

## **Preparatory Year at St. Agnes**

Prep in a Catholic school aims to provide an educational experience that is based on an exciting, fun, play-based curriculum in an environment nurtured by faith and values.

Catholic schools are committed to providing a special place for your child in Prep. Our schools offer:

- An exciting, fun, inquiry and play-based curriculum,
- Specialised facilities and equipment,
- Qualified, dedicated teachers and committed support staff,
- Faith and values development integrated into the curriculum
- Close partnerships with parents, families and community
- Commitment to the growth and development of the whole child – spiritually, intellectually, physically, culturally, socially and emotionally
- A safe environment and caring community fostering the unique beauty of each child
- Integration within the wider school community enabling a smooth transition to year 1 and beyond.

### **Transition from home to school**

National and international research highlights the importance of quality fulltime early education and smooth transitions to formal schooling to aid children’s long term educational outcomes.

Home represents the first and the most important avenue of learning in a child’s life. The influence of the home continues to be highly significant in the education of the young child. The prep program extends the child’s learning environment beyond the home. It provides a transition from home to school.

Building partnerships is a key part of the new early year’s curriculum. Making partnerships with families and carers is a key element to a positive learning environment for young children. Prep teachers will be building on these partnerships and involving families in a variety of ways in the prep classroom.

The prep focus is on continuity and the promotion of success for learning as a life long learner. To ensure smooth transitions in all facets of school life schools develop Early Years philosophy and practices to ensure that prep children are immersed in a program that is developmentally appropriate and links into the other early years of school.

### **Prep Education**

Research tells us that children learn best when they actively construct knowledge of their world around them. Therefore your child will be actively involved in an inquiry- based learning program (play-based) where teachers and children work together to explore, observe, ask questions, discuss observations and seek answers about everyday experiences. On a daily basis your child will be developing their physical skills by climbing an obstacle course or building their literacy skills through language games.

An old adage states: “tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand” – this is the essence of inquiry learning where your child actively constructs knowledge in a

meaningful way. Prep programs that are child-centered and play based will improve your child's social and problem-solving skills and encourage them to have a greater interest in learning.

Your child will be participating in a learning program based on Queensland Studies Authority's *The Early Years Curriculum* which is based on active learning, and includes inquiry and play. Each day at prep your child will be:

- actively making choices about what and how they learn
- investigating and learning how to inquire about their interests
- planning collaboratively with the teacher
- participating in music and language experiences
- investigating and playing independently, in pairs, small groups and as a class
- participating in dramatic play to build an understanding of themselves and the world around them
- drawing and painting to encourage oral language, reading and writing skills
- constructing, using blocks and creating collages to develop early mathematical concepts and skills.

### **Play-based learning**

It is important that parents understand that a play-based learning program is an important step in your child's educational journey. When your child plays, they make decisions, solve problems, develop thinking skills, collaborate, communicate and develop a positive sense of self. In Prep, your child will participate in exploratory, directed, fantasy, educational and free play, as well as physical play and games with rules. They will play both indoors and outdoors in different ways at different times of the school day.

When your child plays, they will develop social and personal learning, language and communication, early mathematical understanding, health and physical ability and active thinking processes. These factors have also been identified in research as the indicators for success in school learning and as the foundations for success in later learning.

### **What will my child learn about Religious Education?**

Religious Education is an important dimension of all Catholic schools. In prep your child will be introduced to the two dimensions of Religious Education; namely the classroom teaching of religion and the religious life of the school. The focus of the classroom teaching of religion is educational as it aims to develop your child's religious literacy. Your child will be introduced to Scripture, Beliefs, Morality and Celebration and Prayer.

As an introduction to the religious life of the school, children will be involved in activities and experiences such as the school's lived Catholic Christian ethos, school and class religious simple prayers and celebrations, simple pastoral care and social justice/mission activities.

### **Prep Operating Hours**

Prep children will attend the same hours of school as the Yrs 1-7:

Monday to Friday: 8.40am – 3.00pm (term 1 only)

The school is dismissed at 3.05p.m. Prep will finish at 3.00p.m. in Term 1 to give parents time to collect Prep children prior to the other classes being dismissed. (Term 1)

Term dates as per school calendar.

