



PREP HANDBOOK 2023

The Preparatory Year



**Our Lady of Dolours
Catholic Primary School**
Living Loving and Learning in Christ

The Preparatory Year

Welcome to Prep for 2023.

It won't be long before your child joins the O.L.D. community and begins the great adventure of school life.

To make the transition to Prep a little easier, we have prepared some information for you about our community, the Prep curriculum, and what you can expect your child to experience at school.

We look forward to being a part of this next stage of your child's life.



ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

What Is Our Special Religious Character?

The spirit of the Creator has been part of this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the Turrbal people, the traditional custodians of the land on which our school is built, and pay our respects to the elders past, present and emerging as the first educators and builders of community.

The Catholic School is defined by a lived commitment to the life teachings of Christ and the Church. We are called as a Catholic Christian Learning Community to embed the four components of *Prayer and Worship*, *Evangelisation and Formation*, *Religious Identity and Culture*, and *Social Action and Justice* into school life. Out of these radiates the integration of faith, life, and learning.

Since 1932, the Archdiocese of Brisbane has provided pastoral leadership to the faithful of Our Lady of Dolours Mitchelton. We stand on the shoulders of both the clergy and laity that built the community and acknowledge the contribution of those who continue with its formation.

Our charism is grounded in the formative work of the parish, the spirituality of St Benedict, and the Sisters of The Good Samaritan of The Order of St Benedict who founded the school in 1951. These find expression in the house names of NUGENT, BENEDICT, and SAMARITAN.

The original school motto, *In All Things May God be Glorified*, gives expression to the ancient Benedictine philosophy to live by paying attention to the fullness of life. This finds resonance in the current school motto, *Living Loving and Learning in Christ*, which draws upon the Good Samaritan charism of recognising the powerless and marginalised and responding with COMPASSION, JUSTICE, and WISDOM.



VISION ~ MISSION ~ VALUES

Our Vision

As a Marian community with a love of learning, we are connected as one, aspiring to be like Christ, caring for our neighbour and our common home.

Our Mission

With Mary as our model and Jesus as our guide, we live, love, and learn as a positive and welcoming community, embracing our Catholic traditions and inclusivity.

Our Values

Living, Loving and Learning in Christ, we use our head, heart, and hands to be:

- People of Compassion – caring for our neighbour.
- People of Justice – being moved to take action.
- People of Wisdom – questioning, inquiring, and reflecting

OUR LEARNING GOAL

Learning and teaching in Catholic schools empowers all learners in our community to understand, shape and enrich our changing world, by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Our students will embrace this goal and promote living, loving, and learning in Christ by being learners who are:

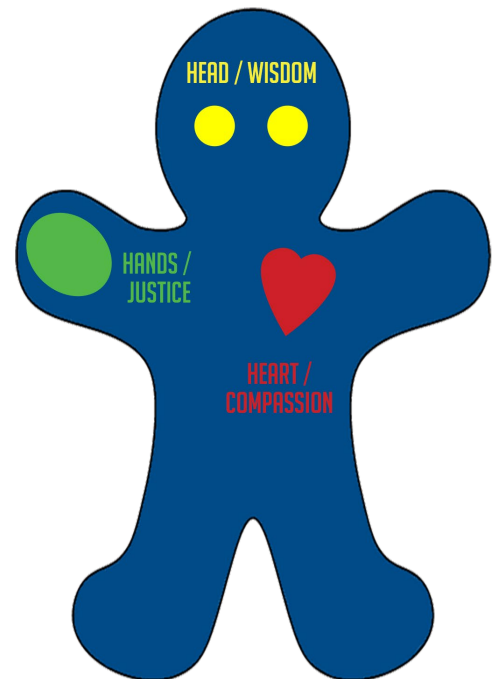
- Confident
- Persistent
- Organised
- Able to get along with others
- Resilient

THE KID IN THE CREST

The story of The Kid in the Crest is about our kids, our school, our aspirations for the future and our Vision for Learning. The Kid in the Crest values are the values that Christ was trying to make real in the lives of those with whom he lived and travelled.

We are living these values when we think about what we are being asked to do every day so that we can have a more peaceful, thoughtful and just society. We believe in the compassion, wisdom and justice of Christ. We strive to show these values in our actions every day.

The Kid in the Crest is a lifelong learner who uses his or her head, heart, and hands to Act Responsibly, Be Respectful, and Strive to Achieve.



