



PAYNE ROAD STATE SCHOOL

PREP Handbook



Our greatest natural resource is the minds of our children.
Walt Disney

PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME

On behalf of our school community, I extend a very warm welcome to all our families with newly enrolled Prep students.

We know that this will be a very exciting time for both you and your child. Beginning school opens a new chapter in your child's life and learning and we appreciate that you have chosen our school as the place for this journey to start.

At Payne Road State School, we understand that every child begins Prep with a wide range of interests, and experiences and acknowledge the need for all children to engage in many different kinds of learning including play and the use of their creative imaginations.

The early days of Prep are a transition period between home and other early learning centres into the routines and rhythm of our school. Our Prep teachers will work with you and your child to help make this early settling time as smooth as possible.

We recognise the importance of building strong and positive partnerships between home and school in the best interests of our children's growth and development. We value the interest and support of our school families and look forward to working with you across the years of your child's schooling.

This handbook provides a point of reference for parents with a range of information that is specific to Prep. It is a companion document to our general Parent Information Handbook which provides information on a range of processes, routines and policies relevant to all year levels across the school.

We look forward to a long and happy association with your family and offer our best wishes to you and your child for a wonderful year in Prep.



Principal
Mrs Danielle Freeman

Learning in a Prep Classroom

Our teachers recognise the needs of early childhood learners, the developmental nature of learning and the value and diversity of knowledge and experiences each child brings to Prep. These elements contribute to the exciting, unique and wonderful world of working with the youngest members of our school in their first year of learning at school.

All Prep classrooms are attractive, organised and stimulating physical environments. Throughout the day, our Preps engage in a broad range of learning activities that primarily target early literacy and numeracy skills and the development of important capabilities and attitudes needed for learning and working together. Our classroom environments reflect the need for active and engaged learning, activities that maximise the interests of young learners and which stimulate and motivate them to learn.

On a regular and daily basis, our Preps will:

- Make new friends and learn how to get along with others
- Be immersed in rich language environments important for developing beginning readers and writers
- Listen, question, explain, discuss, respond and sing as part of learning
- Learn about letters, sounds and concepts of print
- Actively participate in planned focused learning groups.
- Have lots of experiences with hands-on learning activities
- Be involved in planning investigations and classroom events
- Be stimulated to think and respond critically and creatively
- Have time for play for a variety of roles and purposes appropriate for the early phase of learning
- Learn in a variety of ways including songs, music and movement and within and outside of the classroom
- Interact and learn with a range of digital technology and multimedia
- Respond to learning activities with opportunities for drama, imagination and creativity
- Develop self-management skills and independence.
- Learn about school routines and activities
- Throughout the year, teachers also arrange special excursions and in-house events to enhance learning experiences.

Learning Expectations for Prep

General Behaviour

The children will be expected to demonstrate understanding and ability to

- Follow school rules and expectations both in and outside of the classroom;
- Self-manage their behaviour with minimal prompting and reminders;
- Follow directions given to them in a timely and appropriate manner
- Make amends where appropriate.

Learning Behaviour

Children will develop positive learning skills and behaviours that enable them to

- Communicate their needs, thoughts and opinions clearly and appropriately;
- Contribute to class conversations and discussions and ask questions;
- Apply effective listening skills in large and small groups;
- Focus on learning activities that require independent application for ten to fifteen minutes;
- Exhibit age appropriate collaborative and cooperative group skills.

Australian Curriculum Achievement Standards

ENGLISH

Reading, Viewing, Listening

By the end of the Prep year, students will be able to

- read short, predictable texts with familiar vocabulary and supportive images, drawing on their developing knowledge of concepts about print and sound and letters;
- identify the letters of the English alphabet and use the sounds represented by most letters;
- listen to and use appropriate language features to respond to others in a familiar environment;
- listen for rhyme, letter patterns and sounds in words.

