Oak Flats Public School
Preschool

Parent Handbook

Cnr of Central Avenue and Griffiths Street, Oak Flats NSW 2529
☎ 02 4256 1405  02 4526 1760
oakflats-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au
Whose Child is This?

“Whose child is this?” I asked one day

Seeing a little one out at play.

“Mine” said the parent with a tender smile

“Mine to keep for a little while;
To bathe his hands and comb his hair
To tell her what to wear;
To prepare for him his daily food,
To teach her that she may always be good.”

“Whose child is this?” I asked again.

As the door opened and someone came in.

“Mine” said the teacher with the same tender smile;

“Mine to keep for a little while.
To teach him how to be gentle and kind,
To guide and direct her little mind,
To help him live by every rule.
And get the best she can from school.”

“Whose child is this?” I asked once more

Just as the little one entered the door.

“Ours,” said the parent and teacher as they smiled
And each took a hand of the dear little child.

“Ours to love and guide together.
Ours, this blessed task forever.”

Author unknown
Dear Parents and Carers

Thank you for choosing Oak Flats Public School Preschool for your child. At Oak Flats Public School we cater for children from Preschool to Year 6 and value respectful relationships, rigour in learning and resilience for life.

The first day of Preschool is a milestone in the life of your child and family. It’s a day when your child starts to forge ahead towards independence and formal education in a new, exciting, challenging and fun filled environment.

Oak Flats Public School Preschool provides an environment in which children can develop intellectually, emotionally and become socially and physically confident. The staff supports young children’s learning by providing play and real life situations that are purposeful, integrated and relevant to a child’s needs. Preschool is a learning place where children, teachers and parents come together in a supportive environment.

We hope that your year at Oak Flats Public School Preschool will be a happy, worthwhile experience for both you and your child. We look forward to working with you.

Karen Hodge
Principal
Welcome to Oak Flats Public School Preschool

Dear Parents and Carers

Oak Flats Preschool welcomes your family to ours. We have a focus on building relationships with educators, children, families and our community to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for our children. Our preschool program is always growing and changing, but our foundation values and beliefs are steady and true. Being part of the community for over 35 years, Oak Flats Public School Preschool is committed to helping your child develop his or her social and emotional skills which we believe ARE the foundation for cognitive learning.

We believe that Oak Flats Public School Preschool is a unique, creative place where we endeavour to provide innovative education programs that will inspire both you and your child. Your family will be a part of a child-centred learning environment that is developmental and nurturing.

We aim for our program to set the stage for your child’s life-long learning journey and we are happy you have allowed us to be a part of this. We believe our philosophy insures a child-centred, age appropriate, well supervised, safe environment for your child to grow and create new friendships.

We believe that each child is unique and is capable of building their own world of knowledge which sets the foundation for their future success in learning and development.

I encourage you to explore this Parent Handbook to become familiar with all we can offer you. Feel free to ask questions.

On behalf of the Oak Flats Public School Preschool team I wish to express how excited we are to be with you during this part of your family’s wondrous journey!

Sincerely

Chris Higgins
Department of Education and Communities Preschools

The Department of Education and Communities operates 100 preschools that are located within public schools. They provide educational programs for children for the year before Kindergarten. Preschools in public schools provide educational programs for children one year prior to enrolment in Kindergarten. A child may be eligible for enrolment in preschool from the beginning of the school year if they turn four years on or before 31 July that year.

The department provides an early childhood trained teacher and a teacher's aide or SLSO (School Learning Support Officer preschool) in each preschool class.

related links:
www.oakflats-p.school@det.nsw.edu.au

Licensing Regulations
Oak Flats Public School Preschool complies with appropriate State and National Licensing requirements.
National accreditation: Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA).

Oak Flats Public School Preschool 2014

Regulatory Authority: NSW Early Childhood Education and Care Directorate
Approved Provider: Department of Education and Communities
Nominated Supervisor/ Educational Leader: The Principal – Karen Hodge
Teacher: Chris Higgins
Support Staff
School Learning Support Officer Preschool : Emma Patching/Wendy Reid
School Administration
Manager: Kathy White

National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework aims to raise quality and drive continuous improvement and consistency in education and care services through:

- a National Quality Standard
- a national legislative framework
- a national quality rating and assessment process
- a new national body called the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority.

