



# ***Narrabri West Public School Pre School***



## ***Our Mission Statement***

Narrabri West Public School Pre School commits to providing a quality Pre School service in partnership with parents that is relevant and responsive to its community and prepares children for their entry into Kindergarten. We recognise diversity and foster the overall development of each child as an individual within the group context and wider social environment.

# ***Handbook***

# ***Narrabri West Public School Pre School***

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## **Contents**

<b>1. GENERAL</b> .....	<b>2</b>
▪ Introduction	
<b>2. EDUCATION</b> .....	<b>2</b>
▪ Our Philosophy	
▪ Our Goals	
▪ The Educational Curriculum	
▪ Pre School Program	
▪ Additional Needs Programs	
▪ Enrolment & Eligibility Criteria	
▪ Positive Guidance	
▪ Learning Environment	
<b>3. PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PRE SCHOOL</b> .....	<b>5</b>
▪ Daily Requirements	
▪ Lunch and Snack Times	
▪ Rest Time	
▪ Library	
▪ Valuing Children's Work	
▪ Toys	
▪ Clothing	
▪ Birthdays	
▪ Sign In and Out	
<b>4. PRE SCHOOL FEES</b> .....	<b>7</b>
▪ Fees	
<b>5. HEALTH, SAFETY AND HYGIENE</b> .....	<b>7</b>
▪ Illness & Immunisation	
▪ Medication	
▪ First Aid	
▪ Absences	
▪ Excursions	
<b>6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION</b> .....	<b>7</b>
▪ Parent Help & Roster	
▪ Communication	
▪ Parent Communication to Staff	
▪ Parent Teacher Meetings	
▪ Parent Library	
▪ Release From Face to Face Teaching (RFF)	
<b>7. TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM</b> .....	<b>8</b>
▪ 'Ready, Set, Kinder!'	

## 1. GENERAL

### 1.1. Introduction

A child's early years determine much of his or hers future development. Extensive educational research and experience has confirmed that experiences in the first five years have lasting and far reaching effects.

Pre School education is concerned with the growth and development of young children during this important period. It aims to help each child to achieve their potential and to find ways of using their abilities creatively. At Narrabri West Pre School the child's time will be planned to give them a variety of daily activities and experiences, which will include indoor and outdoor play, music, books, craft and language.

As your child begins Pre School, there may be some questions which arise. We hope this handbook will assist you in understanding our Pre School and help you and your children enjoy a happy and rewarding year with us. Of course we are always available to talk with you about your children.

Narrabri West Pre School was established by the Department of Education and Training (DET) in 1977 and is one of only three DET Pre Schools in the New England Region.

We offer a 5 day fortnight, from 9.30 am to 3.30pm with children attending either Monday and Tuesday or Thursday and Friday with alternating Wednesdays. This will mean that we have two groups with a maximum of 20 students in each group. Regular attendance at Pre School is important. Our terms and holidays are the same as for Narrabri West Public School. The children attend for the full year prior to Kindergarten enrolment.

We have an early childhood trained teacher, a teacher's aide and we encourage parents to help on a roster basis.

## 2. EDUCATION

### 2.1. Our Philosophy

We aim to enhance the cognitive, personal, social and physical development of the children through an interesting, stimulating and secure learning environment, that provides materials and subject matter which will support, challenge and recognise the special needs and talents of all children.

Our early childhood curriculum focuses on areas of Literacy, Numeracy, Science and Technology, gross and fine motor skills, language, music and cognitive development. Our curriculum provides an atmosphere that encourages and fosters the child's developing independence, social skills and self-esteem.

We adopt an approach of understanding to meet the needs, interests and developmental stages of each individual child. We believe each child's development is unique, thus we endeavour to incorporate a variety of teaching methods and experiences that reflect their individual needs, interests, learning styles and family background.

We recognise that a family is a child's primary learning environment and that is why we encourage all parents and carers to play an active role in their child's Pre School experience. We aim to understand and incorporate each child's family background, conveying awareness and respect for the cultural diversity of our community.

### 2.2. Our Goals

Children attending Narrabri West Public School Pre School will be provided with opportunities to:

- Extend their own understanding and knowledge and be challenged to develop skills and abilities;
- Believe in themselves and develop positive self-images;
- Work towards ways that enable them to achieve self-fulfilment and self-determination;
- Realise and develop their strengths and special talents;
- Build upon their interests in order to sustain motivation in their learning;
- Develop their interpersonal skills, such as co-operation, negotiation and collaboration;
- Take responsibility for their own learning, developing skills for self-directed learning;
- Enjoy learning experiences and feel motivated to learn; and
- Experience a supportive, co-operative and stimulating learning environment.

### 2.3. The Educational Curriculum

#### Theory

Our approach to learning is based on current child development knowledge and encompasses a variety of developmental theories.

