

Ashwell State School

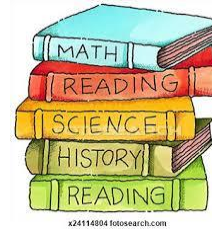
Prep Handbook

2019



WELCOME TO PREP

Ashwell State School offers a wonderful start for your child's learning. Developing a love of learning, celebrating success and establishing the building blocks for future learning are the core elements of a quality Prep curriculum program.



The Early Years Curriculum

The Australian Curriculum, in conjunction with the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines, has been designed for use in all Prep Year classes. The curriculum is designed to provide all students with a solid foundation to their learning and provide the springboard to future learning success. The Prep Year is focused on **child-centred learning**, **Inquiry-based learning** and **investigations** are key elements of the curriculum.

Our teachers plan for children's learning using English, Maths, Science, History and Geography, Health and Physical Education (Australian Curriculum) and the Early Learning Areas (*Early Years Curriculum Guidelines*):

- Social and Personal Learning
- Active Learning Processes

These **Early Learning Areas** are linked to our school's curriculum with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy. In the Early Years, children learn through:

- Focused learning and teaching
- Investigations
- Routines and transitions
- Play
- Real Life Situations



Some of the learning experiences that your child will encounter include:

- Constructing using blocks, collage and manipulative equipment to develop early mathematical concepts and skills
- Initiating and participating in dramatic play to build an understanding of the world around them

- Drawing and painting to encourage oral language, reading and writing skills
- Writing stories and copying signs as part of their play, constructions and art
- Playing and investigating independently, in pairs, small groups and as a whole class
- Actively making choices about what and how they learn
- Investigating and learning how to inquire about their interests
- Planning collaboratively with the teacher using a plan-do-reflect model
- Participating in music and language experiences

These learning experiences assist children to:

- Develop early literacy and numeracy skills
- Understand and use language to group, sort and describe objects and to communicate ideas, feelings and needs
- Become independent thinkers and problem-solvers
- Learn how to co-operate with others
- Develop physical co-ordination skills
- Listen, respond to and give directions
- Become confident at taking risks in their learning
- Make good choices

The teacher's planning responds to the children's needs and interests. Teachers monitor, assess and reflect on children's learning by:

- Understanding children
- Building partnerships
- Establishing flexible learning environments
- Creating contexts for learning
- Exploring what children want to learn

The Prep Year of Schooling

Prep is a compulsory full time five day per week program. Students born within the following dates are eligible to enrol in Prep.

- For 2019: 1 July 2013 - 30 June 2014
- For 2020: 1 July 2014 - 30 June 2015



Please Note

The whole school information about Ashwell State School, its curriculum, teaching, learning, policies and processes are detailed in the **Information Handbook**. **The Prep Handbook** contains specific information for parents who are coming to our school with their child for the first time. If there are any questions after reading both of these handbooks, please do not hesitate to contact the staff at Ashwell on 5464 1184, visit us at the administration office or ask your child's teacher.

What Your Child Will Need for Prep

Classroom Items

Each year parents are provided with a Prep Booklist detailing all the items required. Parents can purchase the entire list, from most stores. It is important to note that some of the items for Prep are pooled and used by the entire class group and throughout the year there may be times when certain items have depleted and the Prep teacher may write to request the purchase of additional items.



Lunch

Each day children require a fruit break, lunch (first and second break) and a water bottle. Please carefully consider the foods included in your child's lunch box as we **encourage children to eat healthy choices** first and leave 'treats' for later. Ensure your child knows what food has been packed and when to eat it. Supplying lunch in labeled, easy to open packages and containers will help to encourage your child's independence.

Suitable healthy food choices include:

- ✓ **SNACKS** – Cut fruit or vegetables including apple, grapes, strawberry, carrots, beans, crackers, cheese, boiled eggs, dried or fresh fruit/ vegetables, natural popcorn, muesli bars or savoury biscuits, yoghurts and dairy products
- ✓ **LUNCH** – Sandwiches, rolls, wraps, poppers
- ✓ **FRUIT BREAK** – Around 10.00am each morning the class will break for a quick 'fruit break'. Please place one piece of fruit in their lunch box each day. Appropriate fruit include: small apples, mandarins, strawberries, cucumber slices, carrot sticks and sultanas as they are NOT messy to eat.



Unsuitable food choices include:

- × Chips, lollies, cake, roll ups
- × Soft drinks/ cordial
- × Foods in containers children cannot open

As some of the children at school have an identified allergy, we teach the children to wash their hands with soap after eating nuts and nut-based products. We also explicitly teach children not to share, swap, give away or take other students' lunches to alleviate any issues related to allergies and dietary requirements. We appreciate your support in this matter.

