St. Joachim’s Catholic Parish Primary School

Prep Parent Handbook 2016

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At St. Joachim’s we recognise that we are living witnesses of God’s love. We choose to make Jesus’ vision and mission central in our lives and encourage all within our school and parish community to live a spirit-filled life.

With this understanding:

- We celebrate our Catholic Faith by immersing students in rich liturgical experiences within the school and parish community.
- We acknowledge the family as the first and constant influence in Faith Education and we welcome the partnership of parents and the school in all aspects of learning.
- We offer experiences which encourage everyone in our community to develop their spirituality.
- We foster inquiring minds and strive for excellence in order that students achieve their full potential.
- We create a safe and inclusive community where students, staff and families feel connected.
Welcome to St Joachim’s Primary School

Beginning school is a major step and it should be a positive and exciting time in your child’s life. As parents (and your child’s first teacher) you are an important and essential link in the educational chain.

The best education for your child will be achieved when the link between home and school is strong and parents and teachers work in partnership together.

St Joachim’s is first and foremost a Catholic parish school. The religious and faith development of your child can benefit through the partnership of parent, school and parish. We ask that you reflect on our Vision Statement. This statement is the basis of our educational philosophy and gives vision to those who participate in the life of the school.

Included in this booklet is a great deal of information which will help you and your child to make the very best of the years you spend associated with our school and ensures a smooth transition for your child (and you) into school life. If you have any concerns or questions regarding enrolment please feel free to contact us on 9785 2633 or by email.

People you need to know:
Parish Priest: ................................................................. Fr John Madden
Principal:................................................................. Mr Paul Dwyer
Deputy Principal / Student Wellbeing Leader..... Mrs Irene Stewart
Prep Teachers: ............................................................ Ms Zeeta Andrew
......................................................................................... Miss Renee Felmingham
Office Administration: .................................................. Mrs Sheridan Kellett
......................................................................................... Mrs Sheryl Reed

School Hours: 8.45am – 3.15pm

The playground is supervised by staff members from 8:30am – 3:30pm. Children should be at school by 8:30am when classrooms are opened. School commences at 8:45am

8:30am..........Classrooms open
8:45am..........2 hr Teaching Session
10:45am........Morning Tea
10:55am........Morning Play
11:25am........Line up
11:30am..........2 hr Teaching Session
1:30pm..........Lunch
1:40pm..........Afternoon Play
2:10pm..........Line up
2:15pm..........1 hr Teaching Session
3:15pm..........Dismissal

Term Dates 2016

Term 1: Wednesday 27 January – Thursday 24 March
Preps begin Monday Feb 1
Term 2: Monday 11 April – Friday 24 June
Term 3: Monday 11 July – Friday 16 September
Term 4: Monday 3 October – Tues 20 December TBC
Preparation Your Child at Home
Transition from Home to School

By the age of five, children are beginning to take turns, ask for things and to handle situations themselves. They can manage the simple routines of dressing, undressing, toileting, etc. They begin consciously to know right from wrong and are concerned about doing the right thing. They seek approval and begin to assume some responsibility for their own actions. In these ways four and five year olds are growing physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

The following are some areas in which you can help their development.

Faith

- Establish simple prayer routines eg: prayer at bed time, grace before meals etc.
- Talk about God with your child.
- Get to know your Parish Priest. (Fr John Madden)
- Help your child fill out the weekly children’s newsletter available at weekend masses.
- Make the sign of the cross.

Responsibility

Encourage your child to:

- Care for personal property.
- Care for school property.
- Do up own shoes.
- Dress and undress unaided.
- Do up buttons.
- Put away toys.
- Manage in the toilet.
- Wash their hands after going to the toilet.
- Listen carefully.
- Obey promptly.
- Speak up.
- Help and participate in all activities at home.
- Share and take turns.

Children enjoy assuming responsibilities within their capabilities. They become confident and reliable if given the opportunity to attempt simple tasks.
Preparing Your Child at Home (cont.)

