

Kindergarten Booklet

Current at the time of printing

“The preschool years, the kindergarten years, [the years before formal schooling] are the most important of all in the education of the child.” “It is absolutely essential that before we begin to think, before we so much as begin to set our thinking in motion, we experience the condition of wonder.”

Rudolf Steiner

Dear Parents,

The years prior to formal schooling are the formative years that are a bridge between home and Primary education working with the principles and philosophy of Rudolf Steiner. We strive to create an environment where the imagination, creativity and inner-will of your child will flourish.

Until the age of 6 – 7 children learn through imitation. With this in mind, our program aims at creating a warm and loving homelike environment with rhythmic repetition where children feel secure.

Our day consists of a flow of physical, social and artistic activities. Children have the opportunity to enjoy domestic tasks such as, baking, washing and gardening. This participation enables the child to imitate purposeful adult work and be involved in real life activities.

We strive to provide an education that maintains the dream-like quality, deepening the child’s innate sense of wonder, and developing an awareness of the world through play, which is the foundation of formal education. If they experience beauty, goodness and truth in their activities and surroundings they will grow with a sense of quality in all they do. Thank you for entrusting your child into our care.

The Early Childhood Teachers

(This booklet is a supplement to the Samford Valley Steiner School Handbook.)

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CHECKLIST FOR BEGINNING PREP/PRE-PREP

To fully enjoy our program, your child will require the following items. Please refer to this booklet for reasons why these items are important for your child's play and learning environment.

ALL CHILDREN

- * Small china mug
- * Clothing
 - Plain comfortable clothes as per Dress Code in *School Handbook*.
 - Hat – legionnaire or wide brimmed – to be left at school.
 - Covered shoes with good grip for outside play (NO crocs or thongs).
 - Spare clothes.
 - Soft soled, slip-on plain indoor shoes – (orders can be made through Sun Shadow Slippers at www.sunshadowslippers.com.au)
 - During Winter months - Singlets, socks and layers of warm clothing.

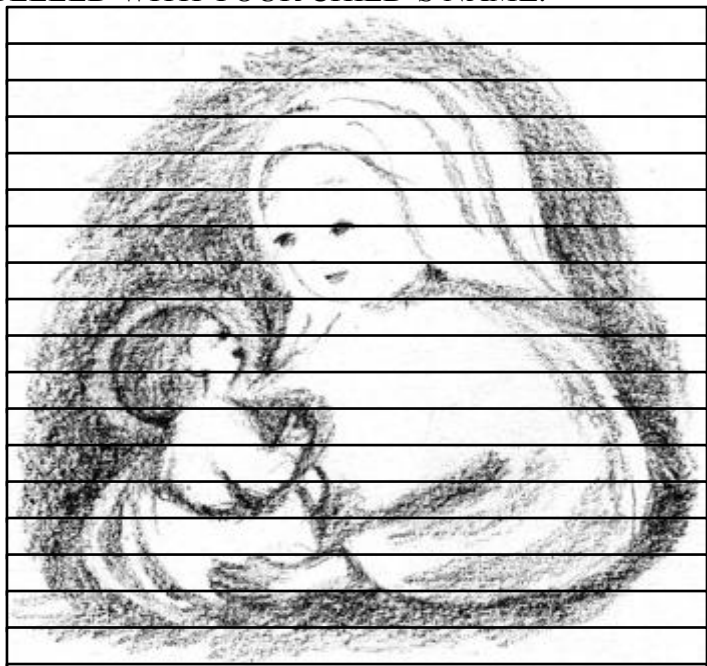
LUNCH

Term 1- No Lunch Box Necessary

Term 2- 4 – Prep children to bring lunch box on Wednesday's only.

A healthy lunch is prepared daily for all the children. Please speak to your teacher if your child has special dietary requirements

ALL ITEMS MUST BE CLEARLY LABELLED WITH YOUR CHILD'S NAME.



ATTENDANCE HOURS

Pre-Prep attendance:

Term 1: Five days a fortnight: A part-time calendar will be provided to confirm which days your child will attend. Please note 1pm daily finishes are available for students requiring gentler transitioning.