Information available at: www.aceqca.gov.au
Quality Improvement Plan

All services must prepare a Quality Improvement Plan that:

- includes an assessment of the quality of the practices of the service against the National Quality Standard and the National Regulations
- identifies areas of strength
- identifies any areas that the provider considers may require improvement
- includes a statement of philosophy of the service.

Please ask to see our Quality Improvement Plan.

Hours of operation

The preschool operates the same school terms as the primary school.

We are open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, 9am to 3pm.

Wednesday 8.30 – 11.30am and 12.00 – 3.00pm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Attendance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00 - 3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fees

Preschool fees are set by the NSW Government and are compulsory. They will be adjusted annually.

2014 fees have been set at $20 a day. Therefore for each group's two full days and half a day the fees will be $50 a week.

The fee for Aboriginal children will be set at 50% of the full fee unless they are eligible for further fee relief or fee exemption.

There is provision for fee relief at the discretion of the Principal. Please see the staff if you have any queries.

To assist with the purchase of consumable items like paints, glue and cooking ingredients we invite families to pay a voluntary contribution of $10 at the beginning of each term.
**Philosophy**

At Oak Flats Public School, the students, staff and community acknowledge the Dharawal nation as the traditional custodians of this land. We also pay respect to Elders both past and present. Together we look forward to a future of mutual respect, harmony and reconciliation. Together we are, together we can, together we will.

We are committed to providing a high quality educational service where ALL children, families, staff and the wider community feel a strong sense of **BELONGING** in our preschool setting. Everyone feels welcome and valued and learning is meaningful to all parties. We believe that each child, family member and educator is a unique and valued individual.

We value the now and celebrate the children as individuals at this particular stage of their life as they express themselves, explore, investigate, discover and just enjoy **BEING**. We believe that play is essential in the lives of young children. We believe play should be fun, exciting, spontaneous, hands-on, stimulating, relaxing, comforting and challenging. We believe it is important to provide opportunities for children to experiment, discover, explore, create, investigate, practice theories, solve problems and express ideas with the support of other children and the educators. We believe in celebrating children's play, discoveries and learning through reflection and meaningful documentation.

We believe in providing a rich, stimulating and nurturing environment that offers opportunities for children to create, experiment and develop relationships. The children are encouraged to take ownership of their learning in a supportive environment that develops confidence, persistence, resilience, cooperation and the ability to reflect. Supporting children's health and keeping them safe is a fundamental responsibility of our preschool.

We believe in developing respectful relationships with children, families and staff through open and meaningful communication. At Oak Flats Public Preschool we believe in supporting and developing a partnership with families to share the nurturing and education of their children, as we share information and celebrate their discoveries and successes. We encourage each family to participate in the preschool community and we support and welcome their interest and involvement.

We believe that as children engage in meaningful learning experiences they are **BECOMING** independent, capable and competent individuals, who are adopting the values, attitudes and ways of living and learning that will help them to be effective members of the wider communities in which they now live and will live in the future.
Parents and Partnerships

Oak Flats Public School Preschool welcomes your family to ours. We have a focus on building relationships with one another, educators, children, families and our community to ensure the best possible outcomes are achieved for our children.

We believe that we can best meet the needs of individual children by working closely with parents/carers. We aim to develop partnerships between parents/carers and staff which are based on mutual trust and respect and which promote the sharing of information and knowledge for the benefit of the children in our care.

Our aim is to support parents as their children’s first and most important educators by involving them in their children’s education. We also aim to support parents in their own continuing education and personal development. We aim to ensure our setting is warm and welcoming to parents/carers to help them feel at ease.

Enrolment

Children are eligible for enrolment in preschool classes from the beginning of the school year if they turn four years of age before July 31st of that year.

Applications for the following year will be taken in the second week of Term 2 the year prior to enrolment.

On processing of the applications, you will be sent confirmation that your application has been received.

Where the number of applicants for enrolment in the preschool exceeds the number of places available the school's Placement Panel will meet to establish a prioritised waiting list based on the eligibility criteria and the specific priority enrolment criteria.