## **Children's Transition Program**

To ensure a smooth transition for children into the prep program children will attend one half day (9am – 12.30pm) prep program (either Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> January or Friday 29<sup>th</sup> January) in the first week of the school year. All children will attend full time from the commencement of week two. Parents will be informed which half day for their child.

## **Rest time**

Prep teachers will consider and respond to the needs of the children and make educational decisions about the provision of rest time and appropriate quiet activities for children in the afternoon.

## **Uniform**

Prep children will wear the school sports uniform and a gold school hat. They will wear Velcro black leather shoes. In winter, children wear the school track shirt and track pants. Please ensure that all clothing, including shoes and socks are clearly named. Uniforms can be ordered on Orientation Morning or through the School Uniform Shop.

## **Arrivals and Departures**

Parents (adult carer) take children to their designated prep classroom at 8.40am and collect them from their classroom at 3.00pm. After Prep, if a child is not collected on time and is enrolled in Outside School Hours Care, they will be taken to O.S.H.C (Outside School Hours Care) and parents charged accordingly. Arrival and departure procedures are formulated in response to the needs of the children and to ensure the safety of the youngest members of our school community. These procedures will be reviewed at the end of term one.

## **Break times**

Please send morning tea packed separately to lunch.

### Morning Tea

Please pack your child's morning tea in a plastic container. This will be kept in the morning tea container. Please ensure your child's morning tea is clearly named and keep perishable items for lunch as morning tea is not refrigerated.

### Lunch

Please pack your child's lunch separately to morning tea. This will be kept in the fridge. Please provide your child with a small flat plastic lunch box clearly labeled with the name on the lid and base. Flat boxes are easier for the children to stack in the fridge. Lunches stored in cooler containers will not fit in the fridge.

## **Nutrition**

We encourage parents to send a variety of healthy foods in the lunch box. Ideally, the lunch box should include foods from all of the five food groups:

- Breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles
- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Milk, cheese, yoghurt
- Meat, fish, poultry, eggs, legumes.

For example:

Morning tea: grapes, crackers and cheese

Lunch: ham sandwiches, carrot sticks, snow peas and sultanas.

Water is the best drink. Snack foods such as lollies, fruit sticks and chips should not be included in lunchboxes. To help parents keep a track of what their child is eating, food not eaten will be returned home in the lunchbox.

The prep room has fridges available to store big lunches. Packing lunch and morning tea in separate, easy to open containers, makes things easier for the children.

Due to a number of children at St Agnes with severe nut allergies (see heading Nut-Free Zone).

Tuckshop is available on Mondays and Thursdays. The menu includes a range of healthy choices.

**PLEASE NOTE: Sweets, chocolates, roll ups, chips, dunkaroos, dessert snacks, flavoured milk, etc. are discouraged.**

If your child has special dietary needs, please advise the teacher. Prep children may order tuckshop from week 5 onwards, term 1.

### Water Bottles

Please provide your child with a drink bottle full of water each day. Containers need to be clearly labeled.

If providing items such as yogurt, please include a spoon in your child's lunch box. Please do not include any food items that require heating.

When appropriate to the developmental needs of the prep children they will eat lunch with other children in the early years and will play in the playground supervised by the teacher on duty.

### **Parent Participation**

Parents are welcome to spend time in Prep. To be part of our program, you may be able to assist by:

- \* *reading a story to a child*
- \* *playing a game with a small group*
- \* *cooking with the children*
- \* *helping with the preparation of activities*
- \* *printing digital photos*
- \* *assisting children with computer programs.*

### **What do children need for Prep each day?**

St Agnes school bag

Gold St Agnes school hat

Spare set of clothes and underclothes (to be left in school bag)

St Agnes library bag

Items for rest time – bath towel and small pillow (cot) stored in a drawstring bag.

Morning tea

Lunch

Drink bottle

Please ensure all personal items are clearly labeled with your child's name.