- * Monday and Tuesday 8.30am – 2.30pm and alternate Wednesdays 8.30am - at 1pm.

OR

- * Thursday and Friday 8.30am– 2.30pm and alternate Wednesdays 8.30am - at 1pm.

Term 2 onwards: 3 days per week

- * Monday and Tuesday 8.30am– 2.30pm and every Wednesdays 8.30am - at 1pm.

OR

- * Thursday and Friday 8.30am– 2.30pm and every Wednesdays 8.30am - at 1pm.

Prep attendance:

Five days a week 8.30am–2.30pm (except Wednesdays: 8.30am–1pm)

The children's school day begins at 8.30am. The children do not need to be at school before this time. Prior to the doors opening, we ask that your child and their siblings wait quietly with you. Please respect that prior to this it is teacher preparation time.

ARRIVAL

An adult must accompany all children.

Punctuality - Please be punctual as it can be very disturbing for some children to arrive late and feel that everyone else has started without them.

Remember, we are creating a harmonious calm mood in the room so please assist us by entering in a quiet manner.

SIGNING IN & OUT

A parent or responsible adult must 'sign' the child in each day in the Attendance Sign In and Out book. Each class has a sign in book. Children must not be left alone or with older siblings in the grounds. The sign in book should also be used for informing the teachers if someone other than yourself is picking up your child. A *message book* is placed alongside the sign-on book for all incidental communication between parents and teachers.

SETTLING IN

The first week of school can be an anxious time for parent and child. We try to make this transition away from home as gentle and positive as possible. With this in mind, we offer a few suggestions and comments that you may find useful.

Children like order and routine so try to establish your school routine as quickly as possible.

- * Give yourself plenty of time in the morning so your child does not feel rushed and unsettled.
- * Say goodbye in a cheerful and loving way. Do not cling, however hard it may be. If you say “the last kiss”, mean it.
- * Please consider that your feelings and misgivings can interfere with your child’s adjustment. Once you have made a careful decision about the School, stop worrying and show your child you are confident that s/he will have an enjoyable day and be happy.

All children need to feel secure and begin school with a positive experience to enable them to become successful learners. Even though we work with a strong daily rhythm that provides security and reduces anxiety, sometimes this is not enough for some children. If your child is unable to stay at Preschool without you, the teacher will suggest strategies to enable a successful separation to occur.

After 5- 6 weeks a review will occur between the parents and Teachers to determine separation progress and other strategies.

Due to the impact on your child and the rest of the group, if your child has not settled into Preschool successfully by the end of Term 1, without your presence, you will need to consider if your child is ready to attend Preschool. If there are problems, please speak to the teacher about this, preferably without the child being present.

DEPARTURES

All children must wait on the verandah until the adult signing them out arrives. For your child’s safety, teachers must be aware of anyone other than yourself who will be picking up your child via the sign-in or messages book.

Children will not be dismissed into the care of Primary school-aged children. Please collect your child on time as children can become distressed when they have to wait for parents. Please take your child’s hand and walk with them to the carpark.

Reminder: Playground equipment is not to be used before and after school. The area should be vacated promptly in the afternoons as staff need to prepare for next day set-up.

MESSAGES

Once the children have started to arrive the teacher's time is devoted to the children and helping to set the mood for the day.

We ask that you help set this mood by refraining from talking to adults while in the room. If there is an important message, leave the information in writing in the message book. You may also speak to the assistant who will pass it on to the teacher at an appropriate time.

Teachers are available for appointments and home visits. Messages from the teacher are often sent home via a class letter, the Parent Newsletter or a notice posted on the notice board. Please check the letter pockets regularly each week. It is responsibilities of all car-pool drivers to pass on these messages.

Messages can be left at the school office on **P** 3430 9600. Absentees can be phoned through on **P** 3430 9610.

TELEVISION, MEDIA & THE YOUNG CHILD

It is our expectation that in keeping with the school's low-tech ethos, that NO television is watched during the week and that TV viewing before bedtime can be disturbing to a child's sleep.

