

McDOWALL STATE SCHOOL



PREPARATORY YEAR

The Preparatory Year is:

- ◆ A full time 5-day a week programme.
- ◆ Considered as the first year of Primary schooling.
- ◆ Available in all State Primary Schools.
- ◆ Available to all children turning 5 years by 30 June in the year of enrolment in the Preparatory Year.

In addition:

- ◆ Preschool is no longer available in State Primary Schools.

PREPARATORY YEAR – ENROLMENT

- ◆ Applications for Enrolment into the Preparatory Year at McDowall State School are available annually from February the preceding year, through School Administration or the school website www.mcdowallss.eq.edu.au. Parents are contacted from September to arrange a pre-enrolment interview with the Deputy Principal P-1. Parents of prospective new enrolments need to ensure that their contact details remain current at School Administration or the lodged Enrolment Application may be cancelled.
- ◆ Children in the Preparatory Year are full time. Children are expected to attend Monday-Friday, generally 8.20am-2.30pm at McDowall SS.
- ◆ Children entering the Preparatory Year must be 5 years of age by 30th June in the year of enrolment.
- ◆ The Preparatory Year is the first year of school and provides the foundation for a child's formal education.

Children who are younger than the prescribed age for the Preparatory Year may be enrolled if they:

- ▶ Turn 5 years by 31st July in the year of proposed attendance; and
- ▶ The Principal is satisfied that the child is ready for education in the Preparatory Year, having regard to the child's attributes (including ability, aptitude, social and emotional competence, physical development; and level of knowledge and understanding).

The Principal may also enrol a child who is younger than the prescribed age into the Preparatory Year if the child:

- ▶ Has previously started education that is equivalent to the Preparatory Year in another state, territory or country; and
- ▶ Is considered ready for education in the Preparatory Year in regard to their attributes (including ability, aptitude, social and emotional competence, physical development; and level of knowledge and understanding).
- ▶ A programme is considered to be equivalent to the Preparatory Year if it is full time, school based; and has a defined curriculum delivered in the year prior to Year 1.

There are no exceptions to these requirements. The parent is expected to provide satisfactory evidence and appropriate documentation that the child is entitled to apply for enrolment.

Queensland kindergarten and Preparatory Year eligibility requirements now align with New South Wales. These cut-off ages are the youngest starting ages in Australia so parents (and Principals) need to seriously consider the readiness of a child to engage within formal education. Kindergarten is an important preparation for the Preparatory Year. Developmental play in kindergarten is critical in terms of ensuring child readiness for primary school.



It is not compulsory for a child to attend the Preparatory Year as soon as they are old enough. Eg. 5 years by 30th June in the year they enrol. Parents may delay their child's entry by one year if they feel that their child is not ready for formal education. The child will start school in the Preparatory Year.

Aptitude and Ability Examples

- ▶ Confidently makes choices/decisions and follows through.
- ▶ Makes several attempts to complete a new or challenging experience before seeking help.
- ▶ Talks confidently, including expressing feelings and ideas, to familiar and unfamiliar people.
- ▶ Attempts to resolve conflict by suggesting modelled strategies.
- ▶ Actively participates in familiar and new group learning experiences.
- ▶ Recognises a problem and ways to solve it.
- ▶ Actively seeks and accepts help from familiar and unfamiliar adults.
- ▶ Is willing to contribute thoughts, ideas and solutions.

- ▶ Has awareness of and attention to routines, roles and responsibilities.
- ▶ Responds to ideas using imagination and in a range of ways.
- ▶ Recalls past experiences, events, or discussions.

Social and Emotional Competence Examples

- ▶ Applies awareness of their own and others' rights in familiar situations.
- ▶ Observes, asks questions and explains simple changes to their environment over time.
- ▶ Engages positively with familiar and new experiences, and manages unexpected situations and changes.
- ▶ Eagerly contributes to new and challenging experiences.
- ▶ Talks confidently, including expressing feelings and ideas, to familiar and unfamiliar people.
- ▶ Co-operates with others in a range of social and learning situations. Eg. The child can play and show self-control.
- ▶ Shows respect for others.
- ▶ Demonstrates coping skills and resilience when things don't go to plan.
- ▶ Interacts appropriately with other children and adults.
- ▶ Self-manages own belongings and activities with increased independence.
- ▶ Shows responsibility such as helping to tidy up after activities.
- ▶ Uses language to communicate ideas, knowledge and feelings (oral language, augmentative language). The child can express their own needs.
- ▶ Behaves appropriately in situations. Eg. Rarely or never shows aggressive behaviours, is able to demonstrate helping behaviours.
- ▶ Copes well with separation from parent/s for the duration of the school day.