In responding to written text, they will be able to

- use predicting and questioning strategies to make meaning from texts;
- recall one or two events from texts with familiar topics;
- know that there are different types of texts;
- identify connections between texts and their personal experience;

Speaking, Creating, Writing

By the end of the Prep year, students will be able to

- understand that their texts can reflect their own experiences;
- identify and describe likes and dislikes about familiar texts, objects, characters and events;
- communicate clearly in informal group and whole class settings;
- retell events and experiences with peers and known adults.

In their **writing**, students will be able to

- identify and use rhyme, letter patterns and sounds in words;
- use familiar words and phrases and images to convey ideas;
- show evidence of sound and letter knowledge, beginning writing behaviours and experimentation with capital letters and full stops;
- correctly form known upper and lower-case letters.

MATHEMATICS

By the end of the Prep year, students will learn and use early mathematical language and develop basic conceptual understanding in early numeracy.

Expectations are that they will

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

SCIENCE

By the end of the Prep year, students will be able to

- describe the properties and behaviour of familiar objects;
- suggest how the environment affects them and other living things;
- share observations of familiar objects and events.

HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (HASS)

By the end of the Prep year, students will be able to

- identify similarities and differences between families;
- recognise how important family events are commemorated;
- sequence familiar events in order;
- pose questions about their past;
- relate a story about their past using a range of texts;
- describe the features of familiar places;
- recognise why some places are important to people;
- recognise that places can be represented on maps and a globe;
- share observations in a range of everyday language;
- describe simple elements of direction and location;
- suggest ways they can care for a familiar place.

A Snapshot of How the Year Unfolds

Term 1

- ✓ The first part of the term focuses on the transition into the routines and rhythm of the Prep classroom. Children become familiar with the specialist teachers and the range of other people with whom they will have regular interaction in the school. Children eat their morning tea and lunch outside their classroom to enable the teachers to monitor their eating. Play space is in a designated Junior School playground where Preps have an opportunity to mix with children in Years 1 and 2 as well as other Preps.
- ✓ Teachers begin to develop an understanding of each child as a learner and to gather a picture of each child's development and needs on entry to school. Knowledge of the alphabet, letter names and sounds and oral articulation are screened to establish where children are at early in the year.

There is a strong oral language focus on vocabulary, positional language and the language and concepts of early reading, writing and number. Reading is strongly featured and part of everyday activities. Children become very familiar with big books and stories with lots of repetition and predictable text. Work begins on correct letter and numeral formations and pencil and scissor grips.

- ✓ Throughout this term and across the year, there is time and space for structured play, planning and investigating child centred investigations, creative responding, conversation and discussion and for exploring concepts in active, hands-on activities in all curriculum areas. Music and movement are a regular part of learning.
- ✓ Children work on writing their name and are encouraged to engage in reading and writing behaviours. At this stage, teachers caption or write sentences under drawings and illustrations for most children. The focused learning of single letter names and sounds begins.
- ✓ Teachers offer opportunities for face-to face interviews on student progress

Term 2

- ✓ Children have moved to the eating area used by Years 1 and 2.
- ✓ Oral language and listening skills continue to be important. Regular and repeated reading of well-known and well-loved stories with lots of repetition is a daily activity. There is an increasing focus on teaching letters and sounds and on building children's capacity to apply their developing knowledge of print concepts, sounds and words to well-known, familiar texts and to a variety of early writing tasks. Teachers model and think-aloud in the explicit teaching of specific reading and writing skills with the gradual release of responsibility for independent work by children occurring over time and with decreasing support as the year progresses. They develop class books based on experiences and interests as part of their reading collection. Sight words are introduced.
- ✓ Students listen to and read a range of literary and non-literary texts, including fiction and non-fiction books and everyday texts. They engage in multiple opportunities to learn about language, literature and literacy within the five contexts of learning - focused teaching and learning, play, real-life situations, investigations, and routines and transitions.
- ✓ Learning to read in Prep involves a number of aspects including
 - Learning sight words.
 - Understanding and using strategies for decoding words.
 - Understanding and comprehending the texts they read.
 Students participate in small group reading sessions that focus on these three elements.
- ✓ They strengthen their understanding of number and abilities to use mathematical language. They apply their learning to demonstrate conceptual understanding of spatial, measurement and number concepts in a range of contexts.
- ✓ Parents receive information on the purpose and intent of the home reader program and ways to support motivation and interest in reading.
- ✓ Teachers prepare for written reporting to parents.

