

Beginning school –Prep Transition

Prep Curriculum

Religious Education

In prep, we use the '*To Know, Worship and Love*' text produced by the Catholic Education Office. We work in themes that cover topics involving Awareness of Self, Awareness of Others and a Growing Awareness of Our Church Community and the Wider World. We endeavour to lead the children to see how special they are and how much God loves them. A strong emphasis is placed on developing a knowledge of, and relationship with God our Father and Jesus. The prep children are also taken to mass approximately once every term, sometimes with their 'big friends' and sometimes as a grade. At this stage, prayers are mainly informal and spontaneous. The Our Father and Sign of the Cross are introduced. eg. morning prayer, prayer before meals.

English

Language consists of four interrelated areas:

Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

These areas operate to varying degrees simultaneously and arise out of the context of the children's experiences. Language IMMERSION plays an extremely important part in language development. If a child is interested he/she will become involved through listening and speaking. Stimulation is provided through themes, excursions, visits to the school by specialists, films, pictures, displays, music, drama, play, pets, art and craft, cooking, books, poems and MANY stories.

CLaSS – Children's Literacy Success Strategy

St. Christopher's school has been part of CLaSS for the past five years. This is a collaborative initiative between the Catholic Education Office and Melbourne University. This strategy strives to raise the levels of literacy attainment in young people in the early years of schooling. CLaSS focuses on students in years Prep, one and two. We have been very pleased with the effect of this strategy over the past few years. Results indicate a significant improvement in literacy in the junior classes.

Reading:

Children should read as often as possible and it should be an enjoyable experience. Remember:

CHILDREN LEARN TO READ BY READING.

At school, your child will often choose the books he/she wishes to take home. This creates interest for your child. At first, the books your child chooses should be read to him/her. Later, as your child becomes more confident, you should allow him/her to attempt to read the books.

It is essential that all book covers are signed and returned to school the next day, after your child has read his/her book.

Writing

Writing is a developmental process. The children develop through stages in their attempts to write. eg. drawings, scribble, writing strings of letters, words, then sentences. Children are encouraged to write every day at school.

Oral Language (speaking and listening)

Children are given opportunities to explore ideas through speech so that they may build up their experiences and language.

Spelling

Children are given a variety of activities to introduce them to letter - sound relationships.

Handwriting

Children are taught to use SMALL (Lower Case) LETTERS ONLY, unless capital letters are required. eg. at the beginning of someone's name, at the beginning of a sentence.

Children are taught the starting and finishing points of each letter.

Maths:

At St. Christopher's, we base our Prep-Yr 6 Mathematics program on the Curriculum and Standards Framework. At the prep level the main aim of Maths is to develop each child's interest and understanding of number by providing a wide range of practical experiences.

Children are taught to recognise, write numerals and count to at least ten. Children are given experiences including counting, grouping, sequencing, classifying and measuring activities, which help the development of many concepts. Maths language is also developed through these experiences. eg. more than/less than, how many, big/bigger, etc.....

Later in the year, the children are introduced to addition and subtraction. A wide variety of resources are used to teach and reinforce all Maths topics.

Library:

Children attend a formal library lesson once a week. They are taught library skills and may borrow a library book each week. Children are expected to bring their library bag on the day of the lesson.

If possible you may wish to join your Municipal library and encourage your child to borrow and read books.

General Studies:

General Studies includes Studies of Society and Environment, Science and Health. This area is taught according to themes and is closely linked to religious education and Language. For each topic the children explore a focus question and are taught specific skills. eg. 'The Beach': Why do we go to the beach?

- to play on the sand, to swim, to look at rock pools, to go sailing, to go fishing.

Themes:

Themes are units of work based on a particular topic, eg. The Beach, Teddy Bears or Multiculturalism. During a particular theme, encourage your child to bring appropriate books, pictures, objects, etc...to share with their peers at school.

Excursions:

All excursions are planned according to the Language and General Studies themes. It is expected that all children attend excursions.

Art/Craft:

Art/Craft activities are done each week in prep. Children are given the chance to use their own creativity and imagination through a variety of activities. The children are taught particular manipulative skills with a number of materials.

Physical Education:

Physical Education is an essential part of the physical development of your child. It includes the teaching of fine and gross motor skills. This improves your child's co-ordination as well as enhancing your child's ability to participate more fully in other areas of the curriculum.

The sports uniform consists of :

Runners, white socks, black shorts/skirt, team coloured school polo shirt, tracksuit.

