



# Chevallum Prep

## "A Discerning Choice"

### An Information Booklet for Parents

Thank you for your interest in Chevallum State Prep as an option for the education of your Prep child. We understand what an incredibly important decision this is to make and how many different options you are faced with for this first compulsory year of your child's education. Hopefully reading this booklet will help you towards making an informed decision about your child's Prep year.

We realise you may be considering a few options. Amongst these may be other State Preps or Private Preps (eg. centres attached to Private Schools). Each setting has its own unique blend of advantages, and teaching staff and support staff have their own personalities and qualities to add to your child's Prep year. We suggest you take time to visit each setting you are considering. It's a good idea to have some questions listed to ask the staff to help you make an informed decision. Allow time to spend half an hour or so in the environment to see if you could imagine your child being comfortable there and receiving the style of early childhood education that most suits your child, your beliefs and requirements.

If this is your first experience with State Prep, it may be helpful to consider some of the advantages Queensland State Education has to offer:

- A balanced approach to education, play and care
- Nurturing environment
- State-funded with minimal parent contributions
- Manageable group sizes
- Experienced, fully qualified staff
- State funded on-going teacher support and training
- Consistent group of children
- A setting where your child can attend as a natural progression in education, with children they know
- A setting with access to state-funded specialists such as *Second Language Lessons*, *Speech Therapy*, *Learning Support* etc, with the possibility of *Out of School Hours Care* available from 6:30-8.30am and 2.50-6:00pm, and *Vacation Care*.

## Why Choose Chevallum Prep?

### **Our Culture**

Chevallum is a State Prep with a unique culture. Aspects of this culture overflow from the Chevallum State School which remains at the cutting edge of educational practice; providing an education for the individual and retaining the fun of childhood in formal schooling. Chevallum State School has multi-age family grouping from Prep to Year 6, values a broad education, acknowledging Howard Gardner's multiple intelligences and recognising the importance of life-skills. Chevallum has behaviour management policies based on Restorative Practice, teaching children to live well with others without damaging their self-worth and confidence. Chevallum families come from a rich variety of backgrounds equipped with an array of work and life skills, which benefit the education of all our students. Parents initiated our permaculture garden which now supplies fresh produce for our Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program, while others with theatrical, artistic and musical careers organise special projects throughout the year. Whether you are looking at Chevallum Prep only or are intending to continue throughout the primary years, you will enjoy the benefits of this culturally rich environment.

### **Your Child**

Your child is the most important part of what happens at our Prep. They come into our environment with personality, knowledge, abilities and a range of intelligences all of their own. Our task is to get to know your child as an individual, discover where they are along their developmental pathway, and help them towards reaching their full potential during their time with us.

### **You as a Parent**

You are a very important part of what happens at our Prep. It's you who has been the main educator of your child so far and you who has a lot of valuable information to share with us about your child. The family life at home will continue to be the single most important influence on your child as they learn and grow. Your child's development is most effectively nurtured when home and Prep work together in a partnership, so we appreciate whatever involvement parents can offer.



## The Unique Chevallum Prep Curriculum

Our Prep program allows children to learn important preparatory knowledge, skills and experiences to transition them into their formal education. This will include the foundations of early reading, writing and maths learning. Our personalised implementation of the Australian Curriculum is underpinned by our belief in educating the whole child. This approach ensures a balanced program which embraces active participation and learning across all areas of the Australian Curriculum as well as in key 21<sup>st</sup> century skills such as critical and creative thinking, intercultural understanding, problem-solving, and personal and social development and wellbeing.

In addition, Chevallum Prep children enjoy:

- "Thinking Play" based on Reggio Emilia principles
- Opportunities for drama/performance and creative expression
- Experiences which provide intellectual rigour whilst embracing the fun of childhood
- A learning environment which takes time to nurture the child's personality and individuality
- Excursions into the community
- Daily perceptual motor/physical program
- Specialist lessons (eg Italian, Library, Music)



### **School Integration**

Our children have an allocated Prep playground space adjacent to the Early Years (PY/Yr 1) classrooms, which is separate from the play areas for older children. In the second semester of each year they will have the option of integrating with the lower primary aged children during play times. In the fourth term of the year, Chevallum has a transition program that promotes a smooth transition into the Year 1 playground. Students will also access regular Library, Italian and Music lessons during their Prep program.

### **Multiage Prep/Year 1 Classes**

Our Early Years classrooms reflect the philosophy of the school and provide multi-aged learning environments where Prep children learn both with and along-side Year 1 children. Your child will experience the educational advantages of a stable class structure with half the students remaining for the second year as well as two age levels working together in a co-operative learning environment, enabling exposure and access to Year 1 content, smoothing the transition from Prep to Year 1. They will also experience two years with the same teachers and a low ratio of 12 new Preps to one teacher each year. Our multi-age approach also provides opportunity for Year 1 students to nurture Preps and model for them, appropriate behaviour within the learning environment.