Application for preschool enrolment is made by the parent/carer by:
1. Completing Oak Flats Public School Preschool Application to Enrol Form; and
2. Providing original documentation when requested

Orientation and Transition

Coming to preschool for the first time can be stressful for children and their families. Orientation is an important process for children, parents and staff. It enables the children to become familiar and comfortable with their environment and gives an opportunity for parents to meet the staff and ask questions. It also enables the staff to begin to develop relationships with the children. The combination of these factors makes for a smoother and happier transition to preschool for all involved.
Settling into preschool

Helpful Hints

Before your child begins preschool

The first day of preschool is an important day for both you and your child.

Preparing your child for preschool is extremely important to ensure that anxiety is minimal.

The most important thing to remember is to:

Be positive !!!!!

Don’t let your child hear anything negative. For example, some parents will often talk about how anxious they are about their child’s first day. If your child hears how anxious you are then they are also going to be anxious. If you need to express your fears with teachers or relatives please make sure that your child is not able to hear you.

Don’t feel guilty. Many children will be very unsettled on their first day. This is normal. What we encourage parents to remember is that you have put your child into preschool for a specific reason whether it is to develop skills in certain areas, for social interaction with other children or for school readiness. Therefore you need not feel guilty if your child is having difficulties settling. If you are concerned please talk to the staff, we are here to help. Be patient, some children can take up to 6 weeks to settle in. Try to focus on the reasons you are sending your child to preschool and the long term benefit of having them settle more easily into formal schooling.

Some Helpful Hint to Settle Your Child

We encourage parents not to remain at the preschool for too long in the morning. This may end up being more distressing for your child.

Some children are very good at getting you to stay for "just a little longer" so that when the time comes to say goodbye they have greater difficulties separating. Tell your child that you can’t stay but you will be back to pick them up.

The most effective strategy that we use if your child won’t leave you is to ask you to place your child in the care of a staff member, say goodbye and make a hasty retreat from the room. This may be very distressing for you as a parent, but in most cases your child will settle very quickly. We will be there to comfort them.

Once you have said goodbye please ensure that your child cannot see you. This enables your child to settle in and become involved in the program.

If you leave and your child is distressed, then please ring us during the day, as many times as you need to. You can also ring at any time to check how your child is settling in.
To help prepare your child for preschool you may like to do the following things:

- Talk to them about what they will do at preschool. For example - painting, water play, block play, lunchtime, singing, stories etc. Talk about the teachers who will take care of them. Ensure that they are aware that if they need anything that they can ask a teacher, who will help them. Try to use the staff’s names so the children will become familiar with them.
- If your child is from a non-English speaking background, then make sure the teachers are aware of some key words that will enable us to help your child eg. toilet, lunch, mum, dad etc.
- For those of you who have older children, who have attended preschool, encourage them to talk about the fun things that they did or show your preschooler photos and craft items you may have kept.
- Make a special trip to the shops to gather things your child will need at preschool eg. lunch box, hat.

Be aware of things that may unsettle your child. For example, changes in our preschool routine can distress some children who would normally settle without difficulty. Changes at home can have a variety of effects on children. Some changes may include a new baby, moving house, renovations to your house, parental stress etc. We find that the end of the year can unsettle children who have had no previous settling problems. This can be due to a child’s fear of ‘big school’ or the added pressures that families feel around Christmas time. Letting a staff member know of any changes to your home life can help us to be extra aware of any differences in your child and may assist us in understanding any behaviour changes. We have resources/handouts, which may help you with any areas your child may be worried about.

If you have any concerns about settling your child into preschool please do not hesitate to talk to us.
Delivery and Collection of Children

Oak Flats Preschool has a duty of care to the children that attend the centre. A part of this duty of care is to ensure that access to a child attending the centre is limited to persons authorised by the parent/carer and this includes collection of the child from the preschool.

Drop Off

- Children are not to be left prior to the centre opening at 9am.
- On arrival the person bringing the child is responsible to sign the child in on the attendance sheet next to the child's name, indicating time of arrival and expected departure time.
- The person dropping off the child must ensure that a staff member receives the child/ren before leaving the centre and that any special needs are communicated.

Collection

- Children must be collected by 3.00 pm.
- The authorised person collecting the child must sign the attendance sheet next to the child's name, indicating time of departure.
- The authorised person must ensure that a staff member is aware that they are taking the child from the preschool.
- If the child is to be collected by a person whose name is not on the enrolment form as a person authorised to pick up the child, parents must have personally informed the appropriate staff member prior to pick up. The person picking up the child should be asked to bring photo identification.

