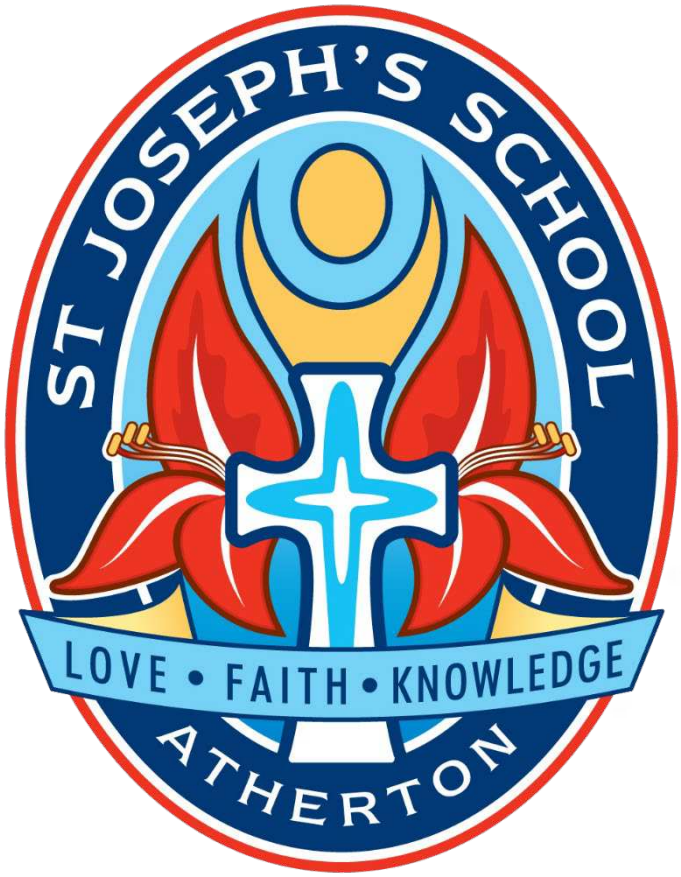
Prep
Parent Information Handbook



2027

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL, ATHERTON

IDENTITY STATEMENT

St Joseph's School is a Christ-centred professional learning community founded in the Mercy tradition. Inspired by our patron, St Joseph, and Venerable Catherine McAuley, we embody the Mercy charism and live out our school motto, "Love, Faith, Knowledge"

VISION

At St Joseph's School, our vision is for high levels of learning and wellbeing for all in a nurturing, collaborative and dynamic Christ-centred environment.

MISSION

Our mission statements are developed from the collective commitments we have made as a school community to ensure that our Catholic values and vision are visible through word and action.

We achieve this vision as a community through the lens of our school motto, *Love, Faith, Knowledge.*

Love & Faith

- *Integrated curriculum that develops the whole person.*
- *Ensure all members of the school community are immersed in opportunities for deeper engagement with the mission of the Catholic Church through liturgical celebration, prayer, reflection and opportunities for formation, leadership and involvement in ministry through hospitality and service to others.*
- *Promote social and restorative justice practices in a caring and supportive environment where human dignity and diversity are valued and respected.*
- *Live in respectful relationship with all of creation and with responsible commitment to care for the Earth.*

Knowledge

- *Provide innovative learning and teaching that is contemporary, dynamic and challenging.*
- *Engage in professional practice which is informed by data analysis, current research and quality resourcing.*
- *Commit to excellence and enable everyone to actively participate in their learning through differentiated instruction; empowering them to be critical, creative and reflective thinkers.*

Community

- *Provide a place of welcome that is hospitable and inclusive of all.*
- *Promote and maintain a strong commitment to uphold positive and professional relationships with the school and wider community by working collaboratively to achieve high levels of learning and pastoral care.*
- *Celebrate learning, achievement and culture, recognising the contributions and unique gifts of all.*

Saint Joseph's School Prayer

God made us a family.

We need one another;
We love one another:
We forgive one another,
We work together;
We play together;
We worship together.

Together we use God's Word;
Together we grow in Christ.
God, bless our school.

Saint Joseph,
Pray for us.
Amen



Welcome to St Joseph's School

Dear Parents

Your child is about to begin an exciting new chapter. Primary school will provide them with many exciting challenges and opportunities for which they are ready, within a structured, safe and secure environment.

All children enter school with varying degrees of experience and levels of maturity. Many of them have already been exposed to school-based activities at home or at kindy; others have not. It is important that parents avoid comparisons in the early stages and allow them to develop at their own pace. You need to be patient at times.

I ask that you support your children well in these early days. You will need to show great interest in what they are doing and I encourage you to establish a very good relationship with the class teacher.

The transition from kindy to a more structured school setting is challenging for many children and you will need to be aware of this in the first six week period when the teacher is setting clear boundaries. Look for signs that may indicate that your child is having difficulty adjusting and discuss this with the classroom teacher. Be guided by their advice in how you can best assist your child during this period of change.

This is an exciting and sometimes daunting time for you as a parent and we look forward to welcoming you as an active member of our school community. There are many ways for you to be involved in your child's education, and in my experience, children do best at school when their parents take an active interest in what they are learning and doing.

I do wish you and your child every success in the coming years and I encourage you to visit the school often, regularly converse with your child's teacher, help out with school activities whenever possible and never hesitate to contact your child's teacher or a member of the leadership team if you have a question or concern about your child's education or progress, spiritually, academically, socially, emotionally or physically.