WHAT IS PREP?

Prep is the start of the early stage of learning which continues until Year Two. It is about establishing strong foundations for success in lifelong learning and empowering our children to make transitions throughout their schooling and into the world of work.

- Prep is a full-time program that runs from Monday to Friday. Students are expected to attend full time.
- Attendance aligns with the school's Attendance Policy.
- Hours for Prep are the same as regular school hours for Years One to Six.
- Students should turn five by the 30th of June in the year they begin Prep.
- Assessment and reporting are in line with the Australian Curriculum Foundation Achievement Standards.

CURRICULUM DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION AT OUR LADY OF DOLOURS

Australian Curriculum

Students in Prep are taught through the Australian Curriculum in the following learning areas:

- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- The Arts (Visual Arts, Drama, Dance, Music, and Media Arts)
- Health and Physical Education
- Digital and Design Technologies

Children are taught through the five contexts for learning:

- Play
- Investigations
- Routines and transitions
- Real life situations
- Focussed learning and teaching



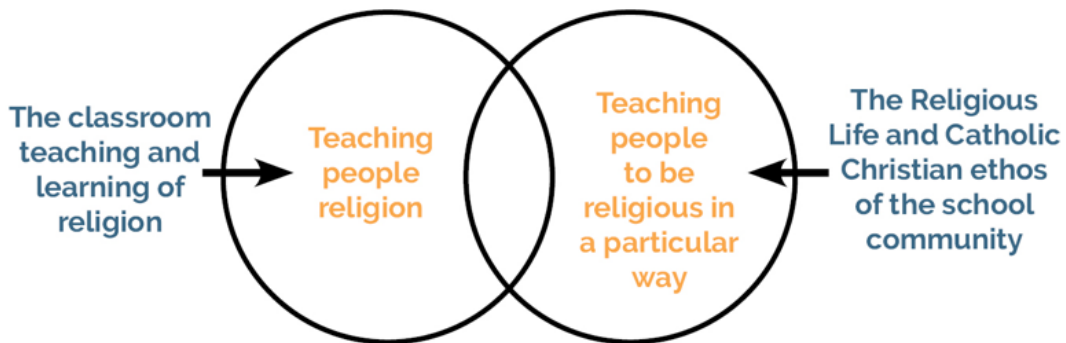
The Australian Curriculum outlines the knowledge, understandings and skills that are important for all Australian students. It encompasses the learning entitlement of students as a foundation for their future learning, growth and active participation in the Australian community. It makes clear what all young Australians should learn as they progress through schooling. It is the foundation for high quality teaching to meet the needs of all Australian students.

Prep teachers provide children with learning experiences that cater for their individual learning styles and give them multiple opportunities for success. When planning a Prep program, we consider the different rates of development of children and their unique individual characteristics. Programming and planning are designed around practice for Prep-aged children.

Children attending Prep bring with them a wealth of knowledge, values, experiences and attitudes that have been developed and influenced by their family experiences and their social and cultural contexts. An Early Years program centres on the concept of children being actively involved in the direction of their own learning experiences. Prep teachers scaffold and provide opportunities for students in a variety of contexts.

Religious Education

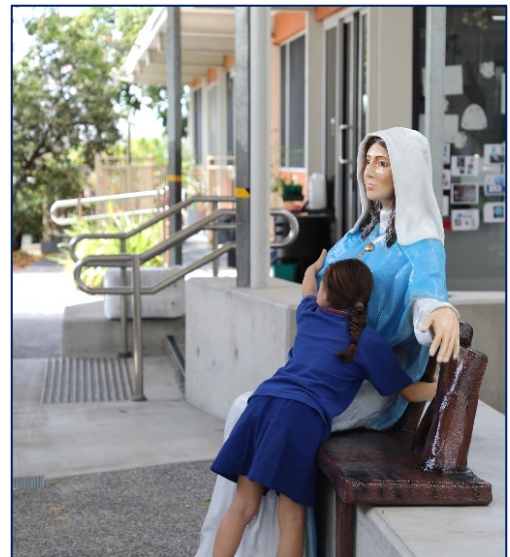
Our Lady of Dolours aspires to educate and form students who are challenged to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ and who are literate in the Catholic and broader Christian tradition so that they might participate critically and authentically in faith contexts and wider society. There are two dimensions to Religious Education in school:



The Religious Education Curriculum Archdiocese of Brisbane (2013: 2020 revised edition) is the source document for planning the teaching of religious education in all Catholic schools in the Archdiocese.