### **Days and Times**

Our times are 8:35am to 2:50pm every school day.  
(Out-of-hours care is available both before and after school)



## Teaching Staff

Our Early Years staff have a strong commitment to provide quality education in an environment that promotes intentional play as an important component of a well-balanced program that utilises a range of age-appropriate teaching strategies.

Our staff also have a strong affinity with the Chevallum community. Some staff have worked at our school for 20 years or more and some, being past students, have returned to work here with our community of learners. It is this ongoing professional and emotional investment in Chevallum that brings out the best in our staff to the benefit of our students.

## Teacher Assistants

At Chevallum, we are fortunate to have each Prep group supported by their own Teacher Assistant. Our Teacher Assistants have significant experience within the Prep area and provide caring, professional and skilled support to our Prep students and staff.

## Chevallum Prep Considerations

### Entry Age

As the person who knows your child best, you as a parent, have options as to when your child begins Prep. It is **NOT compulsory** for your child to attend the Prep year as soon as they are old enough ie 4 on or before June 30 in the year prior to Prep entry.

You as a parent, have the option to delay your child's entry to Prep by one year if you feel that having another year before starting Prep would be advantageous for your child.

If you choose this option, when your child does start school they would still start in the Prep year, as Prep is now a compulsory year prior to Year 1 for all Queensland children. No formal documentation, assessment or approval is required for delayed entry to Prep. This is entirely at the discretion of the parent/s. While some parents may choose to discuss their decision to delay entry to Prep with the school, Early Years staff or Prior to Prep provider, it is not necessary to do so. Parents who decide to delay their child's start in Prep may choose to keep their child at home or enrol them in any of the available Early Childhood Education and Care Services eg Kindergartens, Day Care Centres etc. Birth certificates need to be cited prior to entry into Prep. You are welcome to speak to our experienced staff about your options if you have any queries or concerns.

### Attendance

Prep is a full day program, five days a week. If your child has a birthdate in May or June, or if you are concerned as to how your child will cope with a full school day, every day of the week, please speak to one of our experienced Early Years staff to discuss your concerns and your options.

### Daily Relaxation / Mindfulness Time

There is no official 'sleep' time in our daily program. However, at the beginning of the year especially, a rest, relaxation and mindfulness time is part of each day, usually after the busy lunch time play.



## Uniform

Early Years Polo Shirts from our uniform shop can be ordered during our Parent Information Evening or the transitions visits in Term 4. Each child will require at least two Early Years Polo shirts to hand paint on the front. Shorts/skorts, hats, jumpers, Sports House shirts and backpacks are also available at the Uniform Shop. You can also view more information about our uniform on our school website under the Facilities tab.

## Preparation

There are a number of ways you can help to prepare your child prior to starting Prep at Chevallum:

- Attend the Parent Information Evening and transition sessions to ensure you are fully informed and your child is gaining valuable experience in the Prep environment
- Meet other families at your Prep visits who may be happy to get together for play days so your child becomes familiar with at least one other child prior to starting Prep
- Talk with your child and listen to their thoughts about starting Prep
- Take photos of your child at our school for them to share "their Prep" with friends and family
- Purchase their uniform so they can dress up and show family and friends
- Take your Prep child on a special shopping trip to organize their Prep things, then get them to practise packing and unpacking their own bag, lunchbox etc
- Practise new routines eg breakfast, dressing, in the car by a certain time etc
- Let them over-hear you talking positively about them starting Prep so they catch your positive, confident attitude about school
- Come along to **Strawbfest**, our whole community event, so they can have another positive experience at "their Prep" before they start.

## Enrolment Information

Your child is eligible for Prep if they turn 4 or 5 years old on or before June 30<sup>th</sup> in the year prior to Prep entry. To enrol your child:

- Place your child's name on our waiting list.
- We will contact you before your child is due to come to Prep, asking you to confirm your child's position and informing you of Prep transition details in Terms 3 & 4. At this time, you can express a group preference and friend your child may wish to be with. Remember this is only a preference to be considered. Waiting list procedures will be adhered to.
- Orientation will consist of two Parent Information Evenings and two classroom sessions at school usually held in Term 4.
- During the transition sessions your child will become familiar with the Prep environment, meet teachers and meet some new friends for the following year. You will be given information about the Prep program, a list of things for your child to bring to Prep and an opportunity to order/purchase uniforms.
- An interview will take place after the Transition to Prep Sessions where you will have individual time with one of the Early Years Teachers to let them know all about your child.

## Notes/Questions?

We hope you find this booklet helpful and look forward to a great Prep year together for those of you who choose Chevallum State School.



Chevallum State School

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