Preparatory Year Handbook
Mary Immaculate School, Annerley
Welcome

Welcome to Mary Immaculate School and in particular, to Prep.

We hope that your association with our Preparatory class is relaxed, friendly and valuable. At Mary Immaculate, we endeavour to provide children with optimum learning experiences that will establish a strong foundation for successful learning throughout life.

General School Information

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<th>2018</th>
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Prep School Hours

Hours for Prep to Year 6 are 8:35 am to 3:00 pm each day. The Prep room will be open at these times. The formal part of our Prep program does not commence until 8:55 am.

Parents are asked to bring their children to the room at 8:35 am after the first bell. For the first few weeks, during the first 15-20 minutes, parents are most welcome to stay and spend time participating in the parent/child activities set up until the formal program commences at 8:55 am.

As the children are new to our setting and for safety purposes, we would like the children to be collected from the Prep room by an adult or older sibling, particularly during Semester 1. Those children accessing the Outside School Hours Care program will be collected by the OSHC staff.
Helping Your Child Prepare for Prep

The two and a half months between Prep Orientation and the beginning of school in January can seem like a lifetime to a child who may be nervous and/or excited about going to school for the first time. During these months, there are some simple things that you can be doing with your child to help him/her be prepared for their adventure into a school setting.

By encouraging your child to develop independence and resilience, you are giving him/her a solid foundation for success and happiness at school. The following suggestions will help to familiarise your child with some routines that he/she will encounter at school, and will also help your child to develop confidence in his/her abilities and alleviate some anxiety he/she may have about starting school.

Recognising His/Her Own Name

Provide your child with many opportunities to 'read' or recognise his/her own name in many different contexts. Point out the name on books, papers, clothing and toys. It is important that any items your child brings to school are labelled, so involve your child in this process. Ensure that he/she is familiar with where the name is written on each item. You could turn this into a game! If your child has difficulty recognising his/her name, you could use pictures in addition to words. **When writing your child's name, please use only 1 capital/upper case letter at the beginning and lower case for the rest of his/her name, e.g. Thomas.**

Tags on School Bags

When your child puts on his/her bag for the first time, it will seem like a very big bag for a very little person! As all of the children in your child's class will have the same bag, it is important for him/her to be able to recognise and find his/her own bag easily. Write your child's name on the lower left corner of the bag as well as inside the flap. A key ring or bag tag is very helpful for little eyes to locate a bag amongst a lot of identical ones! **Once children have started school, they will be expected to carry their own bag in order to assist them to develop their independence.**

Spend time before school begins assisting your child to put his/her own bag on and to practise carrying it with their lunch box and drink bottle in, so that he/she can get used to it.

Lunch Box Practise

At school your child will be responsible for managing his/her food throughout the day, with guidance from the teachers. Most children are used to a parent or carer providing them with particular foods at particular meal times. To suddenly be in charge of a lunch box full of food may seem daunting or exciting to little ones, and the temptation to eat it all at once can be very strong!
Your child’s teacher will help your child identify which foods are for each break; however, you could ‘practise’ using a lunch box at home in this time before school begins. With your child, choose foods for three breaks during the day – Munch and Crunch, at about 9:45am (fresh fruit or vegetables only), 1st Break at 11am (sandwiches, yoghurts etc), and 2nd Break at 1:40pm (a healthy snack). Talk to your child about what foods he/she might have at each break and allow them to choose from the lunch box during the day just as they will when they are at school. Packaging the foods in zip-lock bags (numbered if you like) inside the lunch box with a picture or a label might help your child to make appropriate choices for break times. Ensure that your child is able to open his/her own food packages.

Once school begins, encourage your child to put left-over food back into his/her lunch box so that you can see what has and hasn’t been eaten. In the first couple of weeks of school it is quite normal for children to be more interested in playing or talking to friends than in eating. This usually settles down when the children learn that once they have done the eating, they can do the playing!

Toilet and Drink Routines

For safety and supervision reasons, it is necessary for students at school to ask permission from a teacher before going to the toilet or getting a drink. Talk to your child about what to do at school when he/she needs to go to the toilet. If the class is having floor time together, it might be appropriate to put a hand up to ask to go, or if it is during a play activity, your child may be able to go up to the teacher and ask.

In our Prep room, the children are asked to leave the doors open to protect little fingers. After going to the toilet, they are reminded to flush, wash and dry. It is a good idea to talk about these things with your child so that he/she knows what to expect.

We have frequent toilet breaks during our Prep day, and when all children are using the bathroom, they are supervised. During this time, we work on our personal hygiene.
**Drink Bottles (WATER ONLY)**

The best refreshment for your child at school is water. Students are encouraged to bring drink bottles to school filled with water so that they can remain hydrated during the day. Other drinks such as milk or juice may be enjoyed at break times, but only water is to be consumed during class or activity time. While at home, encourage your child to do the same. Spend some time before your child begins school showing them how to open and close his/her drink bottle lid and perhaps how to refill the bottle.