May you travel peacefully with your child on their educational journey,

Rita Petersen

Principal

Getting Ready for School

The Preparatory Year or 'Prep' is about *preparing* children for formal schooling.

Research has identified the following indicators of preparedness for school which we aim to develop:

- Social and emotional competence with a focus on social learning and independence;
- Health and physical well-being, particularly in making healthy choices and gross and fine motor development;
- Language development and communication focusing on oral language and early literacy;
- Early mathematical understandings with an emphasis on early numeracy;
- Active learning processes with a focus on thinking, investigating, imagining and responding; and
- A positive orientation to learning.

Australian Curriculum

St Joseph's School offers children a full time, Preparatory Year of formal school.
St Joseph's is a Catholic Community dedicated to providing young children with an education in a faith filled environment. The Preparatory Year provides a firm foundation for school and is based on developmentally appropriate practices for young children. Quality teaching practices are imbedded into core learning to enhance then social, emotional, physical, and intellectual development of each child.
Students bring to school a wide range of experiences, abilities, needs and interests. They have a natural curiosity about their world. Their desire to make sense of the world provides a platform to plan and review their learning through interactions with others, experimentation, scaffolding, explicit teaching, practice and play in the classroom and beyond. This helps them make sense of a world that is outside their immediate experience, as they connect new knowledge with what they already know or believe. Our developmentally appropriate curriculum provides a conducive learning environment, where children are challenged, supported, and extended in their growth.
Our Prep classes implement the Australian Curriculum (Foundation level). These curriculum documents provide us with knowledge and guidance to differentiate and meet the individual needs of the children while supporting your child to reach their potential. We plan, assess and report in the Key Learning Areas of; English, Mathematics, Science, HASS (History and Geography) Health and Physical Education, Technology and The Arts. The Australian Curriculum is designed to develop:

- successful learners
- Independent, confident, and creative individuals
- active and informed young people who are ready to take their place in society.

The Australian Curriculum is designed to accommodate the varied learning experiences and diverse backgrounds that children bring to school. The Australian Curriculum recognises the importance of communication, language and building relationships. It gives priority to foundation knowledge, understanding and skills that all children are expected to develop to enhance their opportunities for continued learning. In the Early Years, priority is given to literacy and numeracy development because these are the foundations on which further learning is built.
At St Joseph's, we are passionate in our own development of understanding children's cognitive development and how we can tailor our lessons to receive most success for our students. Using research-based pedagogies in the early years of schooling is vital in supporting children's success in being courageous, resilient, and successful lifelong learners.
The daily learning timetable in Prep will consist of a structured Literacy Block, a Mathematics Block, other Key Learning Areas, and Specialist lessons.

The Literacy Block will occur in the first session of each day. Highly structured and explicit lessons will be taught in this session. The Literacy Block will consist of;

- A Morning Routine
- Phonological Awareness and Synthetic Phonics Lessons
- Reading Groups
- Explicit Writing Lessons
- Fine Motor Development
- Handwriting

This learning block will also be supported and balanced by hands on, and group learning sessions during our day.

By the end of Prep, students are expected to make phoneme and grapheme matches for consonants and short vowels, recognise, and spell the core camera words, decode short words using phonic knowledge and read short decodable texts. Students will also be expected to spell decodable words and write several short texts (of different text type), correctly punctuated (capital letter and end punctuation). They will be expected to handwrite lower and uppercase letters, using correct letter formation and pencil grip.
In Mathematics, students will be expected to count forwards and backwards to 20. Connect numbers, their names, and quantities up to 20. Continue patterns and compare lengths of objects. Use materials to model problems, sort objects and discuss answers. Group and sort shapes and objects. Connect events with days of the week and develop an understanding of location words. Simple addition and sharing equations will also be introduced.
Our staff believe in a warm, nurturing, and supportive environment for your child. We recognise the importance of a continuing evaluation system that assesses and reviews the progress, performance, and development of children. Formal written reports will be issued in the last week of each semester, with Parent/Teacher interviews to be conducted during Term 1 and Term 3.

Religious Education

In addition to academic skills, our programs are designed to help children realise that they are part of creation and learn to live by Gospel values, especially respect, reverence, care and justice.

The aim of our Prep Religious Education Program is to (in partnership with parents):

- Give children a sense of God in their world
- Help children discover God's love for themselves
- Develop a positive sense of self-worth and self-esteem
- Shape attitudes of love and respect for self and others
- Learn the value of sharing with others
- Develop a positive attitude toward religion and Catholic teachings and traditions

We aim to achieve this through creating an environment of Christian love and understanding – a safe place where children can explore and experience elements of faith.

Spiritual Development

The best way you can help your children with their spiritual development is to be living examples of what you want for them. Through this example, you will be building the framework of experience which our teachers will reinforce and build upon.

How Can I Be Involved?
There are a number of students, now at St Joseph's, who come from other faith traditions. We also have students who have little or no knowledge of faith. As a school, we celebrate this openness and diversity, whilst sharing our Catholic perspective, traditions and liturgical celebrations.

We encourage those who do attend Mass or a church service with your child to sit where your child can see and participate and enable your child to see your involvement and commitment to your FAITH.