Inquiry and General Knowledge

- Discover with your child, places of interest around Carrum Downs/Skye – places you can walk to, places you can have fun.
- Make things with your child with wood, play dough, paper, etc.
- Look for interesting plants and insects in the garden.
- Discuss with them, whatever they ask questions about.
- Ask grandparents and other adults to share funny childhood experiences with them – kids love these stories and its history.
- Play them a wide range of music, etc.

Reading

- Have a routine of reading to your child every day or night. This is one of the best ways of developing lifelong positive attitudes to reading and an understanding of print and books.
- Praise every effort in reading, especially if confidence is low. Don’t compare a child’s performance with that of relatives and friends.
- Be seen as a reader yourself. Take the family to the local library. Help in selecting books but resist the temptation to impose your own choices.
- Give books as presents and show your child how to care for them.
- Buy your child a bed lamp and encourage the routine of reading in bed before lights-out.

Writing

- Let him or her see you write – letters, shopping lists, short messages and so on.
- Encourage the family to write – letters to friends and relatives, thank-you notes, birthday cards, get-well messages.
- Display writing in the home – reminders, lists of things to do, messages of congratulations, postcards from friends on holiday. Have a kitchen noticeboard or some attractive magnets on the fridge door.
- Give presents associated with writing – different types of pens and pencils, paper of different shapes and colours, a desk lamp, a diary, a dictionary, erasers….
- Be an interested listener and reader. Talk over ideas for writing, encourage the reading aloud of early drafts, read the finished product with enthusiasm.
- Praise writing done at school. Pay more attention to what your child is writing about than to the spelling and punctuation.
- Use thick crayons or pencil and encourage correct pencil grip – At St Joachim’s P.S. your child will learn the Victorian Modern Cursive Handwriting and an example of this is included in your child’s introductory folder. All labelling and lettering done by teachers will be modelled on this script and we hope that you will use it as a model for your own labelling of your child’s possessions.
- If your child wishes to write his or her name, we would appreciate it if you could use the correct form, as this will help to avoid confusion at the beginning of the year.
Requirements

All stationery and books will be organised by the school.

Your child will be required to bring the following:

- an art smock – clearly labelled.
- a St Joachim’s hat – clearly labelled
- a colouring / activity book
- a library bag – clearly labelled
- a blue mail bag (available at our uniform shop) – clearly labelled
- a spare pair of undies/socks in a plastic bag (in their school bag)
- two large boxes of tissues
- a box of baby wipes
- labelled drink bottle – we ask that you send water in your child’s drink bottle.

Uniform

Children are expected to wear the regulation school uniform. A uniform pass is required explaining why your child is out of school uniform and stating when the problem will be rectified. Children are not permitted to wear nail polish or jewellery, apart from a wrist watch and single studs or sleepers. Extreme haircuts and dyed hair are not acceptable for primary aged children.

Hats are to be left at school. The rule during first and fourth term is “no hat, no play.”

Belongings – Please Name Everything!

A quick look at our lost property tub will show why this is essential. We cannot follow up on unnamed articles and children frequently have difficulty recognising their own clothes.

Toys brought to school are the child’s own responsibility. Please ensure that expensive toys are not brought to school. Money or other valuables brought to school should be given to the teacher for safe keeping.

Toys that encourage fighting or that could be deemed dangerous, e.g. plastic swords or guns are not permitted at St Joachim’s and will be confiscated immediately.
Lunches

A nutritious play lunch and lunch will ensure that your child has the energy they need to cope with the demands of a busy day. We strongly encourage parents to provide their child with a fresh “fruit or vegie” snack. Preps have “fruit snack” each day at 12:30pm. Lunch should be sent in a clearly labelled bag or container. It is a good idea to label both the lid and the base. Similarly, drink bottles should also have lids and base names.

Please give your Prep child practice in screwing on the lid of their drink securely to avoid soggy lunches!