Term 3

- ✓ All children attempt to write using their developing knowledge of print and letter sounds and access words from print sources in the room. Independent, modelled and small group reading and writing activities underpin much of the learning and there are frequent, daily activities to practise, experiment and consolidate emerging skills in a wide range of contexts. The concepts of writing in sentences and using capital letters and full stops in independent writing are areas of focus.
- ✓ Children begin to explore the concept of addition and subtraction in oral number stories and real-world contexts. Children gather and collect data and gain skills in applying mathematical language to measurement, time and spatial concepts and skills.
- ✓ Teachers offer opportunities for face-to face interviews on student progress.

Term 4

- ✓ Children consolidate their developing skills as early readers and writers to more independently apply their word, phonic, punctuation knowledge to reading and writing tasks. They read a simple, short repetitive text by themselves. They are starting to use reading strategies such as sounding out, picture cues and reading on.
- ✓ They attempt to write whole sentences with spaces between words, use capitals and full stops. They use some sight words and attempt to sound out other words using beginning, middle and end sounds. Where appropriate, children are encouraged to write longer sentences and experiment with new vocabulary and spelling in writing.
- ✓ Children explore and consolidate ways to record and demonstrate what they know about their mathematical understandings. They represent the concepts of addition and subtraction in a variety of ways. They count to and from 20, sort shapes and objects, sequence the days of the week and identify what things are likely to happen on those days. They use mathematical language to compare and describe items according to their length, weight and capacity.
- ✓ Teachers prepare for written reporting to parents.

The Place for Play

Play has a significant place within the Prep classroom as an important way for children of this age to learn and explore the world. Play-based learning stimulates children's thinking, communication and interactions with other people, objects and representations and actively engages them in shaping their understandings of the world in which they live. The teacher's role in facilitating meaningful and engaging play opportunities for children in Prep settings is a significant one. The teacher acts as a co-constructor of new understandings and provides the environment to promote and enrich children's thinking, experimentation and creative expression.

While not the only way in which learning will be structured in Prep, the learning program will provide a range of regular opportunities for children to engage in different kinds of play such as

- Socio-dramatic: children setting up and running a flower shop, zoo, farm or veterinary clinic
- Fantasy: children creating and using props for imaginative role play
- Exploratory: using blocks to investigate weight, balance, structures, shape
- Manipulative: doing puzzles, Lego construction, threading
- Physical: running, hopping, obstacle courses, climbing
- Games with rules: board games, outdoor games, child created games

Beyond the Classroom

Learning happens beyond the classroom walls and in a wide variety of contexts and places. In Prep, these include:

- Excursions and outings
- Assemblies
- Special event days
- 100 Days of Learning
- Under 8's Celebration
- Easter Hat Parade
- Tuckshop

- Anzac Day and Remembrance Day
- Music and PE lessons
- Library visits and lessons
- Library borrowing
- Buddy class activities
- Sports Day
- Cross Country
- Swimming Lessons
- Celebrations of Learning
- Performances and Concerts
- Student Council Events
- Challenges and competitions
- Book Week
- Displays

Throughout the year, teachers also arrange special excursions and in-house events to enhance and add another dimension to learning experiences. Some of these have a cost attached. Individual invoices will be sent home with your child for these.

