



PREP HANDBOOK 2024



Starting Strong

74 Agnes St, Birkdale Q 4159

Phone: 3286 0777

Email: admin@birkdaless.eq.edu.au



QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT



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Welcome to Birkdale State School!

The time has arrived for your child to attend the Prep Year. This often creates change and challenges for your child and family. You will no doubt have many questions and we aim to give you the information you will need through this handbook, our school website and most importantly through your communication with our friendly staff.

A sincere welcome is extended to you and we trust that your child's learning experience in our school will be an exciting and positive one supported by all members of our school community. We look forward to sharing in your child's learning journey and celebrating their successes together.

Important Information:

Contact Details

School Administration Office: 3286 0777

Student Absence: 3286 0777

After School Care: 0407 913 040

Address: Agnes Street

BIRKDALE QLD 4159

Email: admin@birkdaless.eq.edu.au

Website: www.birkdaless.eq.edu.au



Our Leadership Team:

Principal:	Brendan Smith
Deputy Principal (P-2):	Jenni Mann
Deputy Principal (Yr 3-6)	Jodie Smith
Head of Inclusion:	Leesa Kirsons
Head of Department Curriculum:	Kate Hyder

Important Dates for 2024:

Term 1:	Monday, 22nd January – Thursday, 28th March
Term 2:	Monday, 15th April – Friday, 21st June
Term 3:	Monday, 8th July – Friday, 13th September
Term 4:	Monday, 30th September – Friday, 13th December
Student Free Day:	Friday, 30th August



About Prep

Queensland children are required to undertake Prep prior to Year 1. Prep is a full-time program that children attend from Monday to Friday during normal school hours from 9am to 3pm.

To be eligible for Prep, **children must be aged 5 years by 30 June in the year they start Prep.**

Prep is the start of the early stage of learning which continues until Year 2. It is available in all Queensland state schools and most non-state schools offering a primary program.

Prep provides the foundation for your child's success at school by developing:

- the knowledge, understanding and skills detailed in the Australian Curriculum Foundation Year
- a positive approach to learning
- independence and confidence
- creativity and problem-solving skills
- physical abilities, including gross and fine motor skills.

In Prep, teachers support children's learning by making connections between school and their experiences at home, kindergarten or childcare.

Prep Curriculum



Our Prep classes successfully implement the Foundation Year of the [Australian Curriculum \(External link\)](#). These curriculum documents provide us with knowledge and guidance to differentiate and meet the individual needs of the children while supporting your child to reach their potential.

In Prep, your child will have opportunities to learn in many different ways. This includes active learning such as play-based and explicit teaching approaches. They make decisions, solve problems, develop thinking skills, collaborate, communicate and develop a positive sense of self.

Prep As Part of the School Community

- Prep students will access specialist teacher delivered lessons in Music, The Arts, Japanese, STEM and Physical Education. They will also visit the library each week.
- Tuckshop is open from Tuesdays through to Fridays and is available for Preps. A breakfast menu is available from 8:30-8:45am for cash sales only. Ordering is done online through *Flexischools*. (www.flexischools.com.au)
- Preps will attend the school assemblies when they have settled into school. Assemblies are at 2:30pm every Friday. Parents/caregivers are very welcome to attend.

Sport's House

The students are divided into one of three sport's houses.

WILSON (green)

McNEILLY (yellow)

WOODGATE (red)

They have been named after the first three students enrolled at the school in 1916. Students from the one family are placed in the same house.

Getting Your Child Set For Prep

Starting school can be an exciting time for you and your child. For some children it may be the first time that they have been away from their parents. They may be going into a strange environment with unfamiliar people and things around them. There are some simple steps you can take to help make your child's transition to school more enjoyable and relaxed. Download a [starting school map \(PDF, 2.1MB\)](#).

Encourage your child to be independent by helping them to get used to:

- putting on and doing up shoes
- eating and drinking without help (opening lunchboxes, wrapping and unwrapping school lunches and drinking from drink bottles)
- caring for and putting away play things
- using a handkerchief or tissue
- going to the toilet independently
- using playground equipment safely
- carrying his or her own bag
- identifying belongings
- using words to make his or her own needs known
- using appropriate greetings
- responding verbally when spoken to
- knowing their name
- knowing their parents' names.