Through the Mass/Liturgy, children learn:

- To join their hands – a special sign we are going to talk to God
- The Sign of the Cross – begins and ends any special prayer
- To say the "Our Father" (the special prayer Jesus taught us)
- How to kneel and stand for prayers and Church conduct

These are some of the basic rituals your child will be experiencing in their first year of school.

Throughout the year, the school will be attending various Masses: for Feast Days (Special Saints Days), liturgical seasons (eg Ash Wednesday/Lent) and beginning and end of year celebrations. Your child will also participate in liturgies and prayer. They may be asked to take part in some small way (carrying a candle, reading a basic prayer). Your interest and commitment in this area would be most appreciated. Masses and Liturgy dates and times for each class are on the parent portal at the start of each term.

Praying With Your Child
Following are examples of basic prayers you may like to say with your child.

Morning
God our Father, help us today in all that we do and say. Amen.

Meal Time
Thank you God for those who care for us and provide us with this food we are to eat.
Amen.



Night Time
God our Father, thank you for all the good things that have happened today, for the things I have learnt, the people who have helped me and the things I have seen. Amen.

Thank you Prayer
Thank you God for the beautiful sun that was shining today. Thank you for my friends; we had so much fun today. Thank you God for my family who love and care for me. Amen.

Help Prayer
Dear God, please help me to be the best person I can be. Help Grandma to get better quickly. Please God look after my goldfish that died. …….Amen.

Formal Prayers
Children can also be encouraged to say with you (they will gradually learn the whole prayer) the "Our Father" and "Hail Mary".

Seasons of Our Church
You can help your children to be aware of and understand the seasons of the Church.
Lent: Time to get ready for Easter. Try to be the best people that we can be.
Easter: We remember how much Jesus loved each of us.
Advent: Time to get ready or waiting for Christmas.
Christmas: Time when we remember the birth of Jesus.

Expectations of Prep Children

Children who begin Prep are encouraged to work towards the following:

- Read their own name for identification of work, belongings, etc
- Unpack a lunchbox and drink bottle and pack this away again into their school bag
- Undo and do up their school bag
- Have started cutting with scissors
- Use a glue stick, pasting around the edges of paper and not just in the middle
- Pack a game/activity away after use
- Know the difference between their lunch and recess snack
- Take off and put on their jumper and art smock
- Use appropriate manners – *Please* and *Thank you*
- Use the toilet and wash hands after use
- Sit quietly and listen to a story
- Take turns

Skills for Starting School

A Guide for Parents of Children Starting Prep

Starting school is an important step in a young child's life. "But is my child ready for school?" is a question asked by many parents.

Children develop at different rates and learn skills in different ways. It is the school's task to respond to the needs, learning styles and rates of development of individual students.

Schools plan learning experiences based on the vast array of prior knowledge and skills which students bring to the school setting. Parents, as the first educators of their children, have long since begun the educational process well before their children come to school.

Specialist advice and support is available to assist parents of children with special needs in accessing appropriate educational services. Talk to the school as early as possible about access to these services if you have any developmental (physical, language, emotional or behavioural) concerns about your child.

Here is a sample of skills suitable for most children starting their foundation year of school. Starting school may be just a little easier if they have lots of opportunities to practise these skills prior to commencement. Encourage your child to attempt the things mentioned below; praise their efforts, celebrate their successes and promote resilience through persistence if initial efforts prove difficult. Don't worry if your child isn't able to do all of them and talk to your child's teacher. Together you can support and assist your child's learning.

Language

- Talks to other people about familiar objects and events
- Answers and asks simple questions. Makes needs known
- Follows simple instructions
- Uses books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- Identifies pictures in books, magazines, on television or devices
- Uses a variety of things (pens, pencils, textas, paintbrushes, sticks in the dirt) to draw, to scribble or to write
- Joins in singing familiar songs
- Can sit quietly and pay attention for a set period of time, eg watching children's educational television programs, doing a puzzle, building with blocks, etc
- Can recognise their own name

Mathematics

- Recognises that numbers can be used to count
- Uses words like many, a lot, more, less
- Identifies things in a group that are different
- Creates patterns with beads, blocks, etc
- Sees differences in shapes
- Differentiates between opposites – up and down, under and over, in front and behind, day and night



Personal/Social Skills

- Uses the toilet independently. For example, they should be able to go by themselves, undo and do up buttons or zips, flush the toilet, wash their hands and manage the taps. (The Prep teacher will organise regular toilet breaks during the first few weeks of school).
- Can say own name and address – phone number is an added bonus
- Can recognise their own hat, jumper, school requisites and other belongings. A motif or colour, as well as their name, helps young children identify their things. School bags, drink bottles and lunchboxes can often be similar to another students'.
- Adapts to unfamiliar settings and new experiences
- Can finish a task, and be able to tidy up afterwards
- Plays co-operatively with other children – shares and takes turns and respects other people's property
- Is curious about the world and participates in imaginative play
- Can share an adult's attention with several other children
- Uses words such as *Thank you* and *Please*

Physical Skills

- Uses scissors to cut along a straight line
- Enjoys a variety of indoor and outdoor play
- Can put on and take off jumpers, shoes and socks independently. Sometimes children feel too hot or too cold so they must be able to cope with jumpers by themselves. Often shoes must be taken off and put on again when playing in the sandpit or during wet weather. Lace up shoes can cause problems. Shoes with Velcro are preferable. The best way to help children learn these skills is to encourage them to dress themselves.
- Makes and designs things using a variety of materials
- Is able to feed him/herself independently. They will also need to undo a lunchbox, unscrew a drink container, unwrap their food and peel a piece of fruit
- Can get a drink from a tap

The First Few Weeks of School

Beginning school is the signalling of one of life's biggest milestones. We all have our own personal memories and experiences of starting school and ultimately we want the best for our children. Often our own experiences are a far cry from what children experience today.