Children are the world's most valuable resource and its best hope for the future. J. F. Kennedy

Other Routines in Prep

EATING

- Children generally eat outside their classroom supervised by Prep staff for part of the first term.
- Fruit Break (approximately 10am). Please pack a small piece of fruit or veggies for this break (apple cut up, banana, or raw vegetables)
- First Break (10.50am) We encourage children to eat some substantial food item as well as any yoghurt or cheese. Second Break (1:30pm)
- We support students having a healthy and nutritious diet. Lots of pre-packaged foods and drinks can be high in salt, sugar and artificial colours and flavourings.
- We are an environmentally friendly school and encourage our families to minimise packaging and potential litter.
- Please pack spoons (if required) and note that we cannot heat or refrigerate food for children. We request that parents do not send canned foods (e.g. fruit, tuna, spaghetti) as they are a potential risk for small fingers (and ours too).
- Please ensure your child has a named drink bottle filled with water only EVERY DAY.

TUCKSHOP

- Parents are requested not to order tuckshop for the first two weeks to enable us to focus on establishing routines around eating time.
- Older brothers and sisters are not permitted to purchase food and bring it up to Prep children.
- Tuckshop operates on Tuesday and Thursday only and special Meals Deals once a term on a Friday.

- All food must be pre-ordered on a paper bag or on-line.
- Separate bags are required for first and second breaks.
- Until Term 2, Prep children are not permitted to go to the tuckshop to purchase food items.

PLAYTIME

Different year levels in our school have different places allocated for play. Preps will share the Junior Playground with students in Years 1 and 2.

- ‘No hat- play under cover’ is the Playground Rule. Students are required to play in designated shade areas near buildings if they have no hat.

MANAGING PROPERTY

- Please ensure ALL items are clearly named including jumpers and jackets.
- Your child’s school bag needs to be large enough to fit a folder (plastic home folder approximately A4 size), spare clothes, lunch and a water bottle.

UNIFORMS

Prep students wear the same uniform (apart from wearing a bucket hat instead of a broad brimmed hat) as students in the rest of the school. The school uniform must be worn every day.

- Options include a buttoned cotton shirt, polo shirts, house polo shirt and shorts. Children will be allocated a sports house (advised during the enrolment process).
- **Black shoes** with black laces or black velcro and white socks. (No fluoro embellishments or laces please.) Shoes can be multipurpose joggers and do not need to be “school shoes”.
- The uniform shop – open Wednesday afternoons from 2:30 to 3:30pm.
- No jewellery. In the case of pierced ears, plain studs or sleepers only are to be worn. Limit hair decorations to plain navy or white hair ribbons.

TOILETING

- When children begin Prep, apart from an occasional accident, children should be able to know when they need to use the toilet, access the toilet independently and address associated personal hygiene aspects related to toileting.
- Please let your child’s teacher know if you have any concerns regarding your child’s ability to self-manage toileting or if there are associated medical issues.
- Please pack clean underwear, shorts and socks in case of an accident. Please note that spare shorts can be plain, navy shorts.

ATTENDANCE

All students are expected to be on time to commence the start of the day at 8:50am, with the first bell ringing at 8:40am. Parents/Carers are reminded that if their child is away from school, they will need to register their child’s absence via QParents by 9:00am on the day of their absence. Parents/Carers can also ring our Absence Line on (07) 3511 3160. This will be an automated service, please leave the student’s full name, class, reason for and length of their absence. If a child has been marked absent with no notification to the school, a phone call will be made to the Parent/Carer enquiring of the whereabouts of your child.

When families plan for a student to be absent for more than 10 consecutive school days for any reason, parents are required to notify the office for an Exemption of Schooling form.

OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE (OSHC)

This service is run under the auspices of the Payne Road State School P&C Association. Care is offered before and after school hours and includes an offering of Vacation Care programs. Children must be registered at the centre before they can be included in the program. Outside School Hours carers deliver children to Prep classrooms before school and collect them at the end of the school day. For information on times, registration and eligibility for childcare assistance, please call the Outside School Hours service directly on (07) 3300 0077.

Getting off to a good start in Prep

“The activities that are the easiest, cheapest, and most fun to do – such as singing, playing games, reading, storytelling, and just talking and listening – are also the best for child development.” ~ Jerome Singer (professor, Yale University)

The skills below are important to begin developing before children start in Prep and are part of an ongoing focus particularly in first term. Children are advantaged in learning if parents and carers have invested time and energy into helping their children begin to learn and apply these skills in a range of contexts.