Play lunch snack should be wrapped separately and your child should know what is for “little play lunch” and what is for “big lunch”. To avoid wastage it is important to give children only what they can eat and what they like to eat – within the confines of a healthy lunch of course!

We will encourage children to eat their lunch and take home anything they do not eat.

Sending Notes and or Money

When notes or money (for special lunch days, raffles etc) are being sent to school, it would be appreciated if they were placed in a sealed envelope with your child’s name and grade on the outside; as well as the purpose of the note.

Car Parking

We are fortunate to have car parking available in the school grounds. We ask that you take particular care when using the car park.

- At all times keep an eye out for not only your child but other children.
- Do not exceed a 5kph speed limit in the school grounds.
- Either park in the designated spaces or use the pick up lane. If the car park is full you must wait at the front gate until the pick up lane or a car park is available.
- Do not allow your child to wander to your car unaccompanied if you are parked in a car space.
- Please show courtesy and consideration for other drivers and be cautious and alert.
- As a further safety precaution, parents are asked to reverse into the car parking spaces to ensure the best possible view of the car park and children as they are leaving.

*We can’t reinforce these basic car park rules enough.*
School Rules

- Follow directions
- Keep hands, feet and objects to oneself
- Ignore inappropriate behaviour
- Speak appropriately
- Help and include others

At St. Joachim’s our Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy is based on a belief in the dignity and rights of the person. We believe that our school can achieve this by encouraging optimism and building self-esteem with the whole community working together.

The rules and consequences of our Pastoral Care and Discipline Policy are aids to the fostering of self-discipline within each child. Our ultimate aim is for self-discipline where children develop to their full potential and are responsible for their own behaviour. Each grade follows the same basic rules as listed above. As these rules are consistent throughout the whole school, we find that there is also consistency to consequences and a diminishing in behavioural issues due to teacher and student attentiveness.

Sickness / Absences

In the event that your child is sick or will be absent from school, the school needs to be notified. Attendance rolls are a legal document kept by the school. Absence forms explaining non-attendance at school are required in order to complete the roll. This can be done by ringing the school prior to 8:30am to leave a message for your child’s classroom teacher. When your child returns to school a note to the teacher outlining the reason for absence is required.

Alternately sending a notification via “Tiqbiz” (a communication app we use at St Joachim’s) is a fast and convenient way to inform the school of your child’s absence. This alleviates the need for a note to the teacher.

Late Arrival / Early Dismissal

If children are late in the mornings, please accompany them to the office to obtain a late pass and hand this to your child’s teacher.

If you need to collect your child early from school, please go the office to obtain an early dismissal pass prior to collecting your child from their classroom. This pass is also to be handed to your child’s teacher.

Bicycles and Scooters

Although we strongly encourage children to walk and ride to school, when they reach the school gates, it is essential to walk scooters and bikes to the bike cage. Bike helmets must be worn at all times when riding a bike.
Specialised Programs

Religious Education (Prep – Year 6)

The basis of all teaching at St Joachim’s is the teaching of the Catholic Faith, under the guidelines of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, and our Parish Priest, Fr John Madden.

We believe that religious education is, “a thing of the heart”, and that our whole way of educating is to reveal the love of God to the children who are all unique in the eyes of God.

The continuing growth in the Sacramental life of the Church is supported by the parish and the school throughout the child’s whole primary school years.

Children are prepared through the Parish Sacramental Program for the Sacrament of:

- Reconciliation
- Eucharist
- Confirmation

Religious Education at St Joachim’s is also supported by class Masses/Para liturgies and visits to the classroom by Fr John Madden.

Student Wellbeing:

St Joachim’s Catholic Primary School nurtures partnerships between school, family, parish and the local community to promote a healthy, supportive, safe and secure working and learning environment for students, staff and parents.

Our students work and play in an environment that allows them to grow and learn with encouragement and support.

Our school rules create an atmosphere where the students are comfortable and know the expectations.

All staff members are excellent models of behaviour and develop relationships to know the students so learning is effective and meets their needs. We create an environment where students can build self esteem and resilience.