Prior to your child beginning school, you can build up positive images and ideas that will help the transition to be a smooth one. Visit the school and discuss what will be expected of them.



When the first day arrives, some children may be overwhelmed and teary; this is quite natural. Others will maintain a confident, resilient demeanour. The Prep teacher will assess the situation and take appropriate steps to make the transition as easy as possible for you and your child.

It is important to remember that your child may be extremely tired in the first few weeks. They may even decide that they no longer need to attend school. Ensure that your child has "down time" after school and an appropriate bedtime. This will be beneficial to their development, learning and behaviour.

Establish close links with your school community and your child's teacher. Children respond most positively when they see their parents participating in school activities and showing a genuine interest in their daily activities.



1. **Read to Your Child Every Day.**

It greatly improves their literacy, vocabulary, concentration, and imagination. Children who are regularly read aloud to become better readers and achieve better results.

2. **Follow a Basic Routine.**

Children thrive in environments that are consistent. Having predictable morning and night routines, with a good night’s sleep and healthy meals, improves behaviour and concentration.

3. **Encourage Independence.**

Give your child age-appropriate jobs, doing things for themselves (e.g. tidy room, get dressed), for the family (e.g. refill toilet rolls, set table), and to prepare them for school (e.g. holding a pencil, colouring, using scissors).

4. **Listen to Each Other.**

Listen when your child is telling you things, so they know they can always come to you. An encourage your child to listen, children cannot be taught anything until they can listen.

5. **Talk About Everything.**

This is how children come to understand and make sense of the world. By simply talking to your child, you are teaching them general knowledge, vocabulary, and correct pronunciation.

6. **Check Out Developmental Milestones.**

Use them as a general guide to see what the average child should be doing physically, intellectually and socially. All children develop at different rates, but it is better to have concerns checked, than ‘wait and see’.

7. **Practise Appropriate Social Skills.**

It is important that your child has time to play with others, as through play they learn many important skills; skills such as sharing, turn taking, manners and problem solving.

8. **How to Deal with Emotions.**

It’s okay to have negative feelings (e.g. sad, angry,worried), but we need to teach children appropriate ways to calm down, such as deep breaths or walking away..

9. **Have Rules and Consequences.**

Make sure everyone knows the rules, why we have them, and what happens when they are ignored. Follow through with consequences, it’s more about the certainty, rather than the severity.

10. **Be a Positive Role Model.**

Be careful what you do and say in front of your child unless you mean it and/or want it repeated. You are their first and most important teacher, so teach them well.

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PREP WEEK 1

To assist your child’s transition into full time schooling, we will be conducting a staggered start into Prep. This will enable teachers to establish routines and expectations in a smaller group setting. Half of the class will commence on Wednesday, 27 January 2027. The other half will commence on Thursday, 28 January; with the whole class coming together on the Friday, 29 January. We will notify you of your child’s commencement date and class teacher via an introductory letter at the end of the year.

ENJOY !

Share your child's transition experience with them. Encourage them to draw pictures about their time in their new classroom and perhaps ring relatives 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 until they are back at school for their first day next year.

A-Z Guide to Starting School

Here you will find an A-Z of information that will be helpful to you as a parent of a student in Prep at St Joseph's School, Atherton. More information about policy, procedure and events is available on the St Joseph's Atherton website (http://www.stjoeys.qld.edu.au) and Parent Portal.

Accidents / Sudden Illness

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

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

Attendance

Prep year is compulsory and it is expected that children will attend school regularly. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children attend school every day unless you have a reasonable excuse, such as illness. Shopping trips, social occasions and family holidays are not considered reasonable grounds under the Education Act for school absences. Parents are strongly encouraged to book family holidays during school vacation periods. Please advise the School Office staff if your child will be absent for any reason. You will receive an automated text message from the school seeking notification if your child is absent.

If you require an Early Departure, please contact the office to arrange this. **If your child has a Late Arrival or Early Departure, they need to be signed in and out from the School Office by their parent.**

Bags

In order to encourage the development of independence, your child will be expected to carry his/her own bag to and from the classroom. It is important for children to develop responsibility for their belongings and the independence to be able to carry their bag and place it in the correct place in the bag rack.

You are asked to support us in helping your child in this area by refraining from carrying school bags for them and to also minimise any heavy 'extras' that are put into your child's bag.

Birthdays

On this special occasion you may like to send along cupcakes or cake, etc. to share. 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 teacher. 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 that we can keep in the freezer or cupboard.

Books and Stationery

At St Joseph's School most Prep resources are provided by the school. The cost of your books and stationery will be included in your Prep levy with only a small number of items to be purchased by parents. In addition a Legionnaire Hat and Library Bag are provided and included in the Prep levy.



Car Park and Crossing

Our number one priority in the drop-off and pick-up areas is the safety of our students. It is vital that you model these safe practices with your children of all ages.