Daily requirements:

Full days:

- School bag
- Brimmed hat
- Water filled drink bottle
- Fresh fruit and/or vegetables for "Crunch and Sip" (morning tea)
- Healthy lunch
- Healthy snack for afternoon tea
- Change of clothes in a plastic bag
- On wet days the children may bring raincoats and gumboots

Half days:

- School bag
- Brimmed hat
- Water filled drink bottle
- Fresh fruit and/or vegetables for "Crunch and Sip" (afternoon tea)
- Change of clothes in a plastic bag
- On wet days the children may bring raincoats and gumboots

** Please remember to label ALL items **
Healthy Eating

Please support our Healthy Eating Policy by providing healthy lunches and snacks for your child. We are a nut free preschool and will inform our families of any other food allergies. No chocolates or lollies please. We discourage sweet biscuits, cakes and rollup type foods as they contain high amounts of sugar. To raise awareness of environmental issues we encourage families to send in “Nude Food”. Nude food is any food that has no packaging….i.e. fruit is natural nude food, sandwiches and snacks may be put into containers. The children will love being “Nude Food Dudes”. We encourage the children to drink water at preschool. They will not need to bring fruit juice or cordial.

We are a “Crunch and Sip” preschool. The children will have a morning tea snack where they enjoy fresh fruit and/or vegetables. They will need some fresh raw fruit and/or vegetables like carrot/celery sticks, cucumber etc. and their water bottle.

They will need the following food/water:

- Fresh raw fruit/vegetable for “Crunch and Sip” break
- A healthy lunch (e.g. sandwich, healthy snack)
- Small healthy snack for afternoon tea
- A water bottle

*Please label all containers.

Birthdays

We are happy to celebrate your child's birthday with their preschool friends. Small individual cupcakes may be sent in to share with the other children. If your child has food allergies please talk to staff to arrange a “substitute” food item.

Personal Toys/Items

The children do not need to bring in toys from home. The children will be given an opportunity to bring in a special item from home to share for Show and Tell.

Medical Conditions and Health Plans

We facilitate effective care and health management of children who require medication for illness or a diagnosed health condition. Families are required to complete an authorisation form and supply prescribed medication in its original packaging labelled with the child’s name, use by date and dosage. Individual health plans will be prepared for children with diagnosed medical conditions like asthma, anaphylaxis etc. Please see staff as soon as possible.

Illness

If your child is unwell please keep them at home to recuperate.

If your child requires medication at preschool you will need to complete medication administration forms, provide the medication in its original packaging with your child's details and dosage clearly visible.

Families will be informed about any outbreaks of infectious conditions.
Program

Our program is stimulating and engaging and enhances children’s learning and development. We implement The Early Years Learning Framework.

The Framework’s vision is for all children to experience play based learning that is engaging and builds success for life.

The Early Years Learning Framework describes childhood as a time of Belonging, Being and Becoming. There are 5 learning outcomes which are designed to capture the integrated and complex learning and development of all children from birth to 5 years.

The outcomes are:

- Children have a strong sense of identity;
- Children are connected with and contribute to their world;
- Children have a strong sense of wellbeing;
- Children are confident and involved learners; and
- Children are effective communicators.

The Framework focuses on each child’s learning. We work with families to get to know each child well. We listen, watch and talk with each child. We then create a learning program that builds on each child’s interests and abilities. Families are kept involved in this continual process.

By working together parents and educators can enhance the child’s learning and wellbeing.

Policies and Procedures

The following policies and/or procedures are available for you to read in the policy folder located in the preschool office. Please ask if you would like to read them.

- Acceptance and refusal of authorisation
- Governance and management
- Emergency and evacuation
- Fees
- Medical conditions
- Staffing
- Interactions with children
- Complaints
- Health and safety
- Nutrition, dietary requirements
- Sun protection
- Water safety
- Administration of first aid
- Delivery and collection of children
- Incident, injury, trauma and illness
- Infectious diseases
- Enrolment and orientation
- Excursions
- Child safe environment

Policies are also available on the Department of Education and Communities website.