The First Day

We aim to make the first day at Prep a happy one for your child. We will be working hard to make sure that everything goes as smoothly as possible. We'll have lots of smiles, fun and laughter. Our routine will be simple and consistent, allowing the children to feel confident and happy in their new classroom.

Here are just a few hints to make the first day go smoothly:

- The school day starts at 8:50am. Please be on time.
- Be positive. Talk about new things in a happy way.
- Familiarise children with staff names
- Don't 'sneak' away. Always tell your child when you are leaving and that you will be back at the end of the day.
- Once you have said goodbye and are leaving, please go as quickly as possible –upset children invariably settle down after that initial departure from Mum, Dad or caregiver.

Please do not hesitate to discuss any concerns or worries that you may have regarding your child with their class teacher.



Prep Children's Requirements

Prep children will require:

- A school hat is provided by our P&C in Prep. As part of sun safety, it is school policy that all students wear sun safe hats (not caps) when engaged in outdoor activity. Our school has a 'no hat, no play' rule.
- Students are required to wear black covered in shoes for safety and to suit their activities. This could include shoes with laces or velcro straps to enable independence, if students are unable to tie shoelaces.
- School bag - large enough for your child to place all their belongings in and easily manage. A bag that is too small makes it difficult for your child to be responsible for all their belongings, and to develop their independence.
- Library bag. Bags could include shopping bags, old pillowcases, or other bag options if a library bag is not able to be obtained.
- Fruit break/brain break (fruit/vegetable), lunch and a healthy afternoon tea daily
- Excursions and Incursions are an important part of our curriculum. If you experience financial difficulty, please discuss this with your teacher.

School Uniforms

Birkdale State School is a uniform school and expects students to wear the appropriate school uniform, take pride in their appearance and follow the school dress code. From July 2023, Birkdale State School has partnered with Queensland's local premium quality uniform provider *Weareco Smart Clothing* – operating a *Wearitto Smart Clothing Centre* nestled in-school to provide the best of both worlds in garment production, design and management. *Weareco* offers an online ordering system and home delivery. Order online at www.wearitto.com.au or email birkdaless@wearitto.com.au.



Prep Teacher Aides

Our Prep teacher aides are an integral part our team. Our teacher aides are experienced with children and families and work closely with all members our Birkdale State School Prep team.



Parent and Caregivers at Prep and Volunteering in the Classroom

Parents, caregivers and relatives play a vital and valued role in the education of each child. We encourage your involvement once the children have settled into Prep. You can assist by:

- Visiting the classroom and joining in with our experiences
- Reading our fortnightly electronic newsletter
- Supporting excursions and special events
- Reading to your child daily
- Supporting us by talking with your child about their day
- Supporting our rules and consequences
- Informing us of any concerns, ideas or suggestions that you have
- Read all the information in order to be familiar with our policies, routines and practices.
- has a spare change of clothes and underwear (in a plastic bag), "just in case." These can be kept in your child's bag at all times.
- Please clearly label **ALL** your child's belongings. This is especially important for hats, jumpers as well as lunchboxes.
- The teachers are always happy to discuss any matters. Please make an appointment at a mutually convenient time
- Ensure you keep the school office informed of any changes of phone numbers, address, or emergency contact numbers in event of illness or accident
- parents are asked to sign in at the office when staying at Prep for any purpose.
- toys and trinkets from home very often become lost or broken at school, so it saves a lot of time and heartache if these are left at home
- sometimes items get lost and these can be looked for in the lost property box located just outside the entrance to the library

Confidentiality within the classroom is vital. It is not appropriate to discuss happenings within the classroom with any person. Each volunteer must complete a Mandatory Training information booklet before assisting in the classroom. All grandparents and extended family must present their Blue Card before volunteering in the classroom.

It is important to encourage your child's independence and self-reliance in the classroom

Daily Routine

This is an outline of your Prep child's daily routine:

8:50 - 11:00	Morning session
10:00	Munch and Crunch
11:00-11:45	Lunch and playtime
11:45-1:15	Middle Session
1:15-1:45	Afternoon Tea and playtime
1:45-3:00	Afternoon session



Every Day Counts

1 or 2 days a week doesn't seem much but...

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...	Which means the best your child might perform is...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Almost 1.5 years	Equal to finishing in grade 11
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2.5 years	Equal to finishing in grade 10
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years	Equal to finishing in grade 7
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Almost 8 years	Equal to finishing at grade 4

It is compulsory for students to attend Prep. Going to Prep every day helps your child to build a positive approach to learning and develop social and emotional skills.