#### Play

Play is considered the essential focus for children to learn. Through playing, children learn to develop relationships with adults and other children. Our program is play based and provides all children with the opportunity to make choices, actively explore, problem solve and use their imagination. Children are encouraged to experience objects, people and events so they can discover more about the world in which they live. Our practices support each child's individual development and we provide positive guidance as they interact with peers, adults and the environment.

Through the play based program, children utilise a range of open-ended activities, which are appropriate to all children

aged 3-5 years. However the way in which the individual child utilises the equipment is dependent upon their stage of development. The open-ended activities are planned, provided and guided in the indoor and outdoor environments. They provide opportunities for children to:

- Self select;
- Develop and practise skills;
- Acquire language and communication skills; and
- Encourage each child to develop
  - Physically
  - Socially
  - Emotionally
  - Intellectually

### Curriculum

Our curriculum encompasses everything that happens throughout the child's day. This includes routine times, group and individual experiences, planned and spontaneous moments, indoor and outdoor times.

We recognise and are responsive to a number of learning and teaching opportunities as they occur. We are flexible in our approach to programming and may change experiences to take into account unexpected responses and outcomes. We will pursue spontaneous learning experiences.

Key attributes pre schoolers have is their zest for life and natural curiosity about their environment. We encourage children to initiate, investigate, explore, problem solve, reason and create to their full potential. We recognise that children have intrinsic motivation to explore, and the ability to set challenges for themselves.

We aim to empower children so that they may play harmoniously with others and develop respectful, caring and responsible attitudes to all around them.

We observe children to identify each individual's interests, strengths and needs. The observations and records become the basis of the Pre School program and the reason why particular activities are provided and used as a basis for promoting optimal development.

All children utilise and benefit from the specific activities that are provided and we support and offer guidance where required. This may be done working with children on a one to one basis or involving them in small group experiences.

#### **2.4. Pre School Program**

We aim to provide a program which enables the individual child to develop their natural curiosity to learn about themselves and the world around them.

It will include activities such as painting, drawing, pasting, collage, block building, puzzles, group games, music, movement, stories, role playing, sand and water play and other outdoor activities.

The organisation of the daily program has been developed to meet the needs of the children in a balanced way. There is some flexibility, but generally the timetable is as follows:

### Daily Routine

Our daily routine will include:

- Outdoor play
- Learning Connections (from Term 2)
- Group Time (language activities and story)
- Indoor craft/manipulative activities to increase fine motor skills
- Indoor activity time including games, puzzles, computer, art, home corner
- Group Time (music activities and story)

#### **2.5. Additional Needs Programs**

Our program will endeavour to meet any additional needs your child may have. Our environment is created so the children can learn to actively participate, and direct their own learning from that environment. We will provide an inclusive approach in our early childhood service.

When developing individualised programs we are mindful of the needs, concerns and priorities of the family and the developmental level of the child.

Learning experiences for the child will be planned in a sequential way, with the support of all members of the staff.

Staff will liaise with and seek ongoing assistance from professionals working with the child and family in the special education area, health agencies and any other support agencies.

#### **2.6. Enrolment & Eligibility Criteria**

Where the number of children applying exceeds the number of places available, names will be placed on a waiting list. Priority of enrolment will be given in the following order:

- Children living within the local school boundary
- Children living outside the local school boundary who have siblings attending Narrabri West Public School
- Children living outside the local school boundary

Applications for the following school year will be taken from Term 2 of the current school year.

Applications will be reviewed by the end of Term 3 according to enrolment criteria and successful applicants will be notified immediately after this by mail. This notification will include the school enrolment form to be completed and returned in order to confirm acceptance of a position in the Pre School.

Upon receipt of this acceptance by the school, successful applicants will be supplied with a letter of confirmation and

any additional information. Successful applicants at this time will also be advised of the date of the commencement of the next school year.

A meeting and orientation day for children and parents is organised during the first school week.

### **2.7. Positive Guidance**

Children arrive at Pre School with a wide range of experiences, backgrounds and levels of development. Challenging behaviours may appear when a child first settles into the routine or alternatively they may develop later for a number of reasons. If sudden changes occur staff, together with the family, will consider issues both at Pre School and at home, which may have caused the changes.

Outcomes and goals anticipated will be for children to control and be responsible for their own actions and reactions.

We aim to set clear and defined limits of behaviour that reasonably and consistently build awareness of those limits. Children will learn to solve problems and understand the consequences of their behaviour and be able to verbalise and negotiate solutions.

Strategies implemented include:

- Redirecting, anticipating and preventing problems before they arise
- Positive reinforcement and encouragement
- Empathy and sensitivity to individual situations
- Providing explanations of inappropriate behaviour and consequences of children's actions
- Empowering children to become independent in resolving conflict.

### **2.8. Learning Environment**

We aim to provide an environment where children and families feel relaxed and comfortable; a place, which reflects a warm and welcoming atmosphere that pays attention to design, detail and presentation.

When creating play spaces, the organisation of the indoor and outdoor area is extremely important. Our goal is to provide an inclusive and integrated approach between indoors and outdoors.

