PARENT INFORMATION

PREP 2014

ORIENTATION
Dear Families,

Welcome to St Catherine’s Catholic Primary School. In this information booklet you may find some suggestions that are helpful and useful in preparing your child for school. School is not only a new experience for children, but for parents as well.

In the first few weeks your child will be rather tired as school is a new and exciting adventure. Your child may experience a mixture of emotions, either being anxious or over excited. They may remain calm, taking it all in their stride, or perhaps they may want to tell you about it.

Please take the time to listen to all your child has to say.

**SCHOOL HOURS**

The school day commences each day at 8.50am and finishes at 3.15pm.

Please ensure that your child is at school by 8.35am in order for class to begin promptly. This will allow enough time for your child to unpack and settle in for the day’s activities. Late arrivals are disruptive to the class and can cause anxiety for your child. The “Late Arrival” book must be filled in at the office before proceeding to class. Likewise, if your child is required to leave school early, the “Early Departure” book will need to be completed at the office and your child will then be called to office to meet you.

**TERM DATES FOR 2014**

| Years 1 - 6 | Term 1: 29th January – 4th April |
| PREPS: Wednesday – rest day at home till week ending 7th March, 2014 | Term 2: 22nd April – 27th June |
| Term 3: 14th July – 19th September | Term 4: 6th October – 19th December |


NEWSLETTERS

A weekly newsletter is published each Wednesday and uploaded to our website: www.stcberwick.catholic.edu.au
Please help your child by keeping up to date with the school activities.

COMMUNICATION

Parents own understanding and support is an essential factor. Communication and co-operation between parent and teacher is encouraged to ensure the welfare and happiness of your child. The class teacher should always be the first port of call.

Parents wishing to discuss any matters with the School Principal or Class Teacher are welcome to do so. This should be arranged by appointment to ensure that the time is suitable for both parents and teacher.

SKOOLBAG APP

The St Catherine’s school app is available for both Apple and Android smart phones. You can download this free app by searching St Catherine’s school name in the App Store. The school newsletter is uploaded onto the app each Wednesday. There is also a calendar of school events, which is regularly updated. The school app also allows the school to send reminders of upcoming events, notification of last minute cancellations and to communicate instantly with parents in the case of an emergency.
IN THE PLAYGROUND

Older siblings tend to tire of their younger brothers / sisters playing with them at recess and lunchtimes. However, your children will naturally be interested in one another at school.

* If your child has been to a pre-school, the older children can help them find a friend from their kinder before going off to play with their own friends.

* If your child feels ‘lost’ and wants to stay with a brother or sister, the older child can ask him or her to bring along a friend, so that the little ones have a chance to establish relationships with children their own age.

* Your older children may have friends with brothers and sisters also starting school. In this case they can take the opportunity to bring the youngsters together in the playground.

* Teachers also take advantage of the classroom situation by teaching children how to approach other children to join in their games.
PERCEPTUAL MOTOR PROGRAM

The Perceptual Motor Program, commonly referred to as P.M.P is a course for Prep students. The program was established at St Catherine’s in 2000 and is an example of how parents and teacher work together for your child’s benefit.

The program involves the development of language, co-ordination, balance and physical education skills in a closely supervised environment. In Prep, PMP sessions require five parents / helpers for 2 sessions a week. PMP offers not only essential development but enjoyment for the children. It is an ideal way for parents to become involved in their child’s learning.

‘Recruitments’ are vital for the success of the program!

Please note a “Working with Children” check is required to enable parents to volunteer within the school.

Please go to the Department of Justice, Working with Children Check site at www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au for application forms.
DRESSING

Teachers would be appreciative if parents would:
* teach your child to tie shoelaces – we encourage Velcro.
* see that all articles brought to school are clearly labelled in a prominent place with your child’s full name
* encourage your child to recognise their own clothing eg. shoes, jumper, school bag.

To be brought from home:
* 1 nylon library bag – available from the Uniform Shop
* 1 pair of underpants and socks (clearly labelled) in a plastic bag
* 1 colouring / puzzle book for the wet day programme
* 1 art smock – available from the Uniform Shop

It is essential that your child has an art smock with their name clearly marked, to ensure the upkeep of their school uniform. We cannot take any responsibility for damage to school uniforms through the use of art materials.
LUNCHES

Your child will have the opportunity to eat a morning snack at 10.30am and lunch at 12.40pm. All food is consumed within the classroom, before the children are allowed outside to play.

