



Respect

Honesty

Learning Teamwork



# St. Joseph's School Sorrento

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# Prep Handbook 2023



Dear families

On behalf of our staff and students, I warmly welcome you as prospective and enrolled families to St. Joseph's School. We trust the experiences ahead will be positive and rewarding.

We recognise that parents are the primary educators of their children and welcome their involvement and participation in the educational programs at school.

At St. Joseph's we go above and beyond to ensure each student:

- is known and nurtured.
- Has a personalised learning program designed for their individual learning needs.
- Utilises well resourced, engaging and contemporary learning spaces.

We ask that you read this booklet and our school handbook, and keep them as a reference, so that you are familiar with the operations of our school and are able to support and encourage us in the education of your child. Any changes to policy or procedures outlined in these handbooks, will be advised through the school newsletter.

Yours sincerely,

Monica O'Shannassy  
(Principal)



Our School Values of

**RESPECT, HONESTY, TEAM WORK AND LEARNING**

build a culture of learning together and opportunity for all.



## **SCHOOL DIRECTORY**

Principal: Mrs. Monica O'Shannassy

Deputy Principal: Mrs. Megan Barber

Secretary: Mrs. Lucy O'Brien

Enrolment Coordinator: Mrs. Teresa Laird

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Office Hours: 8.30am – 4:00pm

# **CONTENTS**

## **ST. JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Welcome	page 2
School Directory	page 3
Contents	page 4

## **PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR SCHOOL**

Promoting Independence	page 5
Communication and Language	page 5
Mathematical Development	page 6
Hand-Eye Co-ordination	page 56
Social Aspects	page 7
Emotional Aspects	page 7 & 8
Intellectual Aspects	page 9

## **GENERAL INFORMATION**

When can I speak to the teacher	page 10
Parent/School Partnerships	page 10
Carpark—School Drop off and pick up	page 10
The Transition Process / buddies	page 11
Beginning School	page 12

## **FIRST TERM 2020**

The First Day	page 13
Saying Goodbye	page 13
Things to bring	page 13
School Hours	page 13
Specialist Classes	page 13
First week	page 14
Second, Third and Fourth Weeks	page 14
The Remainder of Term 1	page 14
Term Dates and Public Holidays	page 15

# Preparing Your Child for School

## PROMOTING INDEPENDENCE

Your child will really benefit from being as independent as possible when they start school, of course school staff will always be on hand to help, but children feel a sense of achievement when they can accomplish things by themselves. Examples include being able to dress themselves independently, learning to tie shoelaces or opening lunch containers.



Another important part of being independent at school is being able to use the toilet independently, including washing and drying hands. It will also be helpful if they are able to blow their nose on a tissue and put it in the bin.

Having lunch independently may also be new to your child. Let them practise opening packets and containers on their own. Encourage them to help choose and make their own lunch.

## COMMUNICATION and LANGUAGE

Many parents worry if their child will be able to tell the teacher if they need something or if they will make friends. Good communication skills underpin these abilities.

We know that parents can have a huge impact on their child's talking and listening development. Some simple activities to promote language are; story telling, story sharing, simple listening games like "Simon Says" where the instructions become gradually more complex, or asking them to listen to sounds around them.

At school, children will be expected to start extending their vocabulary, so it is a good idea to encourage your child to learn and use new words. You can play games or read stories which introduce new words.

Play games that help your child to understand and use directions, eg. your shorts are on top of the chair, put your bowl in the sink, your toy is behind the couch, etc. You can also model concept words like first, last, next, before and after. And encourage the correct use of past, present and future tense verbs, which typically will not yet be fully developed.

Teachers do not expect children to know their alphabet or be able to write sentences when they start school. A good foundation in sound awareness skills, such as rhyming and identifying what sound a word begins with would be helpful. Sharing songs, poems and books is a really good way to support this.



Encourage your child to develop an interest in books and other forms of text, for example signs, posters, letters, etc. Read with your child and discuss what they liked about the book when they have finished, ask them questions about what happened in the book, tell them what you liked (this encourages them to join in a discussion).



## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Being able to count out loud, to at least twenty, will be of great benefit to a child starting school. Practise counting up to 20 and backwards too. Incidental counting games are a fun way to promote numeracy skills eg, counting the steps as you walk up them, counting letter boxes as you walk along the street, recognising numbers on letter boxes and as a real challenge ask your child to add small numbers together.

Encourage reliable counting by showing your child how to point to items as they count them, or move items away as they count them. This will help your child to understand what numbers mean. Ask them to find the same amount of different items, eg find three spoons, three forks and three knives.

Take your child on a shape hunt to see how many examples of different shapes they can find. Talk about size, ‘can you pass me the biggest box?’ ‘we will need two big plates and three small plates for dinner.’