The Religious Education Curriculum is organised into four interrelated strands: *Sacred Texts*, *Beliefs*, *Church*, and *Christian Life*. Each strand has its own distinctive body of knowledge and skills.

Students in Prep learn about Jesus' life as a Jew, his family and friends and his teachings and actions. They learn about God's loving relationship with people and all Creation, and the many ways in which communities of believers nurture their loving relationship with God, others, and all of Creation.



The Religious Life of the School is also organised into four strands: *Religious Identity and Culture*, *Social Action and Justice*, *Evangelisation and Faith Formation*, and *Prayer and Worship*. Prep students will be exposed to a range and balance of these strands through their participation in whole school and class liturgies and masses, social action initiatives and through the Religious Education Curriculum in the Prep classroom.

Specialist Subjects

Prep students will participate in Health and Physical Education (30 minutes weekly), Visual Arts (one hour weekly for half of the year), Music (30 minutes weekly), Japanese (30 minutes weekly), Digital Technologies (one hour weekly for half of the year) and Dance lessons (45 minutes weekly for one term).

Monitoring and Assessing Children's Learning

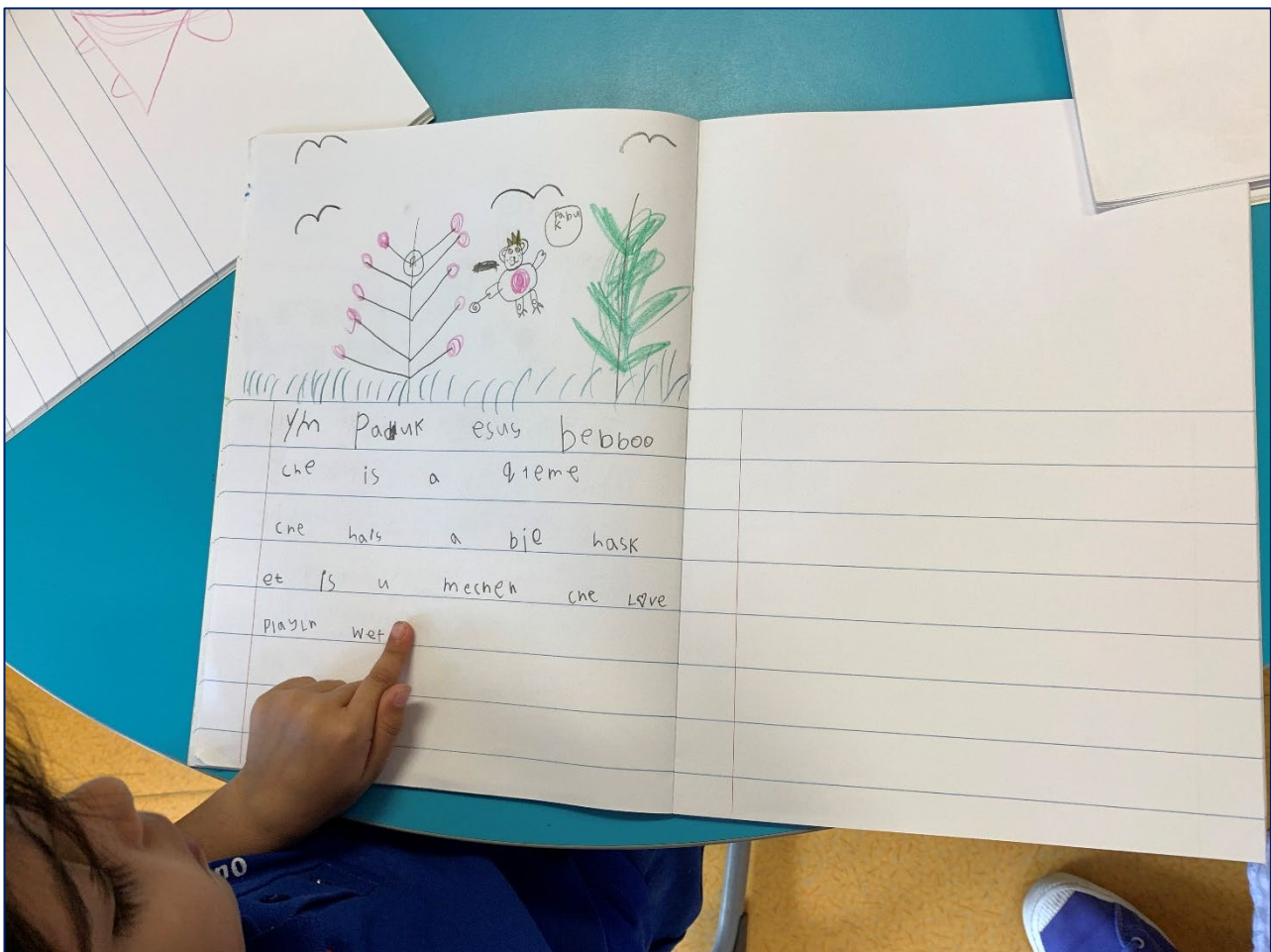
Monitoring and assessing children's learning is an integral part of the learning and teaching process and is an ongoing part of curriculum decision-making. It is not always a separate activity. It is important that children have the opportunity to demonstrate their learning in the full range of learning contexts. The information gathered is used to:

- plan for future learning
- build a picture of a child's learning and development
- give direction to conversations with the child, parents or carers, specialist teachers, the child's next teacher and other professional colleagues
- comment on children's learning in relation to the curriculum
- record point in time judgements using observations to inform assessment

Our student report, prepared twice per year, documents successes made about a child's learning in each learning area. The report uses a five-point scale to describe learning progress:

- Well above the expected standard
- Above the expected standard
- At the expected standard
- Below the expected standard
- Well below the expected standard

Student portfolios of work samples provide a dynamic record of a child's learning and development and will be collated throughout each term. These may be viewed at the end of each semester.



HOW DOES LEARNING OCCUR IN A PREP CLASSROOM?

At Our Lady of Dolours we value and engage children's ideas and experiences to enrich our Early Years program. Our focus will be child-centred and will support all children physically, emotionally, socially, intellectually, and spiritually.

Eight Principles for the Early Phase of Learning

- Children are capable and competent and have been learning since birth
- Children build deep understanding when they learn through all senses and are offered choice in their learning experiences
- Children learn best through interactions, active exploration, experimentation and by representing their learning through a variety of modes
- Children's positive dispositions to learning, and to themselves as learners, are essential for success in school and beyond
- Children learn best in environments where there are supportive relationships among all partners in the learning community
- Early childhood programs are most effective when they recognise, value and build upon the cultural and social experiences of children
- Building continuity of learning as children move to and through school provides foundations for their future success
- Assessment of young children is an integral part of the learning and teaching process



Prep students will be actively involved in a student-centred curriculum. They will participate in a combination of indoor and outdoor learning environments where they will build on and develop a range of skills through the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. The General Capabilities include:

- Personal and Social Capability
- Literacy and Numeracy
- Information and Communication Technology
- Creative and Critical thinking
- Ethical understanding and intercultural understanding



What Does a Prep Day Look Like?

8:15 am	Classroom opens for students to unpack their belongings
8:30 am:	Gather in the courtyard for morning assembly
8:40 am:	Morning session
10:50 am:	First Break – play followed by supervised eating time
11:30 am:	Middle session
1:30 pm:	Second Break – play followed by supervised eating time
2:00 pm:	Last session
3:00 pm:	End of school day

To assist in helping your child build a routine, we ask that they be punctual in arriving at school each day. If your child is late, it is a requirement that they be signed in by an adult at student reception. Failing to sign in at reception will result in an unexplained absence being recorded.

Learning Experiences

The day consists of activities that stretch the brain and attend to all the learning areas. These include games, discussions, small group work, and individual learning experiences. Focused Learning and Teaching occurs across all the learning contexts. It may take place as a whole class experience, in a small group, or one-to-one. It involves the teacher and the student co-constructing understandings about all aspects of the curriculum. Fine and Gross motor experiences combine both teacher-directed and child-directed activities. Children develop both gross and fine motor activities, coordination skills, upper and lower body strength and social skill interaction. Children will participate in specialist curriculum activities including dance, physical education, visual arts and music, and will also visit the iCentre (library) as part of the overall learning program.