**Goodbye Routine**

It is very normal for a child to become upset when it is time to say goodbye to Mum or Dad. Even a child who is very excited about going to school may still feel sad when it is time to begin the day and say farewell. For most children, it is the actual farewell that makes them feel sad and so naturally the longer the farewell takes, the longer the child will be upset. Most children who are teary when Mum or Dad say goodbye settle immediately into the activities that their classmates and friends are doing as soon as their parents have gone.

It is very difficult to leave a child who is crying and holding on to you tightly just as it is also heartbreaking to have to say goodbye and walk away. Take the time before school begins to establish a ‘goodbye’ routine with your child. This might be something fun such as a cuddle, a kiss and a high-five. You could even create a secret family handshake!

In Prep, we begin the year with a lovely ‘Kissing Hand’ story that will help with the morning goodbyes. Talk to your child about what this goodbye routine is and establish an understanding that once it has been done, it is time for him/her to begin the school day and for you to leave.

Talk to your child about what you are going to be doing while they are at school so that they know where you will be and that you will be OK. Remember the power of language; rather than tell your child that you are really going to miss him/her, say that you can’t wait to hear all about their day. Try to organise some play dates before school begins to enable your child to begin to establish independence and confidence being away from you.

**Velcro Shoes**

Prep play time often involves sand, and sand often involves mess! Children will remove their shoes at times while at school, to empty large quantities of sand and bark out of them! Your child will need to be able to put his/her own clothing items on relatively quickly and easily.

Velcro fastenings on shoes are not only quick and easy, but also boost children’s confidence as they are able to dress themselves. Tying shoe laces requires many fine motor skills and good hand/eye co-ordination. Many children at Prep age are not quite ready for this. Keep practising tying shoe laces at home but keep in mind that Velcro fastenings are the most appropriate choice for school shoes at this stage.
Share your child’s Orientation experience. Encourage him/her to draw pictures about the time spent in the new classroom and perhaps ring family and friends to share the news! Remember to keep conversations about school positive to help your child keep the excitement that they are feeling today (at Orientation) until he/she is back at school for the first day next year!

On the following pages you will find an A-Z of information that will be helpful to you as a parent of a student in Prep at Mary Immaculate Primary School. More information about policy, procedures and events is available on our school website www.maryimmaculate.qld.edu.au.
Accidents/Sudden Illness

For injuries of a minor nature, first aid will be administered at school. Should a serious illness or accident occur, every effort will be made to contact parents.

However, it may be necessary to seek immediate medical service. It is therefore essential that school records are kept accurate. Parents are expected to keep the school informed of emergency contact numbers and all other pertinent medical information.

Attendance

Although Preparatory is not compulsory, it is expected that children will attend regularly. Please advise the school office if your child will be absent for any reason. We mark our roll electronically. Children who arrive after 8:50am are noted as late and need to be taken to the office by a parent to be signed in before coming to the classroom.

Bags

In order to encourage the development of independence, your child will be expected to carry his/her own bag to and from the classroom. It is important for children to develop responsibility for their belongings and the independence to be able to carry their bag and place it in the correct place in the Prep room lockers. You are asked to support us in helping your child in this area by refraining from carrying school bags for them and to also minimise any heavy ‘extras’ that are put into your child’s bag.

Birthdays

On this special occasion you may like to send along a simple iced cake or a patty cake for each student (which are much easier to share). Other ideas such as ice cream and cones or water ice-blocks etc are also fine, but please let us know a day in advance. If your child has allergies to any foods that may be shared at school, please ensure that this information is provided to the school and to your child’s teachers. If your child does have allergies that would prevent him/her from sharing in birthday celebrations at school, you may wish to send in a supply of something that he/she could have instead on these occasions.

Books and Stationery

Included in the book pack for the Prep students are items such as crayons, pencils and textas that will be placed into baskets and containers for the students to use whilst working in their groups. This is the best method of providing access to resources for the students in Prep and teaches them valuable lessons about sharing and co-operation.
Please do not write names on these items as this can cause problems for some students when they are combined as a shared resource. To assist your child in identifying particular books, you are asked not to cover the books from the bookpack. It is essential that all items from the bookpack are brought to school on your child’s first day.

**Car Parking and the Pick Up/Drop Off Zone**

Our number one priority in the car park and the Pick Up/Drop Off Zone is the safety of our students. For this reason there are strict guidelines for the use of the car park and access to the school to which all parents and visitors must adhere. It is vital that you model these safe practices whilst on school grounds.