A number hunt is a fun way to encourage your child to look for and recognise numbers. There are numbers everywhere; play a simple game of I spy, but with numbers instead of items



## **HAND-EYE CO-ORDINATION**

This is the ability to direct the hand with the eye. It is very important for such things as writing, cutting, drawing and ball games.

Skills such as handling books, holding pens and pencils, pouring, cutting and playing ball games will be developed and improved at school. Nevertheless, experience with these types of activities, before commencing school can make things easier.

Encourage children to pour water into containers, stack containers inside each other, draw with pencils, crayons, chalk, build with construction kits, throw and catch balls and hit balls with bats.



## SOCIAL ASPECTS

Parents can help prepare children for school by encouraging them to share toys, take turns during games, help with household chores and by allowing them to mix with other children and adults outside the family. Encourage resilience and perseverance, eg. "I can't do it—YET!!!!"



## SKILLS NEEDED

Children often work or play in groups at school, and this means they will need to take turns, share materials and co-operate with others. They need to listen to what other children have to say and realise that they are not the only ones seeking help and attention.

Children more easily adapt to school life if they can:

- listen to the teachers and others
- follow rules
- make needs and requests known
- take turns

## WHO IS MY CHILD GOING TO PLAY WITH?

You can be assured that your child will have friends on the playground. Parents are often concerned about their children during recess and lunch break.

You can feel confident that your children are well supervised, and that the teachers ensure that no child is left without friends on the playground.



## EMOTIONAL ASPECTS

At school, children will have to cope with their feelings in a variety of situations, e.g., when parents leave them, when they find tasks difficult, when they are not getting attention. (Adults are not as readily available at school as at home). Children need to understand that adults must set limits, be able to interact with other children and adults and deal with conflict between individuals.

## 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 who are cheerful and encouraging about the things the child will do at school ease the parting. Use positive language with your child.

## SELF CONTROL

No one expects small children to control their emotions like adults, but children who have temper tantrums, if they do not get their own way, are often rejected by other children. Self-control is developed at home when:

- \* parents do not give in to temper tantrums.
- \* the child is asked to wait while the parents finish what they are doing or saying.
- \* parents don't give children everything they ask for.

## **CONFIDENCE**

Confident children see themselves as being successful. Encouragement to tackle tasks of gradually increasing difficulty, and praise for the attempt as well as for success, increases the child's confidence. It is also a good idea to display his/her creation or work.

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

In the school, each activity has to be tidied away before another can be started. A sense of responsibility is developed at home when parents encourage children to keep their rooms tidy, put toys away and always finish one task or game before beginning another.

## **INDEPENDENCE**

School provides a marvellous range of activities for children. Those who can choose an activity and occupy themselves will attempt more and as a result learn more. Each time parents allow children to tackle something for themselves they are encouraging the growth of independence.



## **PERSEVERANCE**

Encourage your child to complete tasks. When the task becomes difficult give a little assistance and ask guiding questions to help them see the next step, then let them complete the task. Children come to see the value of keeping on trying; it is okay to make a mistake. Encourage a growth mindset.

## **DISCIPLINE**

- \* Be consistent.
- \* Try to be more positive than negative about your child's behaviour.

## INTELLECTUAL ASPECTS

Children delight in developing knowledge and understanding by seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and doing. Many everyday activities offer important learning for children: playing games, going on outings, building with materials, going shopping, cooking, playing with sand and water, counting, following instructions, listening to and telling stories, reading books and drawing and writing together.

By offering your child a range of rich experiences such as these, talking about what he or she is doing, and answering and asking questions, you are helping your child to develop both language and an understanding of their environment.

The intellectual emphasis during the first years of school is on the development of reading and numeracy skills. There is also a strong emphasis on the development of oral language.

You can assist by:

- Reading to and with your child.
- Discussing pictures and having your child predict what they think the story will be about.
- Help your child develop concepts of more, less, bigger, smaller, how many?



## **WHEN CAN I SPEAK TO THE TEACHER?**

Your child's teacher is very happy for you to speak to her about your child, when she is free to do so. Developing the habit of communication is very important. A whole range of minor issues can be dealt with through an informal word with your child's teacher. However, if you have any particular concern, that may require more lengthy discussion, please make an appointment with the teacher at a mutually convenient time. Before school is not the best time, as your child's teacher will be focussed on settling and greeting all children. You can also send your child's teacher an email if there is something you need to make them aware of.

## **PARENT/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS**

At St. Joseph's, we value the school and the home working closely together. Parent ideas, suggestions and feedback form an important part of this relationship. This feedback is both formal, through surveys, etc, and informal. Informal, can be contacting the Principal, Deputy Principal or teaching staff so they can forward this on. All ideas and suggestions are valued.