Clothing

All parents are requested to leave a spare set of labelled clothes, including underpants, in your child's bag. Some second hand uniforms are available at the uniform shop if you require a set for this purpose.

School Bag

Your child's school bag should be large enough to safely and easily carry their lunch box, water bottle, hat, change of clothes and reading bag. Please ensure that you practice packing the bag with your child and that they can open and close it so that all their items remain securely inside. Port racks are located outside the Prep classroom.

Personal Property

Please ensure that **all** your child's personal items including clothing, hat, lunch box, drink bottle and backpack are all clearly labeled. Most lost property items are brought to assembly to be identified and handed back to their owner. If an item is not appropriately labelled and students do not identify the items as theirs, the lost property will be placed in a lost property box in the office. Please feel free to check this at any time if you are trying to locate a piece of lost property.

Although children may be excited by new or special toys and treasures they have at home, at school they can often become lost or broken. Due to this the school rules include **personal items stay at home**. This rule saves heartache and time for all involved.

What Your Child Wears at Prep

Prep students wear the same uniform as all the students of Ashwell State School. The uniform is detailed in the Information Handbook and available for purchase from the P&C. To comply with our Sun Safety policy it is compulsory for all children to wear a clearly labeled, broad brimmed hat for both scheduled lessons and play times. If your child does not have their hat they will be asked to remain under the covered areas. Children are required to wear covered shoes, which may have velcro straps to enable students independence when dressing for school.



The Prep Day

Although there are a wide range of activities your Prep child will encounter over the year, we have included **a sample day** for your information. Please note this is only a sample and may change according to the class needs

Time	School Day	Sample Day
8.00am	Before School	Students sit at the eating area.
8.30am	First Bell	Taking off time. Students are in classrooms working with their teachers and teacher aides on reading, sight words and finishing activities from previous days.
8.50am	Morning Session: Literacy Block	Handwriting Reading Groups
10.00am	Fruit Break	
10.10am		Writing Concepts of print Rhyme Story time
10.50am	First Break – Eating time	
11.05am	First Break - Play time	
11.30pm	Middle Session: Numeracy Block	Numbers Patterns Sequencing Time Shapes Positional Language Math songs/ rotations
1.20pm	Second Break - Eating time and Play	
1.30pm	Afternoon Session: Specialist Areas	Library, History, Geography, Science, The Arts and Design and Technology
2.50pm	Pick up	Parents to collect children from the undercover area.

Arrival at Ashwell SS

All students are expected to arrive between 8.15am and 8.30am. Before school, students are to sit and talk quietly, in the main covered area. When the bell rings at 8.30am students are to move to their classrooms for Taking off Time. During Taking off Time students complete work from the day before, practise sight words and reading with adults and organise themselves for the day. Instruction begins at 8:50am each day. It is important that your child arrives on time as important learning experiences are embedded in every activity in the day. As the year progresses, and when parents and children feel comfortable and confident, teachers will encourage children to organise their equipment themselves and walk to the classroom independently.

Please note that for health and safety reasons the Playground Equipment is not to be used by students or their siblings before or after school.



Lunch Times

There are two lunch breaks for students at Ashwell. At each break, students eat first followed by play time. Students are supervised at both breaks. During play time students are able to access the Playground Equipment, Oval, Tennis Court or Under Covered Area. The play areas are separated into P-2 and 3-6 areas. The library is also open for students to go for reading or borrowing on selected lunch breaks. When the bell rings all students collect their lunch boxes and proceed to their designated covered area to wait for their teacher.

The same process is followed at the second break.

For the safety of students, the administration staff may announce a 'Wet Weather' break and Teachers or Teacher Aides may ask students to leave certain equipment or areas. A 'Wet Weather' break means that students will remain inside the classroom supervised by a Teacher and/or Teacher Aide.

Some Prep students may require support by staff during play time. This support is focused on teaching students skills for socialising with their peers through appropriate play.

End of the Day

School concludes at 2.50pm each day. Parents or carers are expected to collect their children from the undercover area. The end of the day routine involves the students packing their own bags, supported by the teacher and teacher aide, then the class teacher walking the class to the undercover area and students sitting down until they are collected by a parent or carer. Please ensure you inform the classroom teacher of your child's mode of transportation including: collection by older siblings, day care bus, other buses or any other arrangements. As with arrival time, it is important that your child remains at school until 2.50pm each day.