1. When parking your car, you must ensure that you park in the designated parking areas, not in the 'drop-off' or 'bus zones'

2. When walking your child from the car you must walk along the footpath, and only cross the road at the designated crossings

3. Please ensure your child enters and alights from the vehicle from the kerbside. If they need to enter or exit the vehicle from the roadside, they should be supervised and escorted by their parent

Between 8:00–9:00am and 2:50–3:20pm there are crossing guards on duty at the Alice St crossing to ensure the safe crossing of students and families. Please ensure that you follow any direction given by the crossing guards either as a pedestrian or as a motorist.

Drop-off Zone

A Drop-off Zone is designated in the lane closest to the footpath in front of the school's front office. This is a **kiss and drop zone only**. This allows parents to drop-off/pick-up students without the need to park and leave the car. The Drop-Off Zone is a matter of traffic law and is enforceable. The times when the Drop-Off Zone is in effect are on school days, 8:00-9:00am and 2:30-3:30pm. We strongly encourage parents to use the Alice St entrance for drop off and pick up as this is more easily accessible and has a supervised crossing.

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, thus affecting their behaviour. We would appreciate the sharing of this information as it may help in understanding any changes in behaviour.

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Your child's teacher's email address is available for you to use as a convenient form of communication; it is a vital tool in helping to maintain regular contact. If you need to make an appointment to request a meeting or to inform the class teacher that your child has been unwell, please email them and allow time for a response. The school day is a very busy one and the teachers are not able to send responses immediately, however they will strive to do so in a timely manner.

Paper copies of newsletters are not printed, so it is essential that you check your email and read the school newsletter regularly for important information. The St Joseph's School website and the MyCE App also provide extensive information regarding policy, procedures and calendar events. Please ensure that you use these as the first source of information.

Curriculum Planning

Teachers of Prep follow the Australian Curriculum and the Brisbane Catholic Education Religious Education curriculum.

Events and major activities are planned together to ensure that students in each Prep class can share in these experiences together.

Goodbye Routine



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

Talk to your child about what this goodbye routine is and establish an understanding that once it has been done it is time for them to begin their day and for you to leave to continue with yours. 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 okay. Remember the power of language - rather than telling your child that you are really going to miss them, tell them that you can't wait to hear all about their day.

Try to organise some play dates before school begins to enable your child to begin to establish independence and confidence being away from you.

Handwriting

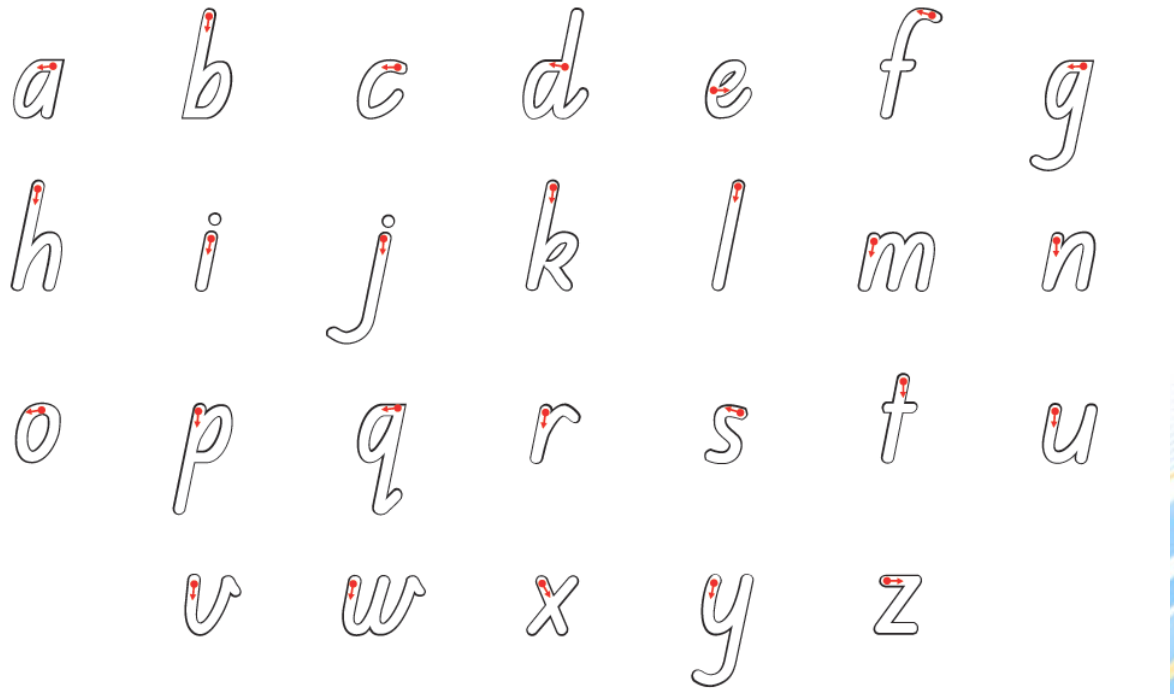
Correct letter formation is an essential skill to be taught when children are learning how to write. Incorrect letter formation and pencil grip can lead to difficulties with writing and hand discomfort in later years. On the next page is an example of the Queensland Beginners Script that your child will be taught at school. By following this letter formation when doing writing activities at home, you will help your child to consolidate the learning that is occurring at school and help them to correctly establish an essential life skill. A larger copy of this can be obtained from your child's teacher.