Physical Development Examples

- ▶ Confidently uses fine and gross motor skills to complete tasks.
- ▶ Sustains active involvement in challenging experiences.
- ▶ Monitors and manages own physical needs. Eg. Toileting.
- ▶ Sustains energy and displays endurance across the learning and routine expectations of a school day.



Level of Knowledge and Understanding Examples

- ▶ Listens, observes and communicates with others in a range of learning contexts.
- ▶ Applies knowledge from past learning to a new learning situation.
- ▶ Applies some modelled or familiar thinking routines to help solve problems.
- ▶ Independently maintains focus when engaging in a range of familiar experiences.
- ▶ Willingly engages in creating and using different types of texts.
- ▶ Experiments with copying and forming letters and assigns a meaning to their writing, uses letter names, if in a familiar context.
- ▶ Uses a variety of vocabulary when classifying, sorting, sequencing and comparing everyday materials and objects.
- ▶ Uses language associated with and shows understanding of spatial positions and directions.
- ▶ Is familiar with printed material. Eg. Can handle a book and can recognise some letters, numbers and symbols.

PREPARATORY YEAR CURRICULUM

The Australian Curriculum: English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, etc will be taught, assessed and reported on in the Preparatory Year. A Student Progress Report is issued at the end of each semester.

Please go to: www.acara.edu.au www.australiancurriculum.edu.au

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

AVAILABILITY & ACCESS

What is the Preparatory Year school starting age?

Children must turn 6 years by 30th June in the year that they enrol in Year 1.

Research shows that children who are older when they begin schooling are more likely to engage with and enjoy learning, and will have greater success throughout their education.



Birthdate:	Eligible for Prep. Year in:	Eligible for Year 1 in:
Child born 1 st July, 2014 – 30 th June, 2015	2020	2021
Child born 1 st July, 2015 – 30 th June, 2016	2021	2022
Child born 1 st July, 2016 – 30 th June, 2017	2022	2023
Child born 1 st July, 2017 – 30 th June, 2018	2023	2024
Child born 1 st July, 2019 – 30 th June, 2020	2024	2025

What facilities are provided in support of the Preparatory Year?

The Preparatory Year classes are located in three purpose-designed buildings. (PA 1-2, PB 1-2 and PC1-2). Additional Primary buildings may be used depending on enrolment. Outdoor learning and play facilities and equipment are provided. Toilets are located between PA 1-2, J Block, the Sports Centre and in School Toilet Blocks.



Will all children be able to access a Preparatory Year?

All children of appropriate age will have access to the Preparatory Year.

An Enrolment Management Plan applies to the McDowall State School, so also applies to Preparatory Year prospective enrolments. Should a child reside within the School Enrolment Catchment Area, there will be no Waiting List for the Preparatory Year. Should a child reside outside the School Enrolment Catchment Area, a Waiting List does apply according to enrolment conditions being met as outlined within the Enrolment Management Plan.

The McDowall State School does enrol children who reside outside the School Enrolment Catchment Area. It is best that Applications for Enrolment are lodged with School Administration as soon as possible during the year preceding prospective child enrolment. Parents should make contact with School Administration.

Will my child be disadvantaged if they do not attend a Preparatory Year?

The Preparatory Year is the first formal year of school. All children must enter Year 1 after having completed the Preparatory Year. The Preparatory Year is designed to provide children with a solid base to the early years of education.

What will the Preparatory Year class sizes be?

Teacher allocations for discrete Preparatory and Multi-Age Early Years Classes will be based on a target size of 25 children.

ENROLMENT & ATTENDANCE

How can I have my child enrolled in the Preparatory Year?

Parents intending to enrol their child in the Preparatory Year should apply to enrol their child at the school they believe would best suit their child's learning needs. Enrolment in the Preparatory Year is the same process as exists for Years 1-6. Please contact McDowall State School Administration each year from February or access the school website for an Enrolment Application. www.mcdowallss.eq.edu.au Parents will be contacted later this same year to arrange attendance at an enrolment interview with the Deputy Principal P-1. During this interview, the school is provided with evidence of date of birth, residence location and other pertinent information that will assist the teacher in providing a quality learning experience for your child. Parent Information Meeting details will also be provided.



Does my child have to attend five days a week?

Yes. Children enrolled in the Preparatory Year are expected to attend full-time, to obtain maximum benefit from the programme.

What are the hours of the Preparatory Year at McDowall State School?

In better managing local area traffic, at McDowall State School, Preparatory to Year 2 students begin formal instruction from 8.20am until 2.30pm on school days. Years 3-6 begin formal instruction from 8.50am until 3pm on school days. During the first four weeks only, parents should deliver their children to these Preparatory Year classrooms at 8.15am and punctually collect them at 2.30pm. After the first four weeks, Preparatory Year students should be encouraged to walk from and to, the school gate, use school bus services and access the Kiss-and-Ride Facility as all other students do. Parking is not available within the school grounds.