Arrival

Prep students are supervised in the school Library from 8:30am each morning. If you arrive before the library is open, you are required to wait with your child. Please note that the Prep playground is not open before or after school. Class rolls are marked at 9am. If your child arrives after this time you are required to attend at the school office to sign in and obtain a late arrival slip before going to class. This will ensure your child's attendance record is adjusted accordingly. Please ensure that your child is at school on time. This way, your child does not miss any valuable group learning experiences or feel upset when entering the room.

If you are helping in the classroom in any sessions, please make sure that you sign in at the office as a visitor. Please encourage your child to unpack their schoolbag and complete their morning tasks before taking them to the library.

Departure

School concludes at 3:00pm every day. Students are to be collected from outside their classrooms. We ask that parents wait away from the classroom until the bell rings at 3:00pm so as not to distract the students. Students may not follow instructions or become emotional if they can see someone they know waiting outside. Parents are asked to wait on the grass area at the front of the school or in the under covered areas.

The end of the day routine involves the students packing up the classroom activities and packing their own bags, with support from both teacher and teacher aides. The door will then be opened and the children will be let out one by one once a known adult or sibling is in the area. After 3:10pm, any children still waiting to be collected will be taken to the office to wait.

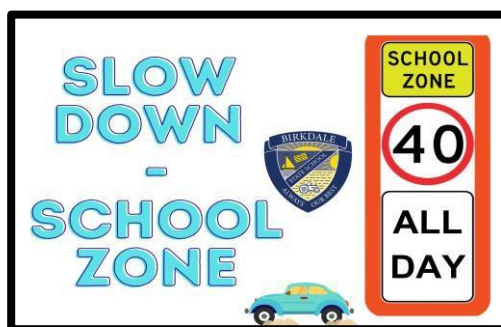
Late Arrivals

Please telephone the student absentee line by 9:00am on 3286 0777 if your child will be arriving late to school. If you do not phone the absentee line, you will receive an SMS notification requesting you to provide a reason for your child's absence.

Upon arrival, please attend at the school office to sign in and obtain a late arrival slip before going to class. This will ensure your child's attendance is correctly recorded on the class roll.

Early Departures

From time to time you may need to pick up your child early from school. You will need to inform the class teacher about this beforehand and sign your child out at the school office. Your child's teacher will then be contacted to send your child to the office with their school bag for collection. Remember, early departures should be for emergencies only.



Parking

Parking for schools is often a problem due to the number of people who wish to access the school at very specific times – drop off and pick up.

At Birkdale SS we have a large campus with a significant number of parents needing to access the school during these times. Very limited on-site disability parking is available in the Staff Carpark and in front of the school office on Agnes Street. This is available for cars with permits.

Parking is available on Agnes and Mary Street —there is **no parking** available for parents in the school grounds.

Parking in the Staff Carpark endangers the lives of children who are entering and leaving the school grounds at this very busy period of the day.

Loading Zones (2 minute Drop and Go) and bus zones are located on Agnes Street outside the front of the school. It is important for the safety of our students that these **are kept free of parked vehicles, as per signage**. These signed 2 minute zones are enforceable by Council's Local Law Officers.

PCYC School Aged Care

PCYC (Qld Police Citizens Youth Welfare Association) School Aged Care services operate from 6:30-8:50am for before school care; and 3:00-6:00pm for after school care. Vacation care is available on enquiry. PCYC will also offer care on Student Free Days.

Fees are payable on the day that care is used. Some parents may be eligible for a fee relief. You are advised to discuss this at the time of booking with PCYC staff. Contact details are available from the school office or by visiting the PCYC building on site before or after school.

Telephone: 0407 913 040 Email: birkdalesac@pcyc.org.au

Student Code of Conduct

At Birkdale State School we believe that student behaviour is a part of the overall teaching and learning approach in our school. Our staff take responsibility for making their expectations clear, for providing supportive instruction about how to meet these expectations, and strive to use behavioural incidents as opportunities to teach. All classroom expectations are based on our Birkdale State School Code of Conduct for students.

