



# Mary Immaculate Primary School Prep Parent Handbook



## Welcome!

A very warm welcome to Mary Immaculate Primary School. A special welcome if you are a parent of a new Prep student.

At Mary Immaculate, we endeavour to provide children with enriched learning experiences that will establish a strong foundation for successful learning throughout life.

## General School Information

<b>2022</b>		
Term 1	Tuesday 25 January – Friday 1 April	10 wks
Term 2	Tuesday 19 April – Friday 24 June	10 wks
Term 3	Monday 11 July – Friday 16 September	10 wks
Term 4	Tuesday 4 October – Friday 2 December	9 wks
Public Holidays	Term 1: Australia Day - Wednesday 26 January Term 2: Good Friday - 15 April Easter Monday - 18 April ANZAC Day - Monday 25 April Labour Day - Monday 2 May Term 3: Exhibition (EKKA) Show Day - Wednesday 10 August Term 4: Queen's Birthday – Monday 3 October	
Pupil Free Day	Term 3: Friday 2 September	

## School Hours

Hours for Prep to Year 6 are 8:35am to 3:00pm each day. The Prep room will be open at these times. **When the children arrive, they have a 'morning routine' that sets them up for a successful day in Prep.**

This routine is modelled during our early days, and the children are then supported and guided by staff each morning to achieve their morning routine success

*criteria: I hang up my hat, wash my hands with hand sanitiser, unpack my bag (water bottle in the tub, lunch box in the fridge, snack in the container, message bag, bag in my locker space) and move my name card. Finally, I can sit on the bug rug ready for the day.*



As the children are new to our setting and for safety purposes, we ask that the Prep students be collected at the end of the day from the Prep room by an adult or older sibling. Those children accessing the Outside School Hours Care program will be supervised and then collected by the OSHC staff. Dependent on Covid regulations, we may need to make changes to these routines. These will be communicated with parents via the School Newsletter, via email or on Seesaw.

## Helping Your Child Prepare for Prep

The time 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 them be prepared for their adventure into a school setting.

By encouraging your child to develop independence and resilience, you are giving them a solid foundation for success and happiness at school. The following suggestions will help to familiarise your child with some routines that they will encounter at school, and will also help your child to develop confidence in their abilities and alleviate some worries they may have about starting school.

## Recognising Their Own Name

Provide your child with many opportunities to 'read' or recognise their 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 they are familiar with where their name is written on each item. You could turn this into a game! If your child has difficulty recognising their name, you could use pictures in addition to words. **When writing your child's name, please use only one capital/upper case letter at the beginning and lower case for the rest of their name, e.g., Thomas. Please refer to the handwriting guide included in this handbook for letter formation.**

The children will be gifted a book at Prep orientation to take home and enjoy. This book will be part of their learning focus when they start school the following year.

## Tags on School Bags

When your child puts on their 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 them to be able to recognise and find their 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 their own bag on and to practise carrying it with their lunch box and drink bottle in, so that they can get used to it.

## Lunch Box Practise

At school your child will be responsible for managing their 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!

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). The Munch and Crunch food needs to be in a separate and small container. Talk to your child about what foods they 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. Ensure that your child is able to open their own food packages or containers.

### Toilet and Drink Routines

The Prep room has its own toilets. 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 they know what to expect. We have frequent toilet breaks during our Prep day.

### 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 their 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 in the morning. 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 during goodbyes settle immediately into the activities that their classmates and friends are doing as soon as their parents or guardians 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 many stories 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 them, say that you are looking forward to hearing 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

Children will often remove their shoes after outside play, to empty large quantities of sand and bark out of them! Your child will need to be able to put their own clothing items on relatively quickly and easy.

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.

Following your child's Orientation experience, encourage them 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 they are 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 and guardian 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](http://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/guardians for students to be collected and taken home.

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

## Attendance

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.**

## Birthdays

On this special occasion you may like to send along a simple iced cake or a cupcake 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 them from sharing in birthday celebrations at school, you may wish to send in a supply of something that they could have instead on these occasions.



## Books and Stationery

Included in the backpack 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 backpack. It is essential that all items from the backpack are brought to school on your child's first day or dropped off the week before school starts.