When do Preparatory Year children have recess breaks?

Preparatory Year children will have their recess breaks at the same time as Years 1-2. Designated Preparatory Year Covered Areas and playfields are provided. Preparatory Year students do not access the Tartan Tuckerbox (Tuckshop) services during Term 1. After this time, Tuckerbox foodstuffs may be ordered through flexischools online. Information will be provided to parents when this service is about to be made available. Teachers will outline variations to these procedures.

Morning Tea ... 10.30am to 11.10am.

Lunch ... 12.45pm to 1.25pm.



How formal is the Preparatory Year?

The Preparatory Year Programme is as formal as it needs to be in order to deliver the Australian Curriculum. During play, children learn as they engage socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually with people, objects and symbols.

Do Preparatory Year students wear a uniform?

Preparatory Year students at the McDowall State School wear a specific school uniform that enables staff to readily identify a student's support, assistance and supervisory needs. The Preparatory Year school uniform is smart and generally liked by Preparatory Year students. School uniform issues can be better discussed at time of enrolment interview. The school uniform can be purchased from the P&C Association Uniform Shop located beside the Tartan Tuckerbox.

Will Preparatory Year students have a booklist?

Yes. There are a number of items that all Preparatory Year students will require for them to successfully engage within the school programme. These will be published and made available to parents from the beginning of Term 4 each year. Further advice will be made available at Parent Information Meetings during Term 4.



Will children in the Preparatory Class be able to have Rest Time?

There is no requirement for Preparatory Year children to have a formal rest period. Teachers plan programmes that respond to the needs of children and this may involve periods of quiet activity sometime during the day. Generally, it should not be necessary for the majority of children to have a rest time.

Will children in the Preparatory Class be able to go to school-aged care?



Preparatory Year children are eligible for school-aged care. A P&C Association managed Out-of-School Hours Care Programme is available on-site within the school. Alternatively, parents should contact their local outside-school-hours care provider to discuss places and access to this service. OSHC staff collect Preparatory Year students from their classroom. Careful consideration needs to be given to movement arrangements between school and child care.

Will children entering a Preparatory Class be eligible for transport assistance?

Students in the Preparatory Year will be eligible for the same level of transport assistance as other Primary School eligible students. Children who live over 3.2 km from their nearest school or qualify under 'safety net' criteria are eligible for assistance with school bus fares. Provision also exists for transport assistance for students with disabilities.

Independent travel for children of this age needs careful and responsible consideration. It is the school's position that parents should drop off and collect Preparatory Year children from school. This issue needs to be discussed at the Enrolment Interview.

CURRICULUM & LEARNING

What will children be learning?

Simply the Australian Curriculum. www.australiancurriculum.edu.au This curriculum expects that all children entering the Preparatory Year have the pre-requisite knowledge and skills to engage with the learning standard expected of an average Preparatory Year aged child.

Who will teach my child?

Qualified, experienced, registered primary school teachers teach the Preparatory Year. With their professional knowledge and expertise, these teachers are ideally placed to deliver the Preparatory Year Programme.

How much Teacher-Aide time is available for each class?

Each Preparatory Year class teacher will be assisted by teacher-aide time. The amount of time available will depend on the total Preparatory Year enrolment. It is expected that at least 15 hours per week will be available per class each week. On average, the provision is much more. Teacher-Aides may work across the Prep-Year 2 Junior School. Preparatory Year class teachers welcome and encourage parent volunteers to assist them in providing learning activities. Such assistance is well considered by the teacher in terms of timing and appropriateness, weighed against learning outcomes being sought. All volunteer assistance occurs at the discretion of the Principal. If you are available to assist, please discuss involvement opportunities with the class teacher.



Will children learn to read and write in the Preparatory Year?

Teachers will address the specific learning needs of students in their classes. This will include the mastery of beginning reading and writing by students in the Preparatory Year, although students may engage with these skills at different times during the school year, depending on their readiness and ability to do so. The Australian Curriculum outlines clear achievement expectations and standards for student attainment.



How will my child's learning continue after the Preparatory Programme?

The learning programme in Year 1 is shaped to provide continuity of children's learning and development from the Preparatory class. Teachers monitor individual student progress across Preparatory to Year 6. This information is shared with parents each year.



Will a Preparatory Year Programme be provided for students with disabilities?

The Preparatory Year will be provided to children with disabilities. Children with high support needs who cannot be supported in their local Preparatory Year class will continue to be eligible for highly specialized programmes. For example, in Early Special Education Programmes such as Special Education Developmental Units and Centres.