1. When parking your car, you must ensure that you park in the designated parking areas only (ie. further down Ferndale St on the school side or across the road on Ferndale St, and **not in the Pick Up/Drop Off area**).
2. When using the Pick Up/Drop Off zone, YOU ARE REQUIRED TO REMAIN IN YOUR VEHICLE AT ALL TIMES AND MOVE TOWARDS THE FRONT OF THE LINE AS CARS LEAVE. Please **DO NOT park your car** and walk up to the Prep room to collect your child.
3. When using the car park beside the Hall, please walk your child safely into the school grounds. Children need to be with an adult at all times in this car park.
4. Between 7.45 am – 8:45 am and 2:45 pm – 3:15 pm there is a crossing supervisor on duty in Ferndale Street to ensure the safe crossing of students and families. Please ensure that you follow any direction given by the supervisor, either as a pedestrian or as a motorist.

**Clothing**

It is essential that all articles of clothing are clearly labelled with your child’s name – including shoes and socks. This practice will help to ensure that items can be returned to the correct owner when they are temporarily misplaced. This is also important so that children can identify their own belongings and develop independence in looking after their own belongings.

**Communication**

It is vital that the home/school relationship is a communicative one. Events in family life such as illness, visits of family and friends, accidents or death of relatives, friends and pets can cause concern or excitement for children and have an impact on their behaviour. We would appreciate the sharing of this information as it may help in understanding any changes in behaviour. Your child’s teachers’ email addresses will be available for you to use as a convenient form of communication, and the Prep Communication Book (found on top of the lockers in the Prep room) will be a vital tool in helping to maintain this regular contact.

Each week the school newsletter will be sent by email to every family. Other communication, eg. Book Club and permission slips, will be placed in your child’s pocket.
(located outside the Prep room doors), so it is essential that you check the pockets daily at drop off and pick up times.

In Prep, we also use online apps such as Class Dojo to provide status updates during our day. When school begins, we will work with our parents to set these up.

Curriculum Planning

Teachers of Preparatory use a Negotiated Curriculum approach, following the Early Years Curriculum guidelines. At Mary Immaculate, we have a strong Early Years’ team that works closely to deliver a curriculum that is both true to the pedagogy of the early years philosophy as well as addressing the requirements of the Australian Curriculum. Further information about the Prep curriculum will be covered early during the first term. Each term, we send home a detailed overview of the curriculum planned for the term.

Handwriting

Correct letter formation is an essential skill to be taught when children are learning how to write.

Incorrect letter formation and pencil grip can lead to difficulties with writing and hand discomfort in later years. Following is an example of the Queensland Script that your child will be taught at school. By following this letter formation when doing writing activities at home, you will help your child to consolidate the learning that is occurring at school and help him/her to correctly establish an essential life skill.

Queensland Script

- The letters are sloped.
- Apart from little ‘e’ and ‘d’, all letters start at the TOP!
- Only the first letter of a proper noun or first word in a sentence is a capital. Please discourage your child from writing all in capitals. The letters can be easier to write; however, it can be a difficult habit to break if not addressed early.
Illness and Sick Children

In accordance with Health Department regulations, children with infectious diseases must NOT come to Preparatory for certain specified times (An Infectious Diseases list is available at the School Office). In cases of minor ailments, parents may use their own judgement about attendance. Children who become sick at school during the day will be allowed to rest quietly while parents are notified by telephone.

Medication

The following is a summary of the procedures for administering medication to children as outlined in detail by Brisbane Catholic Education.

1. The medical practitioner who has treated your child must provide written authorisation and information for administering the medication prescribed.

2. The parent or legal guardian must request in writing for school staff to administer prescription medications.
3. The medication must be in a container labelled by a pharmacist showing the name of the drug, the 'use by' date, the name of the child's medical practitioner and the child, the dosage and the frequency of administration.

4. In the case where it is necessary for the child to keep medication in their possession, eg. an asthma puffer, the parent or guardian must include this instruction in their advice. All other medication is stored in the school office.

5. Oral medication, such as analgesics and over-the-counter medication that has not been authorised by the child's medical practitioner, will not be administered by teachers or other persons on the school staff.

6. Teachers or other volunteers will not give intravenous injections. In order to ensure that all correct documentation is used, we ask that you use the “Administration of Medication” form that is available at the office.

Meetings

If you have concerns or queries, or just want to catch up with your child's class teacher, you are very welcome to arrange a meeting. Before and after school are very busy times for teachers when they are moving children from classes and preparing or packing up from lessons, and it can be difficult for them to give a quick 'on-the-spot' meeting without preparation. Please avoid using this time to ask questions or to try to make appointments, and instead either write a note, an email, or use the Communication Book on the lockers in the Prep room to contact the class teachers to make a mutually convenient time so that the teacher can be fully prepared for you and can give you their full attention.

