Alligator Creek Prep Handbook
Alligator Creek Preparatory

We hope that your association with the Alligator Creek Prep Class will be a happy and beneficial one. Your teacher is glad of the opportunity to work with you as they believe that education is the combined venture of the child, his/her parents, his/her teachers and the community.

Parents are most important in their child’s education. Teachers try to become as familiar as they can be with a child’s needs, but we need parents to help us understand your child more so. If we can work together, then it is your child who will benefit.

Starting school is an exciting new phase of life for you and your child. This handbook has been designed to help you to make your child’s transition to school easy and enjoyable. The information contained in this booklet is based on suggestions from other parents who, like you, want the best for their children.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Notices to parents

The main method of communication between the school and the home will be in the form of a communication book (supplied by the school). Please check these regularly. The school newsletter is sent home weekly, usually on a Thursday. Information about the Prep classes will be available in the school newsletter, communication books or noticeboards outside your child’s classroom. If you lose your communication book, a replacement will be provided at a cost.

Excursions

From time to time during the school year the teachers may organise tours of educational interest where costs may be involved. Parents will be notified of these events prior to the date to allow for permission forms and payments to be returned well ahead of time.

Money

When sending money to the school (e.g. for excursions, photos etc) please ensure that all money is in an envelope with your child’s name, class, what the money is for and how much money is enclosed clearly labelled on it. Please ensure all money is sent to school in your child’s folder.

Tuckshop

The school tuckshop operates four days a week (not open on Mondays). The children are able to order lunch using the paper bag system. Please ensure that the bag clearly shows your child’s name, class, which break the order is for (1st /2nd) and the lunch order. Please use separate bags for each lunch break. Orders need to be placed in the tuckshop box before school starts. Tuckshop price lists will be available from the tuckshop and are sent home each term in the newsletter.
Birthdays

As part of our healthy school policy, the staff at Alligator Creek are not permitted to distribute cakes or party treats to students on special occasions like birthdays. However, if parents would like to bring in a party cake or treat to celebrate their child’s birthday, then this is acceptable, as long as the parent serves it...not the teacher.

Sharing Information

Events in the family life, such as holidays, visitors, major illnesses, accidents or deaths can be a major concern or excitement for children and can significantly affect their behaviour. It is important for the home and school to share information which may affect your child. We would be appreciative if parents would inform their child’s teacher of any unusual happenings of this nature.

Absentees

If your child is absent for any time, it would be appreciated if you would inform the school of the absences by either writing a reason why in your child’s communication book or contacting the school. Could you also let us know if you are going away on holidays. Once enrolled in primary school, your child is expected to attend school every day of each term. It is important that children develop regular attendance habits at an early age. Children who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on learning the basic building blocks in literacy and numeracy and may experience long-term learning difficulties.

Illnesses

In case of MINOR ailments, parents are asked to use their own judgement about whether a child is fit to attend school. Usually if you are in doubt as to whether a child is well enough to attend he/she ISN’T. If your child becomes ill please let us know, particularly where a child has contracted a contagious illness—eg. measles, mumps, chicken pox or flu. Then we can let other parents know that this illness is going around. Children who are ill must stay at home for the period recommended by their doctor. If your child becomes ill at school, we will contact you so your child can be taken home (unless it is an emergency, where we will call the ambulance).

Please note if your child needs to have medication administered at school, please complete the Administration of Medication form (available at the office) and provide the school office with the appropriate medication.
Parents Association

The Parents and Citizens association currently meet each month. Times of meetings are advertised in the school newsletter. The P & C is the forum for all parents. Our active P & C help decide on certain educational and financial issues, including general fund raising, operating Tuckshop and improvements to the school grounds. All parents and interested members of the community are invited to attend these meetings. Please note that parents who wish to attend meetings or perform voluntary work at the school should become a registered member of the P & C Association. Forms for this are available at the office.

Bus

If your child is catching the bus please inform the teacher so they can match them up with a bus buddy if necessary. Please inform the teacher as to which days your child will be catching the bus and which bus. Contact the bus company if you need further information.

Punctuality

The Prep session starts promptly at 8:45am. We realise that mothers/fathers no doubt run a busy household in the mornings, but please ensure your child is at school on time. This is to ensure your child does not miss out on any valuable group learning experience such as special sharing time and explanations of the day’s activities. Many children become upset and unsettled if parents bring them to school late. The doors will open at 8:30am to allow children to be settled for the start of the school day. Note: there are times when specialist lessons, such as HPE or Music, begin at 8:45 sharp.