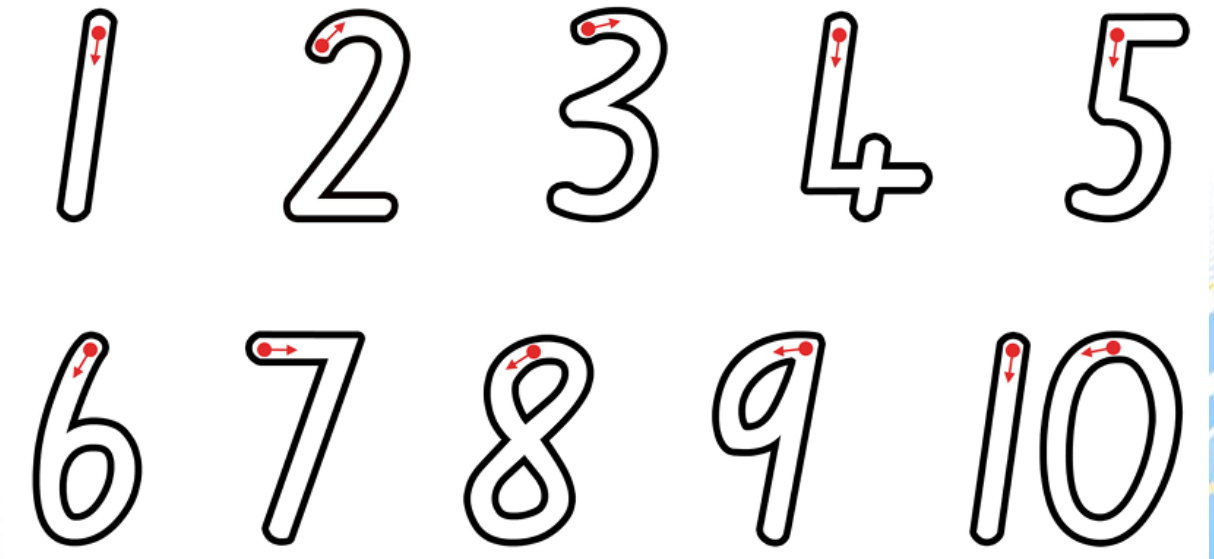
Queensland Script

- Apart from little 'e' all letters start at the TOP!
- **Only** the first letter of a proper noun or the first word in a sentence is a capital Please discourage your child from writing all in capitals – the letters can be easier to write, however it can be a difficult habit to change if not addressed early.

Letter and Number Formation




A B C D E F G H
I J K L M N O P
Q R S T U V W
X Y Z


1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10

Hats

St Joseph's is a Sun Safe School. Children must wear their school hat at all times when outside. A legionnaire hat distinguishes Prep students in the school. The hat will provided in the Prep Levy and your child's name will be written onto the hat.

Head Lice

Catching head lice is unfortunately one of the pesky realities of childhood, particularly growing up in Queensland. Please check your child's hair regularly and treat if you find anything. Please note that follow-up treatment is required after initial treatment to eradicate headlice. If you do find head lice, please let your child's teacher know so that other parents can be informed to also check and treat their children's hair. This will of course be done discreetly and confidentially.

Health and Hygiene

1. The importance of a **regular bedtime** and a good night's sleep cannot be over emphasised. Plan a daily routine so that your child gets ample rest, without an afternoon sleep. A much earlier bedtime, 7:00pm, is often needed during the first year of school.

2. A **nutritious breakfast** eaten unhurriedly in a relaxed atmosphere makes for a good start to the day. Help your child to acquire the habit of being early to school, but not prior to 8:30am. A nutritious recess snack, lunch and a piece of fruit for fruit break helps children through the day.

3. Encourage your child to develop general **pride in their appearance** and especially in their cleanliness. This is extremely important. Children who are not clean might develop social problems as a consequence that can be avoided if they are taught to take care of personal hygiene and cleanliness.

4. Have your child develop the habit of carrying a **handkerchief or tissue**. For health reasons, it is important that parents remind children when noses need blowing and show them the correct use of a handkerchief/tissue.

5. If you have any doubts at all about your child's **eyesight or hearing**, make an appointment for an assessment by an optometrist, child health nurse or doctor as soon as possible. Parents are encouraged to have their child's hearing and eyesight checked before starting Prep.

6. Immunisation boosters for common childhood illnesses should have been received in the pre-school year. It is important to have a record, throughout school life, of the date of your child's last tetanus injection.

7. Continue your teaching of **basic safety habits**. Don't overlook the dangerous practice many young children have of putting "foreign bodies" in their mouths, nostrils and ears.

8. In accordance with Health Department regulations, children with infectious diseases must NOT come to school for certain specified times.

In cases of minor ailments, parents may use their own judgement about attendance. Children who become sick at school during the day will be allowed to rest quietly in sick bay while parents are notified by telephone. In the interests of limiting the spread of disease, please keep your children home if they are obviously unwell and they can be cared for in a more comfortable and comforting environment.

iPads and Laptops/Chromebooks

Your child will be learning through many different contexts during their time at school; Chromebooks and iPads will be used as a tool in teaching, learning and sharing devices in some of those contexts.

We promote cybersafety and responsible digital citizenship in school and strongly urge parents to educate themselves and monitor children's digital usage. There are also many online websites with valuable tips for parents.

Library

We are very fortunate to have access to a wonderful library here at S Joseph's, and our students visit the library to borrow books every week. Parents reading to and with their children is an important time for bonding with your children and encouraging a love of reading.