Students with specific learning needs have individual learning plans developed in conjunction with the family and outside specialists.

We work with our parent community to assist them in the role of parenting and create a range of learning opportunities for them.

Library (Prep – Year 6)

The St. Joachim’s library is an exciting and vibrant resource centre of our school. Prep children will participate in a weekly library session, where they will be encouraged to borrow picture story books. The library sessions are set out to:

- cater for children’s interests
- foster a love of literature and
- teach a range of skills.

Ms Leonie Richardson our library technician encourages 2016 Preps to visit the library now and is happy for pre-schoolers to borrow books too!
Physical Education (Prep – Year 6)
A skill based sports session is held on a weekly basis for students at each year level. As many varied activities as possible are offered to the children. Class teachers also provide additional opportunities for physical exercise in group or individual activities. Senior students have the opportunity to participate in Interschool, Zone & District Sports.

L.O.T.E – Italian (Prep – Year 6)
Children participate in weekly lessons that focus primarily on the language of Italian. There is a room dedicated specifically to this subject

Visual Arts (Prep – Year 6)
A weekly Visual Art lesson is taken in our fabulous, well equipped Art room where children can paint, draw and create!

Performing Arts (Prep – Year 6)
All students are given the opportunity to take part in a Performing Arts session each week. Through song, dance, and the use of many instruments, the students learn many musical concepts. They are also able to develop their performing skills and develop confidence through talent shows, a biennial school concert and senior school concert.
For students from years 3 – 6 there is a school choir which represents the school both in house and out in the community.

Technology (Prep – Year 6)
St Joachim’s uses a range of technology to supplement the curriculum. There are computers in each classroom while our senior classes share two mini labs that adjoin their classrooms. Each classroom is equipped with an interactive whiteboard and a wireless network to enhance our students’ learning. All of these devices support and enhance the student’s learning and give them opportunities to inquire, publish their work and capture learning.

Classes are also timetabled to visit our computer lab each week. These computers are utilised not only to allow children to become familiar with the use of hardware but are supported by programs that reinforce what is being taught in Literacy, Maths and other subject areas.
Other Programs / Activities

Buddies (Prep & Senior)
At the start of the year, new Prep students are introduced to a senior student who will become their Buddy. This program facilitates the transition from home to school and provides a support for those students who find themselves at times lost within new environments. This program continues throughout the year and builds friendships with older students who often model appropriate behaviours & values.

Story time
Every Friday at 3:00pm in the library there is “Story Time” for our pre-school friends. This story time is open to all of our siblings who are coming to Prep at St Joachim’s next year.

Book Club
The St Joachim’s library also offers the Lamont Book Club for all our students. The catalogues offer some terrific book bargains for everyone and all items ordered, earn Bonus Points for our school which we redeem for books. All orders are placed online. Books are then delivered to school then distributed to the child’s classroom.

Newsletter
The St Joachim’s newsletter is emailed to families every Friday. It can also be found on the St Joachim’s website under the News & Events tab and on the Tiqbiz app.
The St Joachim’s Community is a vibrant welcoming school community which values the contributions of our parents.

Your help is appreciated in a number of ways including:

- St Joachim’s Parents Association
- Mothers’ Day morning tea
- Mothers’ Day stall
- Fathers’ Day breakfast
- Fathers’ Day stall
- Sausage sizzles
- Grandparents’ Day
- Italian Day
- Community Arts Program
- Class and whole school Masses
- In the Classroom
- Excursions
- Sports
- Shrove Tuesday
- Working bees
- Garden maintenance
- Feeding the chickens during the holidays
- Library
- Book Fair
- School production / concerts – props, make-up, costumes
- Christmas concert
- Market fresh day
- Numerous other activities!

Parents’ Association

It is wonderful to be a part of such a vibrant, enthusiastic community who are willing to donate their time, energy and talent to the many activities that the Parents Association organises.

We invite you to become involved in 2016. Meeting dates are advertised in the school newsletter.

We welcome your participation at St Joachim’s.