School finishes at 2:50pm. Please be here on time. Children quickly become distressed when it is time to go and noone is here to collect them. It is important for parents to be punctual both in dropping your child off in the morning and collecting them in the afternoon. If you are late in picking your child up they will be sent up to the office to wait and be collected. Please notify us if a person other than the parent or guardian is collecting your child. You can do this via a telephone call or message in the communication book.

Appointments

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel welcome to approach the teacher. It would probably be best to make an appointment time for either before or after school, as once school is in progress we must give our full attention to the children.
The Early years Curriculum has been written to support Prep teachers who work with children and families in the year prior to starting Year One. There are five important building blocks that teachers consider when they plan their programs for young children. The Early Years Curriculum provides advice to teachers in relation to each of these five areas:

**The 5 key contexts of a quality Prep curriculum:**

1. Real-life situations
2. Investigations
3. Routine and Transitions
4. Focused Learning and Teaching
5. Play

At Prep, we aim to support each child as they develop their skills to become successful lifelong learners.

**We help children develop the following skills:**

Social and personal skills
Ability to make healthy choices
Fine and gross motor skills
Language and communication skills
Early Mathematical understanding
Active Learning processes - Art, Computer and Music

**AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM**

In 2012, the Australian Curriculum was introduced. The Foundation level Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science, History and Geography will continue to be implemented. There are specific content descriptors for Prep in these areas, organised under a range of strands. There are also achievements standards for all Prep students to be attained by the end of the year. Whilst these content descriptors and achievement standards will guide the ‘what’ to be taught in Prep, the Queensland Early Years Curriculum Guidelines will continue to be the ‘how’ we teach Prep in Queensland.
Preparation for Prep

Your child will experience greater success and feel confident in Prep if he or she enters into school with many of the skills listed below. The single most critical element to your child’s success throughout all his or her years in school will be if he or she is ready to learn. Students should be interested and motivated and realise that they are going to school to learn. Many children when they start school in January simply do not understand this concept. It will be most helpful if you as interested and involved parents help them to realise that they need to listen, pay attention, and remember what they are practising in school.

Children need to become independent in Prep. Please encourage them to:

1. Dress themselves (button, zip, tuck in shirt). These skills are very helpful for children going to the bathroom independently.

2. Put their shoes and socks on and tie their shoe laces.

3. Use a tissue correctly and blow their nose. Wash and dry their hands correctly.

4. Open items in a lunch box – unwrap sandwiches, open and close lids, etc

5. Carry their own belongings, put away and identify their belongings.

6. Use a variety of equipment such as crayons, scissors, sticky-tape, stapler, hole punch and glue.

7. Listen, do, and stay focused for a period of ten minutes. Respond when being spoken to.

8. Take turns, share and use appropriate manners.

9. Make their needs known (tell the teacher if they need to go to the toilet).

10. Use appropriate greetings.

11. Experience group situations (Kindy, day-care, library groups, playgroup etc) if possible.

12. Count to 10 or more.

13. Look at books at home and print around the home.

14. Attempt to recognise and write their name.
Your child needs to bring

- **School bag** big enough to carry all belongings—please ensure the bag is not too small
  (Large enough to fit a document wallet)
- **Legionnaire/wide brim hat**- This school follows the Sun Safe Policy “no hat, no play”
- **Uniform**- Prep child will be required to wear the school’s Prep uniform. This can be purchased from Sarina Menswear.
- **Shoes**- Child must wear closed in shoes.
- **Spare Clothes**- Please ensure that your child brings a full set of spare clothes to Prep every day. These clothes need to be placed in a plastic bag and will be kept in your child’s school bag. This is in case of any accidents that could occur throughout the day. Don’t forget to include spare socks.
- **Lunch**- This school has a healthy food policy and we ask that your child has these things in their lunch each day.

  A piece of fruit  A nutritious lunch  Healthy snack (labelled)

- Please keep lollies, snack bars, 100s and 1000s, and roll ups for home.
- **Water bottle** (named) with water only please
- **Library bag**- a school library bag can be purchased or alternatively a drawstring bag can be used.