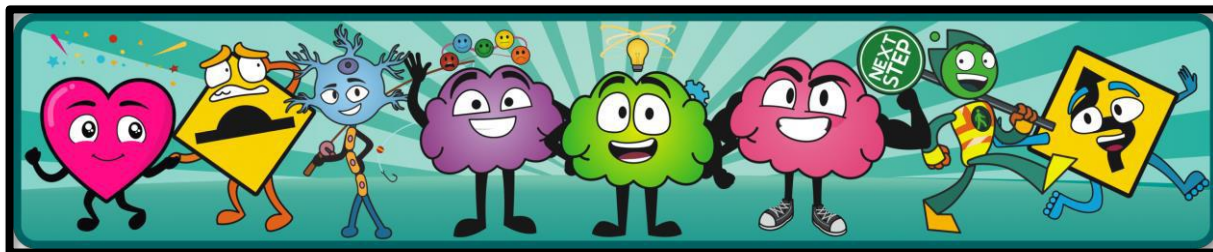
High 5 Strategy



At Birkdale State School we use a problem-solving strategy called the 'High 5' to help develop our problem solving and independence in solving our social issues. The strategy can be used in the classroom or the playground or at home with brothers and sisters. We practice the strategy and the words to use at school and in the playground with role plays, modelling and coaching however you may also like to practice at home.

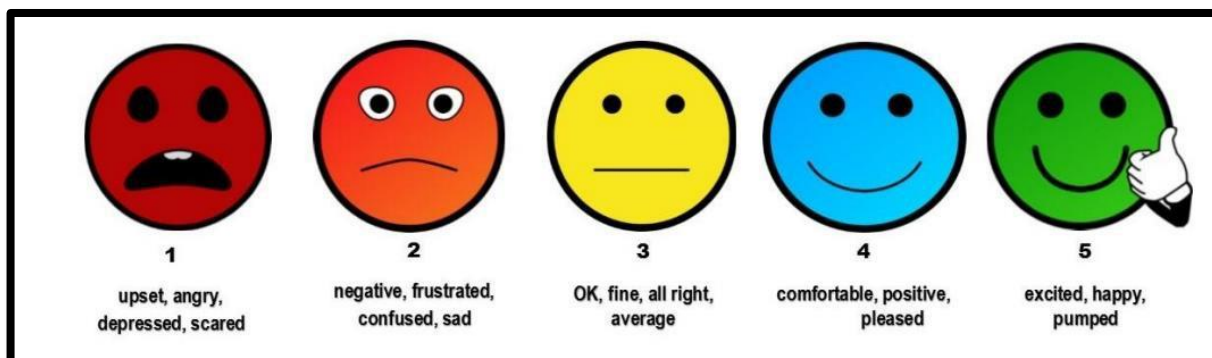
Ignore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pretend you didn't hear it • Take deep breaths • Do not make eye contact. • Count to five in your head • Think positive self-esteem statements. • Practice - Use role play to show what ignore - looks like, feels like and sounds like.
Friendly Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a calm voice. • Redirect to the game, a positive activity/behaviour • Maintain eye contact. • Use confident body language. • Use "I" statements – I feel when you because....
Walk Away	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not look back. Walk confidently, do not run. • Look confident - stand tall, head up high. • Do not make eye contact. • Walk away to a busy area or towards a staff member.
Firm Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an assertive, loud voice. • Re-state your "I" statement. e.g. I said I feel when you because.... • Tell them to stop. • Look confident - stand tall, head up high. • Walk away to a busy area or to a staff member.
Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk away and tell a staff member. • Bystanders also need to support and report. • Report, report, report until somebody listens. • Reporting is helping/getting yourself out of trouble. • Dabbing is trying to get someone in trouble.

Reboot



At Birkdale State School we believe it is important for our children to become more aware of their emotions and realise it's okay to discuss how they feel. We are empowering our children with the tools/strategies to problem-solve and support the regulation of their emotions and their behaviours. We believe it is vital for our children to understand that looking after ourselves mentally is just as important as looking after ourselves physically.

All classes at Birkdale State School will use the Reboot zones to help children identify their emotions and support children in being able to recognise strategies that can support them in each zone. In addition, all staff have been trained and model the language of the zones every day across our school. All children will participate in the explicit teaching of each Zone and tools/strategies to support them.



Lunch Suggestions

We encourage children to eat healthy choices first and leave 'treats' for later. Containers need to be easy to open, food should not need reheating or cutting up, and spoons or forks need to be included, if needed, so that your child can independently manage their food. Planning interesting and different school lunches can be difficult! The following are some suggestions and ideas for you.