Lunch Boxes

Lunchtime is a big event at school. To encourage safe and healthy habits, we ensure that all children sit to eat their food; this provides a nice environment to be able to enjoy their food and the company of their classmates.

Little fingers are still learning how to open packets and wrapping; please ensure that you do not send tins or anything else that might be dangerous or difficult to open.

As we do not have heating or refrigeration available for lunches, please ensure that your child's food does not require heating, and also that the lunch is packed with a freezer block to keep it cool and fresh.

At school your child will be responsible for managing their food throughout the day. Most children are used to a parent or carer providing them with particular foods at particular meal times. To suddenly be in charge of a lunch box full of food may seem daunting or exciting to little ones, and the temptation to eat it all at once can be very strong! Your child's teacher will help your child to identify which foods are for each break, however you could 'practise' using a lunch box at home in this time before school begins. With your child, choose foods for three breaks during the day – Fruit Break (fresh fruit or vegetables), Sandwich Break (sandwiches/main meal) and Snack Break (snacks).

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 his/her own food packages. It is helpful to make a little scissor-cut in food items such as muesli bar wrappers and other prepackaged foods to assist your child to break open the plastic packets. Also encourage your child to approach a familiar adult to ask for help to open food when they are unable. Once school begins, encourage your child to put left-over food back into their lunch box so that you know what they have eaten for the day.

What You Can Pack for Lunch



We encourage a range of healthy eating choices, minimising prepackaged snack foods.

Some lunch box ideas:

- ✓ Fresh or tinned fruit. Dried fruit is sticky and high in sugar, so only offer these occasionally or as part of a meal
- ✓ Try vegetable sticks with dips or a small container with mixed vegetables such as cherry tomatoes, and snow peas
- ✓ Include a variety of breads and fillings. Try bread rolls, flat bread, focaccia, crispbread, rice or corn cakes. Try fillings such as vegemite, cheese, tuna, egg, cold lean meats, grated carrot, avocado and lettuce
- ✓ Include a small drink of water or milk (freeze overnight) wrapped in a cloth in the lunchbox.
- ✓ Fruit yoghurts should stay cool in an insulated lunchbox.
- ✓ Cheese and grainy biscuits – either prepackaged or your own homemade version.
- ✓ Fruit muffins and cakes are a great way to include more fruit and vegetables. Try sultana, carrot, zucchini, banana or pumpkin.

St Joseph's is a *NUT AWARE* school. Please do not include nuts or nut spreads in your child's lunch.

Medication

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

1. The medical practitioner who has treated your child must provide written authorisation and information for administering the medication prescribed.
2. The parent or legal guardian must request in writing for school staff to administer prescription medications.
3. The medication must be in a container labelled by a pharmacist showing the name of the drug, the 'use by' date, the name of the child's medical practitioner and the child, the dosage and the frequency of administration.
4. In the case where it is necessary for the child to keep medication in their possession (e.g. asthma puffers) 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 have 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 Authority" 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 time to meet with them.
During the year you will also have opportunities for formal Parent/Teacher interviews to discuss your child's progress in Term 1 and Term 3.

MyCE

MyCE is an app that allows easy and convenient access to student and school information from your phone. The app is easily downloaded from the App Store or Google Play. Some of the features include:
MyStudents: Access key information relating to your students including parent slips, report cards and more
MySchools: Access essential and important information about the school including newsletter, term dates, documents and Flexischools.
Log an Absence: With a few simple clicks, notify the school of your student/s upcoming absence.
Calendar: Stay current with all the key dates in the school's calendar.

The app has all the features of the parent portal conveniently accessed using your mobile device.

Parent Helpers

Parents are vital assets to any class and parent helpers can contribute so much to the life of the classroom. If you are interested in assisting in your child's class, or anywhere in the school, it is a prerequisite that you **complete the Parent Volunteer Training course** that is provided throughout the year by the school; please check the school newsletter for advertised dates of training courses during the year.

Class teachers will advise session times in which parent helpers would be of most benefit to the class.

Pick Up and Drop Off

The routine for Prep students is as follows:

- **Before School**
  - You may leave your Prep child in the Junior Eating Undercover Area if you arrive before 8:20am and need to leave. **Please note that there will be no teacher on duty until 8:20am.** At 8:35am the first bell rings, and students are welcomed into the classroom to prepare for the day ahead and to participate in quiet activities before the second bell at 8.40am to signal the start of the learning day.
  - The time before school is used as conversation time for the students and provides an opportunity for them to chat with their friends and begin to settle for the start of their school day.
  - We do encourage that students are not late for school as this can be disruptive to the class and may cause embarrassment for your child.
- **After School**
  - Prep students are to be collected by family members from the classroom. If someone unfamiliar to the class teacher has been arranged to pick your child up on an occasion, please notify the teacher of this arrangement.
  - Try to be on time to collect your child from their classroom at the end of the school day, as children often experience fear and may become quite upset if they are not collected on time or are the last to leave. A quick phone call to the office, if you are delayed, will alleviate any apprehension.
  - Students who catch the bus will initially be escorted up to the Bus Stop where they will be supervised by the teacher on duty. If, occasionally, there is a change to the bus routine, please notify the School Office so that the bus roll can be adjusted and the teacher on duty is not looking for a missing child.