Physical Education is a compulsory part of the curriculum.

Perceptual Motor Program: (P.M.P.)

P.M.P. is a program, which aims to teach the child perceptions and understandings of self and the world through movement and motor experiences.

Children are divided into small groups and they spend approximately five minutes on four different activities. These activities involve jumping, skipping, balancing, ball handling, etc.

Swimming:

Swimming plays an important part in the physical development of your child. Water familiarisation skills and safety procedures are taught from prep to year 6. Children who are fearful or hesitant to enter the water will be made to feel at home by the qualified swimming teachers at the Syndal Swim Centre.

Cross-Aged Tutoring Program:

In prep, your child will participate in the Cross-Aged Tutoring Program with the year five and six children. Every prep child has a 'special friend' or 'big friend'. The preps and their 'big friends' do various activities together throughout the year such as language and art/craft activities. They also attend school masses together. This program can be very beneficial in helping your child to settle in at school. eg. often when a prep child is having difficulties in the playground it is their 'big friend' who helps them resolve the situation.

Music:

In Prep, the children are exposed to many types of music through singing, drama, movement and the playing of instruments.

Languages Other Than English (L.O.T.E.):

Italian

All prep children participate in Italian lessons. They learn this language through Italian stories, playing games, singing Italian songs and many other activities. The children also learn about the Italian culture.

Mandarin Chinese

Those children with an Asian background are given the opportunity to participate in the Mother Tongue Maintenance Program.

At year 4 the children can choose to continue with Italian (L.O.T.E.) or commence Chinese (L.O.T.E.) classes.

Victorian Infant Cursive Script

Parental Assistance:

We are most grateful to parents who can help with:

- Walking children to and from swimming
- CLaSS
- Excursions
- Reading with the children
- Working bees

We also enjoy parents being involved in other ways, such as:

- telling the children about your occupation
- demonstrating to the children special skills you may have
- bringing the 'new baby' to school

Preparing for School:

Social and Emotional Development

Confidence

Confident children see themselves as being successful. Encouragement to tackle tasks of gradually increasing difficulty and praise their attempts and successes will increase your child's confidence. To further develop your child's confidence, display his/her work at home.

Discipline

It is important at all times to be consistent with discipline. Never threaten your child with a punishment you do not intend to carry out, or know you cannot carry out.

** It is important to try and be more positive than negative about your child's behaviour.*

Whenever your child does something positive, no matter how small it may seem, praise him/her for his/her efforts. Your child will realise that he/she gains positive attention from you when he/she does something 'good', rather than only gaining negative attention for doing something 'bad'.

Emotional Development

At school, your child will have to cope with his/her feelings in a variety of situations. eg. When his/her parents leave them, when he/she finds a task difficult, when he/she is not getting attention. Undue unhappiness can be avoided if you plan experiences to prepare your child for school.

Independence

School provides a marvellous range of activities for children. Those who can choose an activity and occupy themselves will attempt more and probably learn more. Every time you allow your child to tackle something for himself/herself, you are encouraging the growth of independence.

Therefore, it is a good idea for your child to:

- pack and carry his/her own bag to and from school
- be responsible for putting his/her lunch order, library book and book cover into the appropriate boxes

Listening

At school, your child will work or play in groups. This means that he/she will need to take turns, learn how to share materials and co-operate with others. Listening to what other children have to say and realising that he/she is not the only one seeking help, are 'things' your child will be required to do to be accepted by his/her peers.

If your child can:

- listen to the teacher and others
- do what is asked of him/her
- make his/her needs and requests known, he/she will be learn more easily and be happier at school.

Persistence

Small children can give up easily when things seem to be too hard. If you help your child with the difficulty but then allow him/her to complete the task, your child will come to see the value of persistence and trying his/her best.

Security

A child, who knows he/she is loved and accepted at home, will cope better with the new school environment. Security is also developed when parents set limits on the child's behaviour. The reasons why these limits are made should be explained and it is important that the limits are kept.

eg. "Bed time is 7.00pm"

"No lollies before dinner"

"No T.V. on a sunny day"

Separation

When parents tell a child they are going to leave but will be back and keep their promise, the child learns to accept separation. Parents ease the parting by being cheerful and encouraging about the things their child will do at school.