How Parents Can Get Involved:

The Early Years of schooling here at Our Lady of Dolours will be a time for students to be active participants in the classroom and in society. Learning to co-operate, abiding by rules, being part of a group, communicating effectively, taking turns, sharing, finishing a set task, developing patience, and coping with failure and success are all key growth areas for our young people. We look forward to working with parents and carers as your children learn and grow. Prep parents can help by:

- Supporting the Prep class when asked by the Prep teacher
- Reading correspondence from the school
- Collecting junk and recycled materials as requested
- Supporting and encouraging their child to be independent
- Discussing any problems and worries
- Taking part in school celebrations and social functions

PICK-UP AND DROP-OFF ROUTINE

Morning Drop-Off

The Prep Classroom will be open at 8:15 am. To begin with, Preps stay in the room in the morning before school starts. We will have books and puzzles out for them to play, talk, and socialise with other students. Parents are welcome to stay and help your child settle into an activity. Alternatively, you may wish to drop and go. Later in the year, as they become more comfortable within the school environment, Preps may go and play in the courtyard after they have unpacked their bags. It is very important that your child arrives on time for school by 8:30 am to allow your child and the rest of the group to settle into the morning routine without disruption.

Afternoon Pick-Up

Your child's teacher will explain the process. At the beginning of the year you will collect your child from the classroom. Older siblings may collect younger siblings, but they will need a note from parents giving them permission to do so. No student will be permitted to go to either street pick-up unattended for the first semester at school. If you are running late, please call the office; they will let the teacher know, who can then reassure your child. Once the second half of the year arrives, students can wait for their parents at either the pick-up zone or external to the classroom.

Arriving Late or Leaving Early

While Prep is a full-time program and the children attend for a full school day, there may be times when you need to pick your child up early or bring them in late. If you are arriving late in the morning, you must sign your child in at the office. Your child will then be issued with a late card, which is handed to the teacher. If your child is leaving school early, you need to go to the school office in order to sign them out. Office staff will then call the classroom and your child will be escorted to the office by a buddy.

LIBRARY

Prep students will have the opportunity to borrow books from the Library during a rostered weekly visit. Each student is required to bring their library bag with them to school to protect their borrowed books. Our regular school procedure is "No Bag – No Borrowing" for all students.



HOMEWORK

Specifics of your child's homework will be outlined at the Parent Information Evening early in the new school year.

HOME READING

At Our Lady of Dolours, nightly home reading is promoted and encouraged. Each night, parents can:

- Read to their child while he/she listens
- Read with their child (alternating who reads)
- Listen to their child read to them
- Once home reading is formally introduced, students will be required to read for a minimum amount of time each night (e.g., 10 minutes).

RELIGIOUS LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

Students are provided with many opportunities to reflect, pray, meditate and join in with liturgy. These occur in both formal and informal settings. Students of all faith denominations are encouraged to participate and become fully involved in all religious aspects of school life.



HEALTHY CHILDREN

Food and Nutrition

Food for First and Second Breaks should be packed separately to your child's snack. Include nutritious food items that your child can manage independently. If providing items such as yoghurt, please provide a spoon. Do not pack any items that require heating. Snack can be sent along in small containers to be left in your child's classroom. Lunches are stored in the refrigerator; therefore, a small lunch box is preferable due to limited storage space. As a community focused on caring for our common home, we also encourage waste-free lunches (nude food).



Snack: As the time between breakfast and first break is significant, we allow an opportunity for students to have a quick snack during the morning session. Students should bring healthy food items that can be consumed quickly, for instance – fruit and vegetables (sliced in a container if easier for your child to handle), cheese and crackers, dried fruit.

First Break: Healthy foods with as little packaging as possible are recommended for lunch. Suggestions include sandwiches with healthy fillings, finger salads, crackers, yoghurt, and fruit.

Second Break: This is a short break for afternoon tea. A small, healthy snack is appropriate, for instance – yoghurt, crackers, cheese, fresh or dried fruit, or vegetable sticks.

Foods which are high in sugar or fat are discouraged; whilst packaged food can be fun as an occasional treat, we do not encourage them to be placed in the children's lunchbox as an everyday food.

All classrooms are air-conditioned and have a refrigerator for the storage of students' lunches. Please ensure that lunchboxes are clearly marked with your child's name and have adequate seals and closures. Insulated lunch boxes are discouraged as they are designed to block external temperature penetrating the lunch box – this means the contents will not be cooled by the fridge.

Water Bottles

Please provide your child with a drink bottle full of water each day. Water is available from the bubblers at break time, however, in our hot climate it is important that children be able to access water at appropriate times during class also. Please do not fill bottles with cordial or juice as water is the healthiest option.