Readers

Home Readers are sent home from Term 1. The readers that are sent home will strictly follow are Phonological Awareness and Phonics programs. The home readers have been printed with the intention for you to keep and create your own home library to read together. Your child will receive a Home Reading Folder, which is to be returned each Monday, as it will be filled with more readers for you to practise together. Inside the cover of each reader, you will find a set of instructions for how to read and use the book with your child.

Responsible Behaviour

At St Joseph's School we aim to foster positive behaviour and to encourage responsibility through restorative justice.
Students are taught and supported to be responsible for their choices. They are positively acknowledged for demonstrating the St Joseph's values, such as: Being Responsible, Being Respectful, Being Your Own Person, Being Persistent and Being Prepared.
If a pattern of poor behaviour choices emerges, parents will be asked to attend a meeting with the class teacher to plan for the child's success in this area. Parent input is highly valued in situations where the child requires assistance to make consistently good choices.

School Support Services

Students at St Joseph's School are supported by a range of specialist visiting staff including a speech pathologist, occupational therapist and psychologist. Through parent and teacher consultation, there is a referral process for students to access these services.

We also have a school counsellor who works within our school setting three days a week. The school counsellor forms a part of the Diverse Learners Team along with the Learning Support Co-ordinator, APRE and Principal. Through referrals to this team, student support plans are developed and reviewed.

School Uniform - flexischools.com.au/parents

Please refer to the St Joseph's uniform policy regarding the uniform requirements for our students. If your child is unable to wear a particular item on a school day, please notify your child's class teacher. If your child is out of uniform and your child's class teacher has not received information as to why, a uniform notification card will be sent home for you to read, sign and return.

School uniforms are available from the school. Our Library Aide, Mrs Lee, is the uniform convenor and is available during the week before school commences for parents to purchase uniforms. She is also available before school during the year. Times will be advertised in the school newsletter. Uniforms may also be ordered online using our Flexischools ordering system. A coloured sports uniform was introduced in 2018. Orders are taken for these annually. Mrs Lee will have order forms available at the Prep Information Session to order for next year.

Velcro fastenings on shoes are not only quick and easy, but also boost children's confidence as they are able to dress themselves. Tying shoelaces 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 shoelaces at home, but keep in mind that Velcro fastenings are the most appropriate choice for school shoes at this stage.

Items of clothing and accessories can go missing easily, so we recommend that you regularly check the name labels on your child's items to ensure that they are easy to read and that your child has not accidentally collected someone else's belongings. Lost property is held within the Prep Classroom, so please call in and have a look if your child has lost something.

Spare Clothing

We ask that you keep a spare set of underwear and shorts (clearly labeled) in your child's bag in case it is needed.

We endeavour to ensure that appropriate cover is used for particularly messy activities, however sometimes accidents do happen.

Specialist Lessons

In Prep, the students have lessons with a specialist teacher for the following subject areas:

- The Arts (Music, Drama, Dance and Visual Arts), and
- STEM (Science Technology Engineering, Media)
- Physical Education

Mrs Garozzo is our specialist STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Media) teacher and she will teach your child for 2 hours each week. This enables the class teachers release time – a time for planning, preparation and marking of student work.

The children will be engaged in a specialist PE lesson 1 hour per fortnight. This release time facilitates teachers participation in Professional Learning Team meetings, enabling planning of targetted learning activities to support the individual needs of students.

Information about the timetable for these lessons will be available at the start of the year.

Toys at School

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.

Tuckshop - flexischools.com.au/parents

Tuckshop is available for lunch orders three days a week (Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) at First Break (called Sandwich Break in Prep). We offer online ordering using Flexischools app, alternatively please write your child's name, class and tuckshop order on their tuckshop bag or a brown paper lunch bag to ensure it is sent back to the correct class. Please include the correct money for the order is enclosed in the bag. An updated menu will be provided at the beginning of each year.

Your child will still require fruit for fruit break and a snack for Second Break in the afternoon.

Wet Weather

Raincoats, rather than umbrellas are the best protection from wet weather conditions for students in Prep, both in terms of remaining as dry as possible, and for safety purposes.



What your child needs for Prep Each Day

1. Food for each day -
   - Fruit Break: a **small** piece of fruit or cut up vegetables which is placed in to a separate container
   - Sandwich Break: a healthy sandwich or something else suitable for the main meal.
   - Snack Break: two or three food choices e.g. muesli bar, yogurt, biscuits, muffin etc.
   - A labeled drink bottle, for water

2. Lace-up shoes are impractical at this age. Black **velcro** leather school shoes are much easier for Prep children to manage.
3. All other items including your child's bag, drink bottle, lunch box, reading folder and hat. These must be clearly labelled with your child's name.

Zones of Regulation

At St Joseph's we have introduced the Zones of Regulation across the school. Zones of Regulation is a curriculum used to teach students how to regulate their emotions. You may be hearing conversations or comments about the Zones at home so we would like to take this opportunity to share with you some basic information about the Zones.

Self-regulation is something everyone continually works on, whether we are aware of it or not. We all encounter difficult situations that test our limits from time to time. If we are able to recognise when we are becoming less regulated, we are able to do something about it to feel better and get ourselves to a better place. This comes naturally for some, but for others it is a skill that needs to be taught and practised. This is the goal of The Zones of Regulation (or Zones for short).

We provide the following information so that parents can use the same language at home.



Parents and Teachers



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.