Intellectual Development

Whenever children are actively involved in something, they are learning through their senses. When parents talk to them about what they see, hear, touch, taste, smell, do, children are then able to verbalise their experiences. Therefore, it is important to talk to your child at every opportunity, explaining what is happening around him/her.

Language Development

Language is developed when children are given the opportunity to do a variety of activities such as:

- build with blocks and use construction kits
- play imaginatively
- ride on trams, trains or buses
- visit the country, the beach or the zoo
- look at pictures, learn nursery rhymes and listen to stories
- set the table
- play with sand and water etc....

Tell your child about what is going on around him/her.

Eg: "Auntie Mary is my sister."

"Grandma is my mum."

"Look at that lovely red rose."

Try to give your child interesting experiences and discuss them, encouraging him/her to speak in sentences.

When parents talk to their children, tell them things and answer their questions, they are giving their children knowledge, words to express that knowledge and are encouraging their children to think and reason.

Pre-Reading Skills

Here are some ways you can help prepare your child for reading:

- talk to him/her as often as possible so he/she can learn many words
- draw your child's attention to signs, advertisements, writing on packets, etc.. and tell your child what is written on them.
- Read to your child every day (in any language your child understands). Ask grandparents, brothers and sisters to do the same.

When children are ready to, they learn many things such as:

- print has meaning
- you 'read' the print, not the pictures
- you start at the top of the page and read from left to right
- reading is useful and pleasurable

Pre-Mathematics Skills

Here are some ways you can help your child develop the necessary skills for mathematics:

- When your child is helping with setting the table, putting away toys, doing up buttons, etc... encourage him/her to count the objects they are using.
- Talk about the concept of time eg. "How many sleeps until your birthday?" "What time does Playschool begin?"
- When your child is building with blocks, ask questions such as: "Can you make it bigger?" "Can you find some blue blocks?" "Can you make the tower as tall as the coffee table?"
- When your child is playing with water, sand, play-dough, etc...encourage him/her to see how much will fit into different size containers.

Physical Development

Basic Movement

At school, your child will frequently use the skills of walking, running, jumping, hopping and skipping. These skills can be developed and refined by your child having the opportunity to play freely outdoors.

Dressing

As jumpers and shoes are often removed during a school day and the children attend swimming lessons, you should encourage your child to fully dress himself/herself at home. However, many prep children find it difficult to tie shoelaces. Buckled shoes alleviate this problem for a while, but perseverance in teaching your child to tie his/her laces will achieve great results and give immense satisfaction.

Eye-Hand Co-ordination

Eye-hand co-ordination is the ability to direct the hand with the eye. It is very important for such things as writing, cutting, drawing and ball games. It is developed through activities such as drawing, pouring water, building with the blocks, throwing, catching and hitting a ball – so a game of cricket, football or netball in the backyard is very valuable for your child.

Health

Children need to be well rested and healthy to enjoy school. A regular bedtime routine is needed. Even during daylight saving a prep child should be in bed between 7.00pm and 7.30pm.

Use of Toilets

Your child will need to be able to:

- go to the toilet by themselves and undo and do up any buttons or zips.
- flush the toilet
- wash his/her hands

* The prep teacher programs regular toilet visits during the first weeks of school. However, ‘accidents’ occasionally happen.

Spare clothing is kept at school, but please consider sending spare underclothes in you child’s school bag for any emergencies.

Beginning School

You can make commencing school a happy experience for **your child by doing the following:**

- Teach him/her to be independent with his/her own belongings and toys. Your child should be able to recognise his/her own coat, jumper etc.
- * **ALL CLOTHING AND BELONGINGS/STATIONARY MUST BE CLEARLY NAMED.**
- Teach simple road safety rules such as crossing the road and wearing seat belts in cars.
- Visit the school so that your child can become familiar with the grounds and know where to meet you after school.
- Plan a daily routine so that your child gets ample rest without having an afternoon sleep
- Allow your child to get to bed at an earlier time than usual when they begin school
- Ensure that your child is able to manage his/her own clothing and use the toilet without assistance
- Encourage your child to use the **correct pencil grip**
- Give your child simple tasks to do and make sure that they are completed
- Make a point of speaking to your child and encouraging them to sit quietly and listen
- Begin teaching your child how to tie his/her shoelaces
- Choose a school bag that is a suitable size for your child and one that is carried on the back with shoulder straps
- Familiarise your child with the swimming pool at the Syndal Swim Centre (corner Blackburn and High Street Roads) as your child will be attending swimming lessons there during the year).