Nut Allergy Awareness

Our school does not have a nut free policy but requests all families to consider refraining from incorporating nut products in lunch boxes where possible. This helps us avoid the risk of anaphylactic shock with some of our students. Parents are urged to adopt this voluntary ban on peanut butter and nuts when providing lunches from home.

TOILETING

It is the school's expectation that Prep students are toilet trained. It is understood that on rare occasions, some students may have accidents; in these circumstances, students are required to change themselves independently. If this cannot be achieved, parents will be contacted to collect their child from school to ensure that Occupational Health & Safety Regulations are met. Please note that child protection laws do not permit staff to assist children with their personal toileting needs. Every Prep student is required to have a spare pair of underwear, a shirt, and shorts in their bag in case of an accident. Please name these items and store them in a plastic bag.

MEDICAL PROTOCOLS

Administration of Medication

If your child requires medication to be administered during the course of the school day, please see the office to complete the relevant authority form. It is a legal requirement that all medication supplied be labelled by a chemist outlining the student's name, dosage requirements, and administration instructions.

Accident or Sudden Illness

For injuries of a minor nature, first aid will be administered by teachers in the Prep classroom. Should a serious illness or accident occur, every effort will be made to contact parents immediately. In emergency situations, it may be necessary to seek immediate medical assistance; it is therefore essential that school records are accurate, including emergency contact numbers and all other pertinent medical information. Please notify the office and your child's classroom teacher of any changes to these details.

MAKING OUR PREPS FEEL PART OF THE FAMILY

We understand that moving into school is a big step for little people, so our priority is ensuring the newest members of our school community feel safe and welcome.

The Buddy System

Many schools now operate a Buddy system, whereby incoming Prep students are paired with older student "Buddies". In most schools, this pairing lasts for twelve months; at O.L.D. we extend the Buddy system over a period of two years. Our Preps are paired with Year Five students, and these relationships will carry on until the older students graduate, at which time our little buddies are preparing to move into Year Two. Older Buddies are not only a great support in the playground, but also take part in scheduled class time with their younger friends, playing and reading.

Buddy Introductions

In the lead-up to school, we introduce our pre-Prep students individually to everyone gathered for the orientation process. Book-ending this, during our new Prep students' first term at school their Year Five Buddies formally introduce them to the school community during a series of morning parades, welcoming them one-by-one into our community and sharing some things they have learned about their new charges.

It is a beautiful sight to see our Buddies caring for their little person throughout the year.



TIPS FOR A TERRIFIC TRANSITION

Starting school should be an enjoyable and positive experience, when children have the opportunity to make new friends and learn new things. Beginning school is a big step but there are some things that you can do to help make the transition easier.

Developing Independence



Help your child become used to:

- Putting on and taking off clothes and shoes (Velcro is useful if shoelaces are a problem)
- Opening a lunch box and unwrapping food (Plastic wrap can be tricky!)
- Eating and drinking without help
- Caring for and putting away playthings
- Using a handkerchief or tissue
- Going to the toilet by themselves
- Packing, unpacking, and carrying their own bag

Prepare your child for separation:

- If your child is not used to being away from the family, try to organise for them to spend time at friends' or relatives' houses without you before school starts.
- Take your child to visit the school a number of times before the first day. Show them where the toilets and bubblers are, and how to use them. If this isn't possible, perhaps drive past the school to show them where they will be attending.

Developing Social Competence

Help your child to develop the necessary communication skills. Try to ensure that your child can:

- Ask for help when needed
- Use appropriate greetings
- Respond when spoken to
- Follow simple instructions (Ask your child to help you around the house. Give one direction to begin with. Gradually build to two, then three.)

Help your child to develop the necessary social skills. Try to ensure that your child can:

- Share and take turns
- Play cooperatively with others
- Wait quietly for brief periods (Playing cards or board games require all these skills. Beware of influencing the outcomes of the game though – being able to cope with not winning is also an important skill.)





Developing Physical Skills

Provide opportunities for your child to use the large muscles of their body. This assists with the stamina and co-ordination required throughout the school day. Help your child to develop the necessary skills for:

- Running
- Jumping
- Hopping
- Climbing
- Negotiating obstacles (Set up an obstacle course!)



Help your child to develop the small muscles of the fingers and hand. Try to ensure that your child has lots of opportunities to:

- Draw and write
- Paint with fingers and brushes
- Play with dough (Make biscuits or bread. Great fun and you get to eat it as well!)
- Cut with scissors, tear, and scrunch paper
- Build with blocks and other construction toys
- Pick up and place small objects (Decorate your biscuits or sprinkle sesame seeds on your bread.)