Important Early Learning Skills

- Recognising their first name
- Having a go at writing their first name, using a capital and lower-case letters
- Listening to stories to retell important information or events
- Developing vocabulary – using real words to name objects and a range of words to describe, story time and conversations with adults are really important!
- Understanding positional language – the words used to describe where things are e.g. on, under, next to, behind, first, last, below, above – very important as a stepping stone to reading, writing and mathematical concepts
- Recognising common colours
- Counting aloud to 10 or 20, counting things with growing accuracy
- Being able to focus on an age-appropriate activity for about ten minutes

Important Social Communication Skills

- Greetings – saying hello and goodbye
- Engaging in conversation
- Looking at the person who is speaking
- Listening and following simple instructions
- Participating in collaborative play; sharing equipment and turn taking
- Using manners (please and thank you)
- Appropriate toilet behaviour, requesting to go to the toilet in an acceptable way
- Willingness to have a go at new things

Physical Coordination Skills

Activities that require use of small muscle groups in manipulation and control of objects to assist with developing control, coordination and movement of hand and finger muscles needed for writing e.g. putting pegs on the line, colouring in, cutting with scissors.

Activities that require use of larger muscle groups and coordination in a range of large movements and balance e.g. playing on park equipment, climbing, running and jumping, hopping and skipping.

Organisational Skills

Children in Prep will become increasingly independent in terms of self-organisation and responsibility in the classroom over the year. Children are more confident and self-reliant if they can independently

- Pack their belongings into their bag
- Put their own shoes and socks on and dress themselves
- Open their lunch box and any packaging (wrappers, poppers, packets)
- Recognise personal belongings (lunch box, water bottle, school bag).
- Pack away and help to tidy up.

Prep Student Resource Scheme (SRS)

A student resource scheme enables a parent to enter into a written agreement with the school that, in return for payment of a specified annual participation fee, provides for the participating student's temporary use of resources and for the purchase of consumables and materials for the student's use.

The Student Resources Scheme enables us to equip your child with access to a full set of stationery resources they will need for Prep for the year. The payment replaces the traditional individual stationery list provided to parents of students in Years 1–6.

A parent who does not wish to join the scheme, is responsible for providing the student with the items that would otherwise have been provided to the student by the scheme as detailed on the Year Level Requirements List, to enhance the student's ability to engage with the curriculum.

Assessing and Reporting in Prep

The Prep year was recognised as the first year of schooling in Queensland from 2012. Prep is equivalent to the Foundation year (F) of the Australian Curriculum.

Children's Learning is our Shared Core Business

We encourage all parents to take an active interest in their child's learning and progress throughout school and to engage with regular communication to stay fully informed and share important information. Children are supported and encouraged to fully participate in school when parents and teachers work together to provide all children with skills, attitude and opportunities to enjoy learning, celebrate their achievements and to achieve success at school.

Parents of all children in Prep will receive ***a written report on their child's progress based on achievements, effort and behaviour in each semester.***

Reporting is based on

- teacher judgments about the quality of student learning based on evidence collected over time

- the student's most consistent level of achievement with consideration given to more recent evidence

Reports are intended to communicate to parents

- the learning expectations for students
- the child's individual progress over time
- their child's achievement in relation to the expected standards
- how well the student is engaging with the expected learning
- how the student may be able to improve.

In addition to providing written reports, schools offer parents opportunities to discuss their child's educational performance at the school with their child's teacher(s), at least twice a year.



Prep's Five Point Scale

Due to the age of students and the nature of learning in Prep, teachers use a five-point scale that is *uniquely different* to reporting in other year levels. As many Prep children are just beginning to build their skills as early readers and writers in the first half of the year, they will often still be in the Exploring or Becoming Aware phase of learning at the time of the first report. We expect that as the year advances, they will consolidate their knowledge and skills to progress into the Working With, Making Connections and/or the Applying Phases by the end of year reporting.