SPECIALIST SCHOOL ACTIVITIES FOR PREPS

Specialist Programs

Prep students will participate in The Arts, Music, Technology and Physical Education Specialist Programs. Students are engaged in one 30 minute lesson each week for both Music, The Arts, Technology and Physical Education.

Library

The Library is open for students at some break times during the week. During scheduled instruction time Prep students will go to the library for borrowing once per week.

However, students who do not have a library bag to protect the books whilst they are in the students' care will not be able to bring the book home until they bring their library bag.



School Events

As the year progresses there will be several whole school events or year level activities for Prep students to participate in, for example Athletics Carnival, Book Week Parade, Under 8's and other in school activities. As each event approaches information will be provided to parents via the newsletter and/or class letters. It is vital that parents read these notes to ensure children are fully prepared for every activity and parents and families do not miss an opportunity to see a milestone in your child's first year at Ashwell.

Assembly

An assembly occurs every Friday afternoon and is run by the senior students. During this Parade 'student of the week', prize box and other certificates and/or awards are presented. Students also sing the National Anthem and acknowledge the traditional owners of the land upon which we meet.

EVERY DAY COUNTS AT ASHWELL SS!

Regular student attendance in Prep ensures maximum opportunity to engage in the learning experiences essential for a successful start to each student's learning journey.

Detailed information about the processes for student attendance, late arrivals and early or emergent departures is available in the *Student Information Handbook*.

COMMUNICATION

Newsletter

Ashwell State School's newsletters are produced fortnightly on a Tuesday and are sent home using our eNewsletter format. Please ensure that you keep the newsletter to check back for reminders. You can also view the newsletter on our school website. If you don't have an email address you can get a printed copy, except you won't get the exciting content such as photos and videos.



We also have a Facebook page that upcoming events, reminders and photos are published to celebrate children's learning and successes. Like our page for news!

Meet and Greet Afternoons

Meet and greet afternoons are held within the first four weeks of school every year. They are an important time for parents to meet with classroom teachers and be reintroduced to the learning program, timetable and reminded of processes in your child's class. Teachers value the opportunity to speak directly to parents about the year ahead and in so doing take another important step towards a strong teacher-parent partnership, one that benefits each Ashwell student.



Parent Teacher Communication

Effective communication between families and schools will help to foster and enhance the learning experience of all students. Ashwell State School encourages parents to take the opportunities to speak with teachers to discuss your child, their learning and progress. Teachers are generally available before OR after school for informal conversations regarding your child. If a more detailed discussion is required please arrange a mutually convenient time with the teacher. Please also consider that once the school day has started, teachers will be engaged in focused learning and teaching with the class and it will be difficult to speak to the teacher.

It is also important to discuss and share information with the teacher that may have an impact on your child and influence their behaviours. Events like family visits, moving house, accidents etc need to be communicated to teachers so that we can work together to support your child.

Volunteers and visits are welcome once students have settled in. Each child is different but generally from Term 2. Please organise an individual discussion with the teacher to share how and when you may be able to assist in the classroom.

Reporting to Parents

Informal assessment of students is ongoing and takes place throughout the year in Prep. Teachers will provide parents with information and feedback on how your child is progressing and developing. Teachers will provide the opportunity to have a formal interview half way through the semester. Report cards will be sent home to parents in Term 2 and 4. In addition, parents are always welcome to discuss any learning concerns with teachers at any time throughout the year.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

At Ashwell SS, our *Special Needs Committee* works in collaboration with families, teachers and other agencies to identify and address the range of learning, developmental, social, emotional and behavioural needs of our students. At your child's enrolment interview it is vital to provide detailed and comprehensive information about your child, their development, health, behaviours and learning readiness.

Classroom Teachers

Your child's classroom teacher identifies strengths and weaknesses of all students in relation to curriculum access and participation in the classroom program. This information is used to plan learning experiences targeted at the specific needs of all students.

Guidance Officer

The role of the Guidance Officer at Ashwell SS is to work collaboratively with the *Student Needs Committee* to administer appropriate assessment and provide counselling services. The Guidance Officer assists in monitoring students' progress and appropriateness of placement and recommends appropriate pathways for students with learning needs or giftedness.

Chaplain

At Ashwell, our chaplain fosters a supportive, caring school community providing spiritual support for students and families. The chaplain provides the opportunity to develop a supportive, caring relationship with children as they begin their school lives providing a listening ear, a caring presence and a message of hope. For Preps, this could include helping with classroom activities, or individual meetings, if formally requested by parents.

Advisory Staff

The Department of Education provides access to Advisory Teachers in a range of areas. If required to address the needs of your child, the Advisory Teacher works collaboratively with your child's teacher to develop a plan and strategies for implementation as part of the classroom learning experiences.



PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PREP

Whilst we acknowledge that individual children are at several different developmental stages there are some simple things families can do to support your child's transition from home to Prep.

Encourage your child to be independent by helping and teaching them:

- their full name
- to recognise their name in print
- the name of the street where they live
- their phone number
- to pack, open, close and carry their school bag
- to identify their personal property
- how to eat their packed food, recognising what to eat at first and second break, opening packets and containers
- to use a tissue
- how to wash hands properly, that they should be washed before and after meals and after going to the toilet
- to go to the toilet independently
- to put on and take off clothing such as jumpers, socks, shoes and rain wear
- to put on school shoes
- to care for items and to put things away
- where to wait for you at the end of the day

Work with your child to develop his or her communication skills. Help and encourage your child to:

- make their own needs known
- use appropriate greetings
- respond verbally when spoken to
- practice listening skills and follow directions
- help, care and share with others

Children's oral language skills can be developed by:

- talking in sentences
- looking at picture books
- remembering little rhymes
- reading with parents
- listening to parents reading stories regularly





Giving a Head Start to Early Readers

In today's world reading involves more than reading books. Books are still very important, although viewing websites, television and movies, reading shopper dockets, street directories or junk mail provides great opportunities for families to encourage their children's reading.

There are always reasons to read – for pleasure, to follow instructions or learn something – and children quickly learn that reading is useful through watching people around them make sense of the world and to acquire what they need.

Reading print is still vitally important, but it is no longer sufficient. We need to be able to read much more than print alone. When viewing an internet site you need to recognise and interpret icons to choose a pathway to follow, perhaps watch a video presentation, listen to a voice-over and compose some text to answer questions or send an email.

When supporting and encouraging beginning reading, the key word is '**TALK**' – talk with your child and talk about what they are reading or viewing.

- **Read** to your child and encourage discussion through questions such as: *What do you think might happen next? If you were ... what would you have done? Has anything like that happened to you? Were you puzzled or surprised?* Give the child plenty of time to answer.
- **Watch** a favourite television program or video together and discuss what you liked or disliked.
- **Play** computer games and talk about what is happening.
- **Read** books and **view** websites together. Talk about menus, index or table of contents and how these help identify specific information.
- **Explain** and **discuss** signs, advertisements and safety notices around us.



Tips for helping a young reader read independently

- **Before reading**, talk about the cover, author and title, make predictions about the content, look for new vocabulary and have fun finding out the meaning of new words.
- **During reading** allow plenty of **WAIT** time for self-correction or re-reading, or reading on when unsure of a word.
- **If** a reader substitutes a word that still makes sense – for example, 'house' instead of 'home' – let the reading continue.
- **If** what the child reads does not sound correct or does not make sense, ask *Did that sound right to you?* or *Did that make sense to you?*
- **If** the child makes a mistake in letter – sound relationships, ask *Does that look right to you?* Have them check their reading.
- **After** reading, discuss the text together. This is far more useful and enjoyable than comments such as 'Good reading' or asking the reader a series of questions.

LITERACY – Parents make the world of difference!

Parents are our children’s first teachers!

Your child first learns how to speak and use words at home. Families answer questions about what things look like, what things are used for and when to use them. All the basic skills that are taught give the child a good start at school and stay with them. Many of the everyday activities that we do at home help our children to learn.

Helping your child to learn can be simple!

- Read to them.
- Let them read to you.
- Encourage them to tell you the same story in their words.
- Ask them to talk about what they have learned at school.
- Ask them to talk about the things that interest them.
- Talk about events and activities that occur in your area.
- Write a shopping list together.
- Get a book out of a library together.
- Cook and follow a recipe together.
- Draw a picture, write on it and send it to relatives.
- Read comics, magazines and newspapers.
- Make a book with pictures and words.



Everyone has knowledge to share. Everyone has a story to tell. Parents are vital in helping children to make sense of their world. **Parents are our children’s first and most important teacher!**

Learning together is fun! Sometimes, it seems that the way your child is taught at school is very different from your own school days. You may feel as though you can’t help – but you can! What school children need most to help them learn is encouragement from their family – from parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles and friends. **Giving support and encouragement to your child to learn is the most important way you, as a parent, can help them succeed.**

What can parents do at school?

By becoming involved, parents can understand schools better and find new ways for our children to learn.

- Talk to the teacher about helping your child learn.
- Talk to other parents about how they are helping their children.
- Help with the Reading Programs at school.
- Attend parents’ meetings at the school.

Finally,

*Welcome to
Ashwell State School*