Within Steiner education, it is the imagination that provides the foundation for learning and growth. It is within the first seven years that children learn so much. They learn to walk, to speak, and experience the awakening of thinking as they grow from being babies to infants. Through play, children develop their knowledge of the way the world works, their relationships to others, their physical control and their imagination. Within Steiner education, play is considered the 'child's work' whereby the 'learning processes' occur naturally.

Children learn best through imitating other children and the adults around them.

Television watching places children into an unnatural passive state in which they are deprived of their true work, which is their play.

The presence of the television and other media in a child's life is often clearly seen in the children's play during the Prep /Pre-Prep school years. The strong influence it has upon little children is visible in many ways. The child may speak in the tone of a certain character or machine. The child may seem "stuck" in their ideas of play e.g. imitating super heroes, monsters or Disney characters.

Current research shows that television watching adversely affects children's thinking, speaking, imagination, senses, physique, feelings and behaviour. Television watching itself affects child development regardless of the program content. There are many well-documented effects of television on children, for example hyperactivity and lack of attention

span or inability to complete tasks. Perhaps the greatest cost is the dimming effect it has on the child's wonderful imagination.

To provide consistency between home and school, we encourage you to explore alternatives to television viewing such as meaningful domestic activities that positively contribute to family life (cooking, washing dishes, and gardening etc). The teachers would be happy to share ideas or suggest other alternatives.

COMPUTER USE & DVDS

Our views of the effects of television on the young child also extend to screen times watching DVDs and playing computer games. In addition, music and story tapes as a substitute for the live human voice, often over dramatised, are not appropriate for the young child.

There are a number of highly recommended books in the parents' library on child development and the harmful effects of television and electronic games, including:

- * *Endangered Minds Healy, J*
- * *Who's Bringing Them Up Large, M*
- * *The Plug In Drug Winn, M*
- * *Failure to Connect Healy, J*

MORE ABOUT LIFE WITHIN THE PREP / PRE-PREP ROOMS

“If a child has been able to play, to give up his whole living being to the world around him, he will be able to, in the serious tasks of later life, devote himself with confidence and power to the service of the world.” **Rudolf Steiner**

RHYTHM

Children flourish when their daily activities are arranged rhythmically to reflect the natural order of life. Our program is organised with a sense of “breathing in” and “breathing out”, concentration and relaxation, individual and whole group experiences.

Each day has its own ‘rhythm’ that occurs within a weekly rhythm. The weekly rhythm finds its place within the larger rhythm of the year, e.g. we experience the expansion of summer and the contractive forces of winter.

Each day has its own special activity, which usually takes place during free play time e.g. painting day is Wednesday. This repetition allows for the development of a secure and nurturing atmosphere.

Just as children are nourished at school by the rhythm of each day, we encourage parents to establish set meal times and bed-time routines at home. Establishment of these rhythms provides stability and security for children in an otherwise busy world.

As difficult as it is in these modern times to establish routines, it is important for young children to go to bed at the same time every night. We recommend that this be no later than 7pm. Please feel free to contact your teacher if you would like some ideas for making this transition a successful one for parent and child.

FOOD

As we endeavour to provide a nurturing environment for the children, we also purchase and prepare foods of a high nutritional standard. Grains are either organic or biodynamic as are fruit and vegetables where possible.

Special needs are considered if your child has allergies, please speak to your teacher with details. Due to the increasing prevalence of severe allergic reactions to peanuts, children must not bring any peanuts or peanut products (e.g. peanut butter).

- * *Morning Tea and Lunch for Children:* The Assistant and the children prepare these meals each day according to a weekly rhythm. The children do not need to bring anything from home. The cost of this is already covered in the school fees allowing us to purchase quality foods in bulk.

As filtered rainwater is readily available during the day and at lunch fruit juices are unnecessary. Children are reminded to drink water regularly particularly during the summer months.

MEAL TIME BLESSING

Here are two blessings we use to help build an atmosphere of gratitude and appreciation at mealtimes.

Morning Tea:

Earth who gives us our food,
Sun who makes it ripe and good,
Dear Earth, dear Sun,
Thank you both for all you've done.

Lunch:

Blessings on the blossom,
Blessings on the root,
Blessings on the leaves and stems,
Blessings on the fruit.