GET SET FOR PREP

There are some simple steps parents can take to make their child's time at school more enjoyable and relaxed. Encourage your child to be independent by helping them get used to:

- Putting on and doing up his or her shoes.
- Eating and drinking without help (opening lunch boxes, wrapping and unwrapping school lunches and drinking from drink bottles.)
- Caring for and putting away play things.
- Using a handkerchief or tissue.
- Using the toilet independently.
- Using playground equipment safely.
- Carrying his or her own bag.
- Identifying his or her own belongings.



Work with you child to develop his or her communication skills. Help your child to:

- Make his or her own needs known.
- Use appropriate greetings.
- Respond verbally when spoken to by an adult.

Familiarise your child with the school environment and routine by:

- Driving or walking by the school a few times so that the school becomes a familiar place.
- Attending the Preparatory Year Open Morning so that you can meet the Preparatory Year teachers and see the classrooms.
- Showing your child where to put his or her things, such as a school bag and hat.
- Making sure that your child knows how to get home from school safely or where to wait for you in the afternoon or where to go for after-school care.
- Visiting the school, if possible, when other children are there so that your child can get used to the number of children, the playground and the movement of children around the school grounds.
- Introducing your child to other children in the same neighbourhood who will be attending the same school.
- Asking the school what will be needed such as a school bag, library bag and hat. McDowall State School has a Book List. Make sure that all possessions are clearly labeled with your child's name.
- Checking with your Kindy or pre-Prep provider about how they can help children make a smooth transition to school.
- Encourage children to understand that teachers are at school to help.

MAKING THE FIRST DAY A SUCCESS

Be prepared. The best thing that a parent can do is to make the first day as stress-free and relaxed as possible. The day before, write a list of all you'll need to organize, such as food and change of clothing. Stick the list to the fridge and tick each item off with your child as you complete it.

- ✓ Leave plenty of time to get ready.
- ✓ Make a nutritious breakfast – This is essential for sustained energy and concentration.
- ✓ Talk through the daily routine – Start, Lunch and Finish Times.

- ✓ Talk through a few simple self-help ideas. Eg. Asking the teacher for help or directions.
- ✓ Be positive and encouraging about your child's attendance at school.
- ✓ Be flexible and patient in the early days of school. Some children may take a little while to settle in.



Being at school is hard work, so by lunch-time your child will be hungry and thirsty. They will need a nutritious and filling lunch.

When packing your child's lunch:

- Provide healthy food and drink in realistic quantities for morning tea and lunch.
- Ensure that your child can open and unwrap their lunch. Eg. No ring-pulled can lids please. Plastic film wrap can be difficult at times.
- Provide a variety of smaller items rather than one or two large items.
- Ask the Preparatory Year teacher what foodstuff works best at school.
- Provide a water bottle every day and encourage your child to drink from it.
- Keep sweets, chips and other party food for parties or special occasions.

WHAT PARENTS CAN DO AT HOME

- ❖ Take an interest in your child's schooling and value the importance of attending. Ask your child over dinner, "What new things did you do at school today?"
- ❖ Read aloud to your child. Reading aloud helps develop the imagination because it allows listeners to form a picture in their minds. It also helps develop an awareness of the patterns of language.
- ❖ Provide a variety of experiences to stimulate your child's imagination. Eg. Visit the zoo, park or an airport.
- ❖ Play card games and board games with your child. This helps to develop mathematical, problem-solving, language and social skills such as turn-taking and not always winning.
- ❖ Spend time together as a family. Activities such as shopping, going to the park or working in the garden build childrens' awareness and knowledge of the world around them as well as developing language skills.
- ❖ Find opportunities to write with your child. Make grocery lists or things to take on holiday. Write letters. This builds childrens' awareness of vocabulary and the importance of reading and writing.
- ❖ Sing familiar songs and nursery rhymes together with your child.
- ❖ Show respect for your child's natural curiosity. Be patient and try to find the time to answer the many questions they ask or make ways to find answers together.
- ❖ Help your child become responsible by encouraging him or her to pass on school notices and newsletters or to pack his or her own school bag each day.

WHY NOT GET INVOLVED AT SCHOOL?

- Introduce yourself to your child's class teacher.
- Keep your child's teacher informed of critical issues and changes that may affect your child at school.
- Talk with your child about their day at school.
- Attend Parent Information Meetings.
- Reading the Tartan Times, school newsletter.
- Attending school events.
- Actively travelling to school by: Walking, Ride a bike, Catch a bus, Park and strike or Car pool with another family.
- Attend Parents' and Citizens' Association Meetings.
- Volunteering to assist during school excursions.
- Involvement during School Working Bees.
- Volunteering to attend and participate in classroom activities.



MORE INFORMATION

Contact: McDowall S.S. Administration on 07 3872 5333 or www.mcdowallss.eq.edu.au