- A piece of fruit will often cost less and has more nutritional value than pre-packaged items such as potato chips, chocolate yoghurts and other junk foods.
- Children usually find raw vegetables fun to eat, and they have more vitamins than when you cook them

Teacher's Notes:

- please **NO** canned goods (the contents of tins can be transferred to plastic containers, or a thermos, as the metal ring has been known to snap).
- Please note that we are unable to heat **ANY** food (as per WPH&S regulations)

Planning a healthy lunchbox

smart

CHOICES

Healthy eating at our school

So your children get the right amount of food and nutrients each day, make sure there is a wide variety of food in their lunchbox. All children, no matter what their weight, height, gender or age, need to eat from the five core food groups every day. To achieve this, include at least one food from each of the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* five core food groups in your child's lunchbox daily.

Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties

- Wholegrain bread and bread rolls
- Wholegrain cereals
- Wholegrain pita/pocket bread
- Lavash bread
- Turkish bread
- Fruit bread
- Home-made mini pizzas
- Pasta or noodles
- Rice
- Rice cakes
- Crackers and crispbreads
- Pikelets, muffins and scones

www.eat4health.gov.au

Vegetables and legumes/beans

- Salads – tomatoes, carrots, cucumber, celery, lettuce, sprouts, corn on the cob
- Vegetables – stir-fried, corn on the cob, carrot sticks, capsicum slices, snow peas
- Reduced fat potato salad or coleslaw
- Small can of baked beans¹

Include a bottle of water in the lunchbox every day

Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans

- Sliced cooked lean meats – lamb, ham, chicken, roast beef, turkey
- Boiled eggs
- Tuna/salmon¹
- Legumes including baked beans, chickpeas, lentils, butter beans, kidney beans¹

Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat²

- Reduced fat milk
- Soy milk (or other cow's milk alternative) with added calcium
- Reduced fat cheese
- Reduced fat yoghurt

Fruit

- Fresh whole fruit
- Fruit salad
- Canned fruit in natural juice
- Dried fruit (30 g serve, or 4 dried apricot halves or 1 ½ tablespoons sultanas)

¹ When using canned food, choose reduced salt where possible
² The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* recommend reduced fat dairy products for children over the age of two years

Due to the occurrence of students with allergies, especially to nuts, parents are asked to avoid sending any nuts or nut-related foods to school.

Munch and Crunch

At around 10:00am each day our children will be given a 'brain food break', to allow them to have a healthy snack during the 2-hour session that begins our day. Foods such as sliced fruit, carrots, celery or seeds are great for this break.

Birthdays



Birthdays and other celebrations are wonderful ways to build understanding about one another. Should you wish to share a birthday treat with the class, Birthday Buckets are available from the school tuckshop for \$15. They are filled with a Zooper Dooper for each child in the class, a balloon, bubbles and a birthday certificate. Please check with your teacher regarding allergies and the number of children in your class to ensure we have enough for everyone to celebrate.

Medication

Should your child require medication while at school an *Administration of Medication at School Record Sheet* must be completed and strict medication labelling requirements must be fulfilled. Full information is available from the school office.

Illness and Accidents

While being at school every day for learning is important, disease outbreaks in early childhood education and schools are more common due to groups of children playing closely together. Some medical conditions require children to be excluded from school or child care to prevent the spread of infectious diseases among other children and staff, as well as the community.



The [Time Out Brochure](#) provides information for parents about infectious diseases and exclusion periods in Queensland early childhood education centres and schools.

Please phone the student absentee line 3286 0777 by 9am to report an absence. If you do not phone the student absentee line by 9am you will receive an SMS notification to advise your child is not in attendance and you will be required to phone the office to explain the absence.

If your child should become ill or have an accident at school, first aid will be administered and a parent or emergency contact will be contacted. Children will be sent home if they appear unwell.



Lost Property

Make sure your child's items are named to prevent loss. Please make regular checks of the lost property.

Events in Family Life

Events such as a major illness, visits by grandparents or other relatives, an accident or death of relatives, friends or pets can impact greatly upon children and may markedly affect their behaviour. It is important for home and Prep to share information that may affect your child. We would be most grateful if parents would inform the teacher of any unusual happenings.

And finally,

We look forward to building productive partnerships as we learn and grow together. We are here to provide quality Prep education for your child. Please do not hesitate to discuss any questions or concerns you may have. We are looking forward to our association with you and your child in Prep at Birkdale State School in 2024.