HEALTH

The teachers take a special interest in your child's wellbeing. A nutritious diet contributes to wellbeing. It is normal however for children to experience illness as they grow. As parents you know best when your child shows symptoms of illness. The lively school environment is often very demanding and beyond the capacity of a child who is unwell.

For fever, vomiting and diarrhoea a rest day is necessary. The young child often appears well after illness, however, the body still needs full recovery. Please allow your child at least one full day of rest at home after illness in a quiet, restful environment until they are fully recovered.

Many childhood illnesses are contagious. Teachers must be informed if your child has contracted such an illness so the parent community can be notified. More information can be found in the *School Handbook*.

In an emergency we will use the information you have provided regarding contact numbers, doctor's details and specific instructions. It is essential that all contact details are kept updated in case of emergencies.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

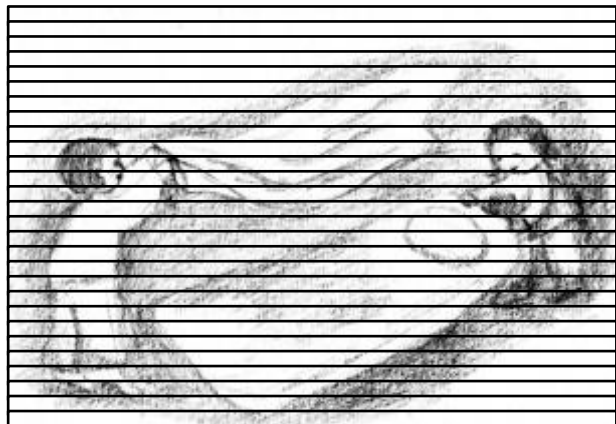
In the interests of personal hygiene, all children must be toilet trained. This means that children must be able to recognise when and where to go to the toilet and be able to manage on their own.

As with all young children, accidents do occur occasionally. If these occur more than once a week a request may be made for the child to be kept at home while the issue is addressed.

REST TIME

A rest time is scheduled at 1.30 pm each day for approximately 30 minutes. Rest time is the moment in the day when the children are given the opportunity to spend time by themselves. It is not expected that the children sleep but they are encouraged to rest.

We would like to encourage the parents of Pre-prep children to also create a rest time for their child after lunch at home. It can be a very special moment to share with your child.



TOYS

Home toys, school bags and picture books are not required at school and best left at home.

To enhance the child's natural sense of wonder and curiosity "special treasures" from nature are welcomed for our treasure basket. Shells, feathers, nests, flowers, crystals etc awaken us to the changing seasons connecting the children to the beauty of their natural environment.

CHILDREN'S WORK

Within the curriculum emphasis is placed on the process rather than the end product. Therefore, throughout the year the children's artwork is collected and kept in a portfolio. This will be given to the children at the end of year Summer celebration. The children's work (craft, drawing, paintings) is often shared at parent teacher nights or parents may view them by asking the teacher.

BEHAVIOUR

We strive to understand the nature of the young child and create a program that provides the security of a daily rhythm, an ordered environment and an appropriate balance of activities. These fundamental principles assist in promoting positive behaviour.

Creative strategies are used to redirect the children, e.g. time spent helping one of the adults, until they are ready to rejoin the group. Teachers reinforce ways of resolving issues among children by modelling positive examples of expected behaviour. Children are offered alternative activities when engaged in disruptive play.

If difficulties persist, a teacher will request an interview with the parents. Together the adults can then re assess the situation to find ways for the child to express them-selves in more socially appropriate ways. Please refer to the school's *Discipline Policy*.

Most importantly, good communication amongst adults is the most helpful approach for the children during these formative years. Parents can also be of assistance by sharing with their child's teacher any changes at home (e.g. moving house, pet has died) that may result in unusual behaviour by their child. In cases of on-going extreme, disruptive behavior, the school's *Wellbeing Policy* will be applied and parents may be requested to collect their child from school.