It has been observed in the classroom, that children who eat ‘healthy’ lunches are best able to last through the physical demands of the day. A ‘healthy’ lunch may include:

* a piece of fresh fruit or vegetable
* a piece of cheese
* a muesli bar
* a sandwich or large ‘salada’ / cracker with suitable filling
* water

Lunchbox ‘treats’ such as sweets, chips and donuts, though convenient and ‘yummy’ are just that – treats! They don’t provide the long-lasting energy that children require.
HINTS FOR HELPING YOUR CHILD

1. **Assure your child of Security**
   Help your child feel they are wanted. Let them know that the people at school care about and for them.

2. **Help your child live Democratically.**
   Help your child to ‘take turns’, to share, respect property – their own and others, to be polite, to listen when someone else is talking. To use words such as, please’, ‘thankyou’, ‘yes’, ‘no’.

3. **Help your child Develop Independence and Self Confidence**
   Provide opportunities for your child to play freely and to amuse themselves. To create things – painting, drawing, cutting and then praise your child. Teach your child to tie his/her shoelaces, to dress themselves and to manage the toilet independently.

4. **Make time to Listen and Answer questions.**
   Encourage your child to talk with you. Show a real interest in what your child is sharing with you. Make time to talk to your child and listen. Read stories together.

5. **Encourage Clear Speech**
   Encourage your child to speak clearly in ‘full sentences’ without baby talk. Speak clearly yourself, as children imitate what they hear. Include your child in the ‘dinner table’ conversation. Encourage your child to say their full name clearly.

6. **Teach your child Responsibility**
   Teach your child to put away their toys and materials after using them. Encourage your child to do simple chores around the house, to set the table. Label all school uniform items so that your child can identify their belongings easily.
GENERAL INTERESTS

EATING

At school children need to:

- feed themselves
- unwrap and open their food
- unscrew a drink bottle
- peel a piece of fruit
- open containers and lunchboxes

Please note that all St Catherine’s children take home their wrappings and peels as we are a Rubbish Free School.

TOILETING

Children need to:

- go to the toilet by themselves
- flush the toilet
- wash their hands
- tuck themselves in
- recognise the signs on the toilet doors
- practise using a urinal (boys)
SICKNESS

Young children in their first year at school are especially prone to illness. Children showing obvious signs of illness are not to be sent to school. If your child complains of illness at school he or she will be allowed to rest for a short time. The teacher will then assess whether your child should be returned to the classroom or sent home for complete rest. If the latter is required, you may receive a phone call asking you to come and collect your child from school.

It would be appreciated if parents would keep their child at home if their child has a temperature, a running nose, bad cough or any other worrying symptoms. Please refer to the School Handbook for illness procedures and whether your child is required to stay home. A child who is unwell is unhappy at school and therefore cannot be expected to learn.

ABSENCES

If your child is absent from school please telephone the office in the morning and a written note of explanation must be given to your child’s teacher upon their return to school. It is necessary to notify the school if your child is suffering from an infectious complaint.

HOLIDAYS

Please try to arrange family holidays during the school holiday period. Inform your child’s teacher in writing of any planned holidays occurring during the school term.
DURING THE FIRST FEW WEEKS

Your child may cry every morning and not want to come. They may wet the bed or be extremely tired. These may be because your child may lack confidence and is finding the break from home quite difficult.

We know that independent and self-reliant children are best able to overcome problems they are sure to encounter. The sooner your child learns to be responsible for themselves and their possessions, the sooner your child will gain self-confidence and confidence in those around them.

Please let us know if your child is experiencing difficulties so that together we can help your child to realise their capabilities. Encourage your child to become independent. Promoting your child’s strengths and talents and helping them to discover a sense of ‘self’, requires co-operation and indeed a partnership between home and school.

EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children need to feel secure and loved to be able to cope with the separation anxiety that school brings. Tell your child that you will be leaving them at school, but that you will be back. Children will be confident and develop a sense of security with the consistent routines that develop around their school life e.g. getting dressed for school, packing their bag, going to bed on time, etc.