Please note that if you arrive late for school, this is not an appropriate time for you to expect classroom teachers to stop their lessons or interactions with the children to have a catch up. This is a time when you could make use of the communication book on the lockers.

During the year, you will also have opportunities for both informal and formal Parent/Teacher interviews to discuss your child's progress as well as an Information Evening for all parents of each class at the beginning of Term One.

Parent Helpers

Parents are vital assets to any class and parent helpers can contribute so much to the life of the classroom. If you are interested in assisting in your child's class, or anywhere in the school, it is a prerequisite that you complete the Mandatory Student Protection Training Course for parent volunteers, which is offered in Term 1. Watch the newsletter for details.

Class teachers may devise a roster for sessions in which parent helpers would be of most benefit to the class and you will be invited to add your name to the roster if you wish.
Term One

Before School - During Term One it is necessary for you to take your child to the Prep room to help them settle for the day. There will be activities such as puzzles available for the students to work on at 8:35 am before classes start at approximately 9:00 am. For the first few weeks, you are welcome to stay with your child until it is time to say goodbye.

After school - You will be required to collect your child from the classroom at 3:00 pm. If you are going to be late, please ring the school to advise the class teacher. When you are waiting to collect your child from the classroom, you are asked to wait outside the Prep gate or quietly on the veranda to minimise disruption to the Prep class at a very busy time of the day.

Terms Two and Three

Before School – You will have two options as follows:

1. You may bring your Prep child to the drop-off area outside the school office in the care of the teachers on duty from 8:15 am. This time is used as conversation time for the students and provides an opportunity for them to chat with their friends and begin to settle in preparedness to start their school day. The children are then taken into the playground for supervised play before the school bell rings at 8:35 am.

2. You may take your child directly to the classroom and do an activity together from 8:35 am until approximately 8:50 am (or the teachers’ signal/invitation to say goodbye).

After School – The Prep doors open and parents are asked to stand where the children can see them. Once your child sees you, he/she puts up a hand and is dismissed from the classroom. If your child is booked into OSH Care, a staff member will collect them from the room.

Toys at School

At times your child will be encouraged to bring items from home to assist him/her in sharing news with the class. At these times, the items from home are to be clearly labelled and will remain in a secure place in the classroom until it is time for Show and Share. Any
toys or other personal items should not be brought to school as they can be easily lost or damaged. There are many resources available for the students to use both in class and at break times, so it is not necessary for children to bring in their own items from home.

Wet Weather

Raincoats are the best protection from wet weather conditions for students in Prep, both in terms of remaining as dry as possible and for safety purposes. **Please do not send an umbrella to school with your child** as they are unsafe for students of Prep age.

What your child needs for Prep

1. **Food for each day**
   
   Munch and Crunch (approx. 9:45am): a small piece of fruit or cut up vegetables in a small container or ziplock bag.

   First Break (11:00 am): a sandwich/pasta/rice/salad and perhaps a yoghurt/cheese

   Second Break (1:40 pm): a small serving of 2 food choices, eg. muesli bar and biscuits, or a favourite snack and a muffin

   A labelled drink bottle filled with **water**

2. **Shoes**

   Lace-up shoes are impractical at this age. Velcro white leather school sports shoes are much easier for Prep children to manage.

3. **A cushion (NOT pillow)** labelled with name and a removable pillowcase for 'Rest Time'. The pillowcase needs to be easily recognised so your child can find his/her own. These will be sent home regularly for washing. As cushions can take up a lot of storage space, please consider the size of the cushion you send in and keep to a minimum.

4. **A paint smock** that your child can put on independently. Old shirts and t-shirts can be handy as paint smocks. Waterproof paint smocks can be very hot, stiff and uncomfortable.

5. **A raincoat** for wet weather. Please do not send your child to school with an umbrella.

6. **Spare underpants, shorts and socks** in the front of your child’s bag for emergencies.

7. **A distinguishable key-ring/toy** attached to the zipper of your child’s school bag for ease of recognition. Please write your child’s name clearly on the inside of the bag flap.

8. **All items including your child’s bag, drink bottle, lunchbox and all clothing (including shoes)** must be clearly labelled with your child’s name.
I dreamed I stood in a studio and watched two sculptors there. The clay they used was a young child’s mind and they fashioned it with care.

One was a teacher, the tools she used were books and music and art. One was a parent with a guiding hand and a gentle loving heart.

Day after day the teacher toiled, with a touch that was deft and sure. While the parent laboured by her side and polished and smoothed it over.

And when at last, time had passed, they were proud of what they had wrought. For the things that they had moulded into the child could neither be sold nor bought.

And they each agreed that they would have failed, if they had worked alone. For behind the parent stood the school, and behind the teacher, the home.
Please bring this document to your meeting with the class teachers on your staggered entry day.