### **CAR PARK— SCHOOL DROP OFF and PICK UP**

We ask all parents, who drive their children to school, to use our valet drop off and pick up system.

#### Morning—valet drop off

(8.45-9.00am)

- Enter via the gate nearest to the church
- Do not exceed a 5kph speed limit in the school grounds
- Drive clockwise around the perimeter of the playground—staff will be waiting, at the friendship garden, to assist your child from your car
- Drive out via the gate nearest to the school



Parents who would like to walk their child into school must park off-site .

#### Afternoon—valet pick up (3.20—3.35)

- Enter via the gate nearest to the church
- Do not exceed a 5kph speed limit in the school grounds
- Drive clockwise around the perimeter of the playground—staff will be waiting, at the friendship garden, to assist your child into your car

Parents are not permitted to park on school grounds.

Children who travel to or from school by bus, riding their bike or walking, enter and leave the school grounds via the driveway at the Sorrento Main Street end of the school

We ask parents not to park in the staff parking bays at the front of the school.

#### First days of Prep

We understand that prep children, and their parents, can be a little anxious on their first few days at a new school, we therefore make alternate arrangements to our valet system for the first few weeks. Prep parents will be informed of these arrangements prior to the start of the school year.

## THE TRANSITION PROCESS

The commencement of primary school is an important event in the life of every child.

The school's transition process, in the year prior to the children starting school, includes the following:

- a general information evening is held for the parents;
- teaching staff contact and visit the kindergartens that children are currently attending;
- three transition mornings are organised for the children, for our 2023 Prep students these days will be:

**Wednesday 26th October 2022—9.30am - 10.30am**

**Wednesday 9th November 2022— 9.30am - 10.30am**

**Wednesday 16th November 2022—9.30am - 10.30am**

- One final orientation session, with their 2023 teacher. This coincides with the whole school orientation morning on

**Monday 12th December 2022—10.00am - 11.00am**

**Followed by whole school community picnic at Sorrento Park (optional)**

- meeting their grade 5/6 buddies

### **BUDDIES**

Each prep student is assigned a year five/six “buddy”.

In the early days of school their buddies can be an important emotional contact; someone they can turn to if they are feeling a little overwhelmed, someone who can show them that school isn't a bad place to be. The senior students are always excited to get their Prep buddy and will take them under their wing and look after them in the early days. The senior and prep grades regularly come together, during class time; they will do activities together, share books and stories, etc. The senior students enjoy being with, and helping their younger buddies and the Prep children just enjoy having their buddies around.



## BEGINNING SCHOOL

### BETWEEN NOW AND THE START OF SCHOOL

1. Teach your child to be independent with their own belongings and toys. It will greatly help if they can recognise their name, their own coat and school requisites.
2. Please label ALL clothing items. We strongly advise name tags, as they do not fade. Also clearly label lunch boxes and school bags.
3. Plan a daily routine so that your child gets ample rest, without an afternoon sleep. (A much earlier bed-time is often needed during the first year at school.)
4. Ensure that your child is able to manage clothing and use the toilet without assistance.
5. Establish a pick-up and drop-off plan, check work times, work towards a calm and orderly pace of being up, dressed, fed, organised and ready to leave the house for a timely arrival at school. If this routine is mastered before the first day of school, your child will not need to deal with the stress of a new morning routine.
6. **Food:** Give your child practice in eating a packed lunch at home.
  - \* Be sure your child has a balanced breakfast before coming to school.
  - \* No glass bottles for children's drinks. (WATER ONLY)
  - \* We promote healthy eating
  - \* Show your child what food you have packed each morning and when the food should be eaten: There are four eating times in Prep
    - BRAINFOOD—Fruit or vegetables
    - PLAY LUNCH—anything (maybe even a sweet treat)
    - HEALTHY SNACK—Fruit, vegetables, cheese, yogurt
    - LUNCH—Sandwich, wrap, etc
  - \* Make sure your child can easily open their lunch box and drink container.
  - \* Encourage your child to bring home any food they don't eat

We endeavour to be a 'Nude Food School.' Please help us to reduce the amount of plastic wrap and other items of plastic that we put into our bins. We encourage students to bring their lunch in re-useable containers; not plastic or plastic containers that have to be thrown out. As a sustainable school we recycle and compost.



## FIRST TERM 2023

### THE FIRST DAY

On your child's very first day at school, walk your child to the classroom. Take a photo if you wish, say a cheerful, short good-bye and then allow the teacher to assist the child in the classroom. If you are concerned about your child, please drive away and call the office at your earliest convenience to check on your child's progress. If there is an adjustment period, it is usually very short. The school will not hesitate to contact you if your child is unsettled or distressed.