Developing School Routines

Use pretend play to practice some of the classroom routines such as:

- Putting your hand up to speak
- Asking to go to the toilet
- Sitting quietly and listening to others for a short time
- Lining up
- Looking after and organising belongings (pencils, sharpener, scissors, etc. in pencil case, lunch box in bag). Children usually love to play "Schools". Take turns with your child to be the teacher



WHAT TO WEAR

- Prep students will wear:
- School blue polo shirt
- Blue shorts for boys and culottes for girls
- Distinctive RED school hat
- Footwear – black Velcro joggers
- Mid length blue socks
- O.L.D. jumper in cooler months

Dresses are not considered to be appropriate wear for girls in Prep as they restrict play and physical activity.



Naming Property

Please name all items sent to school, particularly lunch containers, school bags, shoes, socks, hats, and other clothing. Encourage your students to be responsible for their belongings and to check for these before leaving school each day.

WHAT TO PACK

- School Bag
- Snack
- Lunch and afternoon tea in one lunchbox
- Water Bottle
- Library Bag
- School Hat (Red Hat)
- Communication folder
- Spare uniform including underwear

COMMUNICATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL



Teachers are often available each morning and afternoon to answer quick queries from parents. At any time during the year, parents are welcome to make an appointment to meet with teachers about issues concerning their child's education. Some topics may require a private meeting or perhaps some preparation time. These meetings will occur outside school hours.

Student portfolios are provided at the end of each semester and parent teacher interviews are held in Terms One and Three. A summative report is provided in the final week of Terms Two and Four.

Important information is provided via email and the school newsletter. Newsletters are made available on the school website and an email is sent to your nominated email address informing you that the newsletter is available. This usually happens each Wednesday.

Inclusion of Parents in the Classroom and School Community

Other ways parents/carers and other family members can participate in their child's education include:

- Supporting the school's P&F Committee
- Reading all notices sent home and displayed at school
- Supervising children on excursions
- Collecting and donating materials useful for Early Years activities
- Offering to share hobbies, interests, or skills with the class
- Taking an interest in your child's work and encouraging his/her efforts
- Discussing any problems or concerns with the teacher
- Volunteering to help at lunch days.

CHATTING CHILDREN LITERACY PROGRAM

Oral language is a skill that is a powerful foundation for reading and writing. The Chatting Children Program helps to build foundational skills for future literacy development. The program explores the building blocks of literacy including oral language, motivation and positive orientation to books, alphabet knowledge, print concepts (how to hold a book, reading from left to right), narrative structure, and phonological awareness (word, syllable, and rhyme awareness). All these skills build children's readiness for reading and writing success.



The Chatting Children Program began in 2010 at O.L.D. It is a take home language program that aims to promote all areas of language development in a fun and engaging way. The Chatting Children packs consist of a story book and an accompanying activity book. It is designed to be used by families with their children in the home environment.

Chatting Children is implemented with our Pre-Prep students during the last term of the year and will continue throughout the first term of 2023. For more information on the program, parents can view the slide show on the school website at http://www.ourladyofdolours.qld.edu.au/Chatting_Children/pp_01.htm

MISCELLANEOUS

Outside Hours School Care

This service is available for all families and is open from 7:00 am – 8:30 am in the morning and again in the afternoon between 3:00 pm and 6:00 pm. Parents or Carers need to register with the service before students can attend.

Excursions and Incursions

Special activities that complement learning activities are organised for the students throughout the year and invoiced on the school fees. Families will be notified about these activities via a class letter.

Welcome to Our Lady of Dolours School.

Thank you for taking the time to familiarise yourself with this Prep Handbook.

You will find more information about your school on the O.L.D. website:

<https://www.ourladyofdolours.qld.edu.au>

You are also warmly invited to like the School Facebook page; a great way to keep up to date with what's happening in our community.

<https://www.facebook.com/OLDmitchelton>

We look forward to your family becoming a part of the O.L.D. family.



2023 Term Dates

Tuesday, 24th January – Friday, 31st March (Term One)

Monday, 17th April – Friday, 23rd June (Term Two)

Monday, 10th July – Friday, 15th September (Term Three)

Tuesday, 3rd October – Friday, 1st December (Term Four)