Please keep the following items at home:

- ✔️ jewellery  ✔️ toys  ✔️ lollies  ✔️ cash
Prep can be a scary time for some children (and some mums and dads too). Starting school is something that children have probably been thinking about all summer. Now, they walk into a new room with all these new children, and new grownups, and new “stuff” and maybe Mum looks a little teary-eyed that her “baby” is growing up so fast... well it’s no wonder some children suddenly cling to parents and cry! Here are a few tips for getting through those first few days.

- **Try to act confident yourself.** If you seem anxious and unsure about leaving your child at school, children pick up on that and start wondering if there really is something to worry about!

- **If possible, plan on staying for 5 or 10 minutes** the first day getting your child settled. A longer or shorter amount of time may make separation harder. The classroom doors open at 8:30 and school begins at 8:45. This will give you a 15 minute period to play and settle your child.

- When it is time for you to leave, make sure you **say goodbye**. Trying to “sneak out” when the child is busy and not looking, sometimes makes children panic a few minutes later, and may make separation even more difficult the next day.

- Separation problems sometimes show up on the second or third day, just when you think you’re getting off easy! It is also common for children to have problems when there are **major changes** in the home. Let us know if there is anything happening at your house that you think is important for us to know.

- If your child is having an especially hard time, we will give you a call at home or work.

- Don’t be surprised if your child is exhausted! They would have participated in many activities and often arrive home tired. Give your child a chance to unwind from Prep.

- Please remember that we really do understand how hard this can be. We know that you are entrusting us with a very precious gift, and we feel very honoured that we will be your child’s first school teacher/s.

*Time spent teaching... is never lost*
Alligator Creek Prep Levy

What is the “Prep Levy?”
Traditionally, in Years 1 to 7, parents are asked to provide their child with a set of stationery, workbooks and other consumable type items, for use in the classroom and learning program for the year. It is generally the parents’ responsibility to purchase these items from an appropriate supplier (e.g. newsagency), or make a payment to the school to cover the cost for the school to supply some items. The Prep Levy is the Prep equivalent of the traditional ‘book list’, and is in effect a payment to the school to allow us to equip your child with a full set of resources for the year. Resources purchased will remain at school for ready use as required.

Please note: funds derived from parents paying for the ‘levy’ will not replace the school’s responsibility to fund other necessary resources and equipment, but rather will add to other school-based and government funding. All Prep Levy payments will be deployed to support the Prep program.

How does it work?
1. Parents make a single, one-off payment to the school.
2. The school makes bulk purchases through accredited suppliers as required.
3. Your child will be issued with all day-to-day requirements (resources and materials) as required, for the year.

Why is Prep different from other Years?
• Prep is about hands-on, play-based learning which requires extensive use of a wide range of consumable resources.
• It is difficult for young children, especially at the beginning of the year, to manage their own individual kit of materials.
• It is much easier and more practical to pool class sets of resources which can be issued as required, and collected for safe storage ready for next time.

What are the advantages?
Making payment of the ‘Levy’ ensures:
• A one-stop-shop for parents e.g. no shopping around to get the best buy, or wondering if this is what the school is looking for.
• Peace of mind e.g. you can be assured that your child has everything they need, of the appropriate quality, every day.
• Minimal confusion and angst for children e.g. “She’s got my pencil!” OR “My scissors are better than yours.”
• Best of all, cost-effectiveness – we can make your dollar go further by buying in bulk.
• Keep your receipt and claim on your tax return.

What will my payment buy for my child?
Payment will cover the cost of:
• Consumable items used on a daily basis including: stationery (pencils, markers, paper, folders, etc); art, craft and construction supplies (paint brushes, scissors; glue, sticky tape, crayons, etc.); foods and ingredients for preparation and cooking.
• Individual folios (materials and production) which will be compiled by your child’s teacher throughout the year, for your child. Folios include work samples and other items which show milestones achieved and record your child’s learning journey. Folios will be presented to parents at the end of the year as a lasting memento of their child’s first year of school.

The Payment
1. A payment of $120 per Prep child will be required by week 6 of Term 1. An invoice will be sent home when payment is due.
2. Please include payment with the response slip included with this notice.

[It may be possible to enter into a written agreement with the school to pay the ‘Levy’ in instalments. Please see the Deputy Principal for further information.]

Alligator Creek State School Prep Levy

Please include this slip with payment and return to the school

Name of Prep Child: ___________________________________________________

Class / Teacher (if known): ______________________________________________

Payment of $120 is enclosed for the Prep Levy.