### SAYING GOODBYE

Short good-byes and a positive, non-worried manner, convey to the child an unspoken message that you know he/she is being left in a safe place you picked out just for them.

Parents set the pace for a child's success at school. A cheerful good-bye from you can help your child feel there is nothing to be concerned about.

### THINGS TO BRING IN

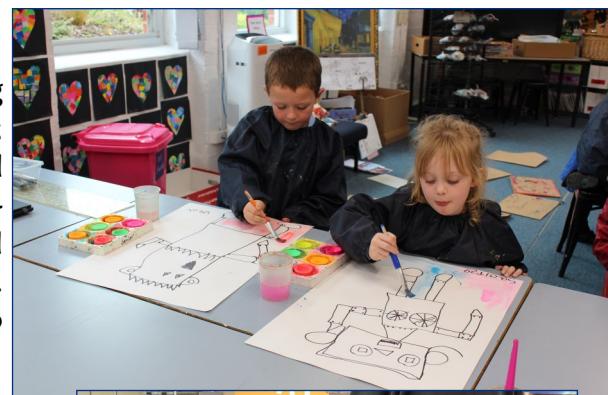
During the first couple of days of school, please bring in all of your child's stationery supplies.

### SCHOOL HOURS

8:45 - 9:00	Valet drop off
9:00 - 11:00	Classes
11:00 - 11:30	Recess
11:30 - 1:30	Classes
1:30 - 2:20	Lunch
2:20 - 3:20	Classes
3:20—3:35	Valet pick up

### SPECIALIST CLASSES

The children will commence specialist classes during the first two weeks of school. These classes include; Physical Education, The Arts, Library, Italian (cultural experience) and STEM. The children will have a second sport day with their classroom teacher. You will be informed as to which day these classes take place. On the days your child has sport, they are asked to wear their sport uniform to school.



Your child will require a communication folder (available from the school). These folders are used to carry notes and take home readers to and from school and to put their library book into.



## **DATES FOR 2023**

**FIRST WEEK** - Monday 30th January—Friday 3rd February (**no school Wednesday 1st Feb**)

- All children start on the same day, Monday 30th January 2023
- Prep children to arrive at 9:00 a.m. and will finish at 1 p.m.
- Only play lunch (little play), a healthy snack (brain food) and water need to be brought to school by prep children this week.
- Play lunch could consist of a snack, a piece of fruit and water.
- Please do not expect children to eat too much, especially considering the hot weather.
- Don't forget your child's school hat.
- On the first day (Mon 30th Jan) parents are invited to stay for a welcome morning tea after dropping their student in the Prep learning space.

**SECOND, THIRD, and FOURTH WEEKS**

- Monday 6th February - Friday 10th February. (**no school Wednesday 8th Feb**)
- Monday 13th February - Friday 17th February. (**no school Wednesday 15th Feb**)  
*(Tuesday 14th February—Prep parent Information Evening 5pm)*
- Monday 20th February - Friday 24th February. (**no school Wednesday 22nd Feb**)
- Children arrive at 9:00a.m. and will finish at 3:20 p.m.
- **FOR PREP CHILDREN.** No class on Wednesdays during February - 1st, 8th, 15th and 22nd.  
On these days, we will be holding interviews with our prep students. Your child will be allocated a date and time on one of these Wednesdays.
- Children will need to bring brain food, play lunch, extra healthy snack and lunch on full school days.
- We will be holding a welcome dinner for Prep and other new families on **Wednesday 15th February at 6pm.**

**REMAINDER OF TERM ONE**

- The school day is from 9.00 a.m. till 3.20 p.m.
- All Children attend every day of the week.
  - Monday 27th February - Friday 3rd March
  - Monday 6th March - Thursday 9th March (Friday 10th March—school closure day)
  - Tuesday 14th March - Friday 17th March
  - Monday 20th March - Friday 24th March
  - Monday 27th March - Friday 31st March
  - Monday 3rd April - Thursday 6th April
- Monday 13th March is the Labour Day public holiday.
- Friday 7th April is Good Friday

Term two commences **Wednesday 24th April** - **Monday 24th April** (school closure day)

**- Tuesday 25th April is the ANZAC Day holiday.**

## TERM DATES and PUBLIC HOLIDAYS FOR 2023

TERM 1— Monday 30th January—Thursday 6th April  
**(No school for Preps on Wednesdays during February)**

TERM 2— Wednesday 26th April—Friday 23rd June

TERM 3— Monday 10th July—Friday 15th September

TERM 4— Monday 2nd October - Wednesday 20th December

Labour Day	-	Monday 13th March
Good Friday	-	Friday 7th April
Easter Sunday	-	Sunday 9th April
ANZAC Day	-	Tuesday 25th April
King's Birthday	-	Monday 12th June
Cup Day	-	Tuesday 7th November