The scale and abbreviations that will be used in the written report for Prep are:

Applying (AP)

The student applies a thorough understanding of the required concepts, facts and procedures. The student demonstrates a high level of skill that can be transferred to new situations.

Making Connections (MC)

The student makes connections using the curriculum content and demonstrates a clear understanding of the required concepts, facts and procedures. The student applies a high level of skill in situations familiar to them and is beginning to transfer skills to new situations.

Working With (WW)

The student can work with the curriculum content and demonstrates understanding of the required concepts, facts and procedures. The student can apply skills in situations familiar to them.

Exploring (EX)

The student is exploring the curriculum content and demonstrates understanding of aspects of the required concepts, facts and procedures. The student applies a varying level of skill in situations familiar to them.

Becoming Aware (BA)

The student is becoming aware of the curriculum content and demonstrates a basic understanding of aspects of required concepts, facts and procedures. The student is beginning to apply skills in situations familiar to them.

N: There is insufficient evidence to make a judgment.

There are no hands so small that they cannot make a difference in the world. Anon



A responsive early childhood focus on active learning, developmentally appropriate learning, curiosity and imagination for the building of early literacy and numeracy skills.

A Small School Achieving Big Results

At Payne Road State School, we know our students well and work hard to help each of them learn, grow and achieve their best. We work hand in hand with our school community to ensure we provide a quality learning environment for our children. Our teachers are committed to their ongoing learning and are caring and dedicated in their work. Our school is set in spacious leafy grounds with high quality, newly refurbished facilities.

Our school identity is shaped through our commitment to:

- *ongoing student improvement
- *a strong focus on literacy and numeracy
- *student engagement
- *excellence in science programs
- *A dynamic Prep program
- *teaching of values
- *student voice
- *stewardship for environmental sustainability
- *ongoing development of our teachers
- *extension and enrichment opportunities for high achieving students
- *a strong school community
- *supportive approaches to teaching self-managing behaviours
- *music, sport and representation opportunities

IMPORTANT DATES

First Day of School: Tuesday 28 January 2025

QUEENSLAND TERM DATES - 2025

Term	Dates	Length
Term 1	Tuesday 28 January – Friday 4 April	10 weeks
Term 2	Tuesday 22 April - Friday 27 June	10 weeks
Term 3	Monday 14 July - Friday 19 September	10 weeks
Term 4	Tuesday 7 October - Friday 12 December	10 weeks

2025 Pupil Free Day: Friday 5 September (Term 3 Week 8)

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS?

Do Preps have their own play area?

Yes, Preps have their own play area. For the first few weeks of Term 1 students stay together as a class and with either their teacher or teacher aide to support them at eating and play times. After this they integrate with the rest of the school in the junior areas. Which are: Early Years Playground, D Block and Library.

Is toileting an issue?

Children starting Prep should be able to toilet themselves. The Preps have their own toilets inside or near their classroom and are allowed to use the toilet at any time. There is always the occasional accident, so it is a good idea to keep a clean change of clothes in their bag, particularly for Term 1 and talk to your child about what to do in the event of this happening.

Will my child learn to read and write in Prep?

If your child is developmentally ready, they will learn to read and write. Each child comes into Prep with prior experiences and the teacher takes this into consideration and therefore teaches from where the individual child is at. Books to read at home *with, by and to* your child will come home from the start of Term 2.

Will I be able to help in the classroom?

Yes, parent involvement at Payne Road State School is valued and encouraged (please see your teacher for more information).

How is eating supervised?

Prep students sit together and eat, we have 10 minutes as a dedicated eating time, but children may stay and eat for longer if they need to. For the first few weeks the Prep teachers will assist and coordinate the eating and play routines. When the Preps are comfortable, they will fall into the normal school routine where a teacher/ teacher aide will be on duty supervising at all times.

Will my child be using computers?

Information and communication technologies (ICT) are an important part of the regular classroom practise. ICT is one of the tools teachers use to create stimulating lessons. Students will have the opportunity to use iPads in small group rotations.



Payne Road State School

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School Office Hours

8:00 am to 3:30 pm