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

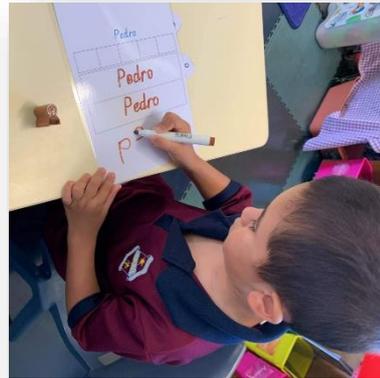
Our number one priority in the Ipswich Rd Car Park and the Pick Up/Drop Off Zone is the safety of our students. For this reason there are strict guidelines for the use of the car park and access to the school to which all parents and visitors must adhere to. It is vital that you model these safe practices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

Dependent on Covid regulations, we may need to make changes to these routines. These will be communicated with parents via the School Newsletter.

1. When parking your car, you must ensure that you park in the designated parking areas only. The Ipswich Rd carpark is ideal for parking. (ie. There is limited parking on Ferndale St, **Please DO NOT park in the Pick Up/Drop Off area**).
2. When using the Pick Up/Drop Off zone on Ferndale St, 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. The best parking is Ipswich Rd carpark.
3. When using the Ipswich car park beside the Hall, please walk your child safely to the teacher on duty. Children always need to be with an adult in this car park. Please walk around the outside of the carpark and hold your child's hand.
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 and interactions with others at school. 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. As a school, we use a digital portfolio of learning platform called 'Seesaw' which also allows teachers and parent to communicate via private messages. This will be set up during the first week of school and is a fantastic way to make communication easily accessible.

Each week the school newsletter will be sent by email to every family. Other communication, e.g. letters will be placed in your child's message bag that travels home each day and is sent back to school the next day.

## Curriculum Planning

Teachers of Preparatory use a Negotiated Curriculum approach, following the Early Years Curriculum guidelines. At Mary Immaculate, we have an experienced Early Years' team that works closely to deliver a curriculum that is both true to the teaching 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 combine the learning that is occurring at school and help them to correctly set up 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 letter in the first word of 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.

Beginners Alphabet

A a B b C c

D d E e F f

G g H h I i

J j K k L l

M m N n O o

P p Q q R r

S s T t U u

V v W w X x

Y y Z z

Numerals

\* all numerals START AT THE TOP

1 1 1 1 1  
2 2 2 2 2  
3 3 3 3 3  
4 4 4 4 4  
5 5 5 5 5

1 1 1 1 1  
2 2 2 2 2  
3 3 3 3 3  
4 4 4 4 4  
5 5 5 5 5

## Illness and Sick Children

Following Health Department regulations, children with cold and flu symptoms or infectious diseases must NOT come to school until they are well, or for certain specified times (*An Infectious Diseases list is available at the School Office*). Children who become sick at school during the day will be sent home and parents will be 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 supply 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, e.g. 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 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. We ask that you please call or email to make appointments, class teachers will make a mutually convenient time so that they can be fully prepared for you and can give you their full attention.

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 helping 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** – All students are supervised by teachers on duty from 8:15am until the morning bell goes. The teacher on duty will bring the children into the Prep playground. Children should not arrive at school BEFORE 8:15am unless supervised by a parent or guardian.

**After school** – You are asked to collect your child from the classroom at 3:00pm. When you are waiting to collect your child from the classroom, you are asked to wait outside the Prep room and social distance whilst doing so. If you are going to be late, please ring the office staff. Dependent on Covid regulations, we may need to make changes to these routines. These will be communicated with parents via the School Newsletter, via email or Seesaw.



## Toys at School

At times, your child will be encouraged to bring items from home to help them 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 staying 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 paper bag e.g banana.

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 e.g small muffin.

A labelled drink bottle filled with **water** (this is refilled as needed during the day).

### 2. Spare underpants, shorts and socks in the front of your child's bag for emergencies.

### 3. A cushion (NOT pillow) labelled with name and a removable case for 'Rest Time'. The case needs to be easily recognised so your child can find their 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.

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.