PLAYGROUND RULES

GENERAL RULES FOR SAFETY

- Hats must be worn at all times during outdoors play.
- Shoes must not be worn when not in the sandpit or water course.
- We walk on verandahs and paths.
- Sticks live on the ground or under the big tree near the compost bins.
- We leave alone creatures that live in the garden.
- Children in the sandpit must dust themselves off in the sandpit before coming to the verandah.
- Big shovels to be used ONLY in the digging patch.
- At tidy-up time ALL equipment is to be packed up and stored tidily in its correct place.
- We walk when using wheelbarrows.
- Children should only pick flowers and greenery from the garden under a teacher or adult's direction.
- Shed door must be left closed at the end of every day.
- Children must not climb the fence or open the gate.
- Only adults turn the taps on.

CLIMBING FRAME, MONKEY BARS & SOFT FALL AREA

- No playing underneath climbing frame or monkey bars.
- Children can hang from bars – NO climbing on top of bars.
- Encourage children to keep soft fall in designated area.
- No throwing of soft fall bark.

CUBBY HOUSE

- Children will clean-up leaving cubbies tidy.
- No climbing or jumping on outside or on top of rails.

Running/Chasing –

In hot weather running & chasing is kept to a minimum. In extreme conditions running will be deterred.

SANDPIT

- Children are to remove shoes and socks to play in sandpit.
- Only sandpit tools are to be used in the sandpit.
- No throwing sand- children must leave the sandpit when this occurs.
- Children help to tidy up, placing all equipment in storage baskets.
- Dirt or soft fall bark not to be used in the sandpit.
- Cover must be pulled over the sandpit after play.

SWINGS

- No-one must play on the soft fall while a child is swinging.
- Children **MUST** wait for their turn by sitting on the wooden surround. After a waiting child has counted to 20 it is then their turn to use a swing.
- Shoes & hats must be worn when swinging.
- Only one child per swing.
- Children **MUST** sit on swing while swinging.

WATER FALL

- Children are to remove shoes and socks to play in the water course.
- No sand or dirt to be brought into this area (children coming from sandpit can't enter watercourse).
- Walking **ONLY** around the water course area - **NO** running or jumping or splashing others.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

CLASSROOM VISITS

Parents are welcome to spend a morning in the class room, although it is not recommended in Term 1 as the children are settling in. If you come to visit, you will be asked to help with tasks. Parents are reminded that as they are observing the children “at work” they should refrain from becoming directly involved in their play. Please ask the teacher for guidelines on that day. Any concerns should be discussed with the teacher and treated confidentially.

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

The birthday ceremony can be a memorable occasion for your child and parents are warmly welcomed to participate. Please contact your child’s teacher the week prior. Details of the celebration are provided in a ‘Birthday’ sheet handout.

NATURE TABLE

Each room has a Nature Table that changes with the seasons, bringing a way for the children to note these natural changes. A small table or display space can be created at home with nature’s treasures gathered from walks or outings.

WASHING ROSTER

A yearly roster for washing hand towels and serviettes will be posted on the notice board. One family will be nominated each week to take home the washing. It is your responsibility to swap with another parent if your allocated weekend does not suit. The children enjoy helping with this task at home. The serviettes will require ironing. Each family’s contribution is greatly appreciated.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS – LEARNING ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Suggested reading on Parenting and Steiner Education. If books are unavailable in our Parent library, they may be purchased from the Bookshop.

- * You Are Your Child's First Teacher *Rahmina Baldwin*
- * Work & Play in Early Childhood *Freya Jaffke* ▪
- * Festivals, Family & Food *Cary & Large*
- * The Genius of Play (2001) *Sally Jenkinson*
- * The Challenge of the Will *Margaret Meyerkort*
- * Storytelling with Children *Nancy Mellon*
- * The Hurried Child *David Elkind*
- * The Incarnating child *Joan Salter*
- * Miseducation *David Elkind*
- * The Waldorf Parenting Handbook *Cois Cusick*
- * Free to Learn (2001) *Lynne Oldfield*
- * Ready to Learn (2002) *Martyn Rawson & Michael Ros*
- * Magical Child *Joseph Chilton Pearce*
- * Mothering with Soul *Joan Salter*
- * Beyond the Rainbow Bridge *B Patterson and P Bradley*
- * Ready to Learn *Martyn Rawson*

And so the Staff welcomes you and your family to our rooms and warmly encourage you to please speak to your Teacher or Assistant to clarify any questions.