lunch.
- ensure that your child can open and unwrap their lunch — plastic film wrap can be very difficult for little fingers.
- provide a variety of smaller items rather than one or two large items.
- pack an ice brick to keep food fresh — there is no refrigeration available for student lunches.
- check with the school for information about healthy food and drink choices.
- provide a named water bottle every day and encourage your child to drink from it.
- keep sweets, chips and other party food for parties or special occasions.
- The school provides a small piece of fruit for each child each day.
* It is important you inform the school if your child has any food allergies.
Prep Curriculum
At Waterford West State School, Prep teachers use the Foundation Year of the Australian Curriculum to guide children’s learning. In 2017 teachers will implement the Australian Curriculum for English, Maths and Science, Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS), The Arts and Technology. Teachers continue to use the Queensland Early Years Curriculum Guidelines to plan Social and Personal Learning.

Foundation Year Achievement Standards

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Receptive modes (listening, reading and viewing)</th>
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<td>By the end of the Foundation year, students use predicting and questioning strategies to make meaning from texts. They recall one or two events from texts with familiar topics. They understand that there are different types of texts and that these can have similar characteristics. They identify connections between texts and their personal experience.</td>
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<td>They read short, decodable and predictable texts with familiar vocabulary and supportive images, drawing on their developing knowledge of concepts of print, sounds and letters and decoding and self-monitoring strategies. They recognise the letters of the English alphabet, in upper and lower case and know and use the most common sounds represented by most letters. They read high-frequency words and blend sounds orally to read consonant-vowel-consonant words. They use appropriate interaction skills to listen and respond to others in a familiar environment. They listen for rhyme, letter patterns and sounds in words.</td>
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| Productive modes (speaking, writing and creating) |
| By the end of the Foundation year, students understand that their texts can reflect their own experiences. They identify and describe likes and dislikes about familiar texts, objects, characters and events. |
| In informal group and whole class settings, students communicate clearly. They retell events and experiences with peers and known adults. They identify and use rhyme, and orally blend and segment sounds in words. When writing, students use familiar words and phrases and images to convey ideas. Their writing shows evidence of letter and sound knowledge, beginning writing behaviours and experimentation with capital letters and full stops. They correctly form known upper- and lower-case letters. |

| Maths |
| By the end of the Foundation year, students make connections between number names, numerals and quantities up to 10. They compare objects using mass, length and capacity. Students connect events and the days of the week. They explain the order and duration of events. They use appropriate language to describe location. |
| Students count to and from 20 and order small collections. They group objects based on common characteristics and sort shapes and objects. Students answer simple questions to collect information and make simple inferences. |

| Science |
| By the end of the Foundation year, students describe the properties and behaviour of familiar objects. They suggest how the environment affects them and other living things. |
| Students share and reflect on observations, and ask and respond to questions about familiar objects and events. |
Our Prep Program
It is through the curriculum outlined that our experienced Prep teachers and fulltime teacher aides will deliver a quality program catering for each child’s needs and abilities. When children start Prep they progressively move towards a more structured learning environment throughout the year.

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.

Daily Routines
As the year progresses, the program 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
10.45 am - Supervised eating time
11.00 am - Eating time and playtime
11.30 am - Maths
1.00 pm - Gross and Fine Motor
1.30 pm - Supervised eating and playtime
2.00 pm – Science/History and Geography/ Technology
2.45 pm - Home time

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. 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 and Physical Education lessons. 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 through the newsletter, assemblies or our school’s Facebook page.

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
- A school newsletter
- Report card

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 1 and 3. Accompanying these interviews will be a student report card.

Attendance
Every day counts in Prep because going to Prep every day ...

- will make sure your child gets the most out of their important first year of school
- will make your child’s transition into Year 1 easier
- improves your child’s reading, writing and maths
- builds a positive approach to learning
- strengthens your child’s independence and confidence.

What will your child’s school do?

- Monitor your child’s attendance
- Talk to you about any unexplained absences
- Work with you to overcome problems affecting your child’s attendance
- Give your child support for any additional learning needs they may have
- Offer developmentally, socially and culturally appropriate learning opportunities

Support for families
If your child is having problems attending Prep each school day, speak to your school for advice and support.
Get involved
As a parent, you play a vital role in your child’s education. By getting involved in the school you can help your child to make a smooth and happy start to their education.
You can do this by:
- introducing yourself to your child’s teacher
- keeping the teacher informed of any changes that may affect your child
- talking with your child about their day
- attending parent information sessions
- reading the school newsletter
- visiting the school website
- checking class notice boards
- attending parent meetings and talking to other parents
- helping your child to complete their home reading and homework tasks.

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!

Transition to Prep Program
Every year Waterford West SS will connect with local childcare centres and families to provide a transition to prep program. The aim of the program is to better prepare and support children to make the transition to school, and to support parents to become involved in their child’s education.

A positive start to school leads to a greater and ongoing connection with school and is linked to positive educational and social outcomes. Children who have a positive start to school are more likely to regard school as an important place, have high expectations regarding their ability to learn and succeed at school with better attendance, achievement and attainment.

The transition to prep program consists of:
- Transition sessions – small groups of children and parents engage with staff to build relationships and start to familiarise themselves with the physical school environment
- Open day – all enrolled children are invited to attend a session with prep teachers and staff. Parents and carers hear from school staff about the expectations of Prep.
- Enrolment interview – parents and carers meet with the school staff to discuss the enrolment process and complete enrolment documentation
- Information evening – parents and carers are invited to hear from school staff about the expectations of Prep.

Information about the transition to prep program is shared with the community early in term 3 through the school’s website, facebook page and by a community leaflet drop.