Considerable planning takes place to ensure a balanced and stimulating environment is created for children to explore with a sense of wonder, opportunities to exchange ideas with each other and adults and for children to make real choices.

By providing a stable environment we aim to develop children's security and independence. Specific learning spaces assist children to locate and replace items with ease and confidence.

Arranging the physical equipment into designated play spaces allows children:

- The opportunity to interact with others,
- To play alone or in small groups,
- To engage in messy, quiet and noisy play spaces.

We will take care in how we present experiences and objects of interest to the children. We will focus on aesthetic qualities, as well as visual and tactile elements, to enhance their learning.

Learning to care for our environment is equally important. All children will be encouraged to help each other and staff in the tidying up process on a daily basis.

## **3. PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR PRE SCHOOL**

Beginning Pre School can be a stressful experience for you as well as your child. We are here to help you and your child in this settling in process and are always available to speak to you.

Settling children is an individual process and parents are welcome to stay with their child until they feel confident and relaxed with the staff and the new environment.

### **3.1. Daily Requirements**

A back pack or suitable school bag (A locker is located inside the Pre School for bags. Each child will have an allocated locker):

- Packed healthy lunch, drink (water, fruit juice) and piece of fruit (This can stay in their bag or it can be refrigerated).
- A change of clothes
- A hat (Narrabri West has a no hat no play policy)

Please ensure that all these items are clearly marked with your child's name.

### **3.2. Lunch and Snack Times**

These are very enjoyable times and provide many opportunities to develop social skills and a beginning awareness of nutrition, as well as the opportunity to try a variety of foods and fruits.

Each child is required to bring:

- Lunch Box with their name clearly marked.
- Sandwich or roll with nutritious filling
- Something extra, e.g. cheese stick, dried or fresh fruit, cheese & biscuit spread packs, vegetable sticks, pikelets, scones, fruit salad, quiche, fruit loaf/bun etc (NO chips or lollies please! The inclusion of these may cause jealousy and conflict and embarrassment for the child when asked to keep them for home).

- Drink for lunchtime (water or fruit juice) – please mark container and lid clearly with child’s name.

The children will have access to water at any time throughout the day.

### **3.3. Rest Time**

The rest routine varies throughout the year to meet the needs of the children at their stages of development. We have stretchers and at the beginning of the year children will rest on stretchers. There is an initial quiet time, followed by music and/or a story. Current research is indicating that 20-30 minutes of relaxation time is extremely beneficial to optimise growth and development and the ability to cope with the rest of the day.

Children who sleep will be left until they wake, unless parents inform staff to the contrary.

Children will need a set of sheets and a blanket in the cooler weather. A pillow may also be brought in if required. It is suggested that a cushion be used. It is suggested that these come in a draw-string bag and will be kept in their locker. They will go home on the last day of attendance each week for washing.

### **3.4. Library**

The children may borrow from our Pre School Library on the last day of attendance for the week. We provide a library bag for the books, which are to be returned on the first day back the following week. Please encourage your child to take special care of the books they borrow - it is your responsibility to replace lost or damaged books. Library will begin in Term 2.

Each Wednesday from Term 2 we will visit the Narrabri West Public School Library to provide an additional literary experience for the children.

### **3.5. Valuing Children’s Work**

The “work” your child takes home represents their efforts and we would encourage every parent to value it accordingly. Offer your child acknowledgement; your praise will greatly encourage them. It is recommended you display some of their work at home.

### **3.6. Toys**

As there are a variety of educational toys at Pre School, it is generally preferable that the children leave their own toys at home. The children may wish to bring along a special toy for ‘show and tell’ which we have on Tuesday or Friday, commencing Term 2. Your child may wish to bring a toy to Pre School to show on their birthday. As it can be very disappointing when a toy is lost or broken, the children will be asked to keep their toy in their bag until ‘show and tell’ time, and then return it to their bags straight after. Although all care will be taken, we cannot accept responsibility if a toy is broken or lost at Pre School.

### **3.7. Clothing**

We ask that children be dressed in clothing which will not restrict their movement or inhibit their involvement in activities at Pre School. The children are encouraged to be independent in dressing. Please bear this in mind by providing shoes and other clothing which can be easily removed. To help prevent loss and confusion, we ask that all items of clothing be clearly marked with the child’s name.

Thongs are not acceptable footwear.

Although aprons are provided for messy activities, please understand that your child may not always go home as clean as they came! All paint and paste is washable and we hope not to difficult to remove.

A hat is also essential in helping to protect your child from the sun.

### **3.8. Birthdays**

Birthdays are very special occasions for very young children. Your child is welcome to celebrate their birthday with us and we are pleased to join in the celebration. At ‘Snack time’ we sing ‘Happy Birthday’. You are welcome to come in and share this special day with the group. You may like to bring in a cake for sharing, which can be cake or ice cream and cones. You may also like to bring candles and a camera.

### **3.9. Sign In and Out**

It is a requirement that each child be signed in and out upon arrival and departure each day. An Arrival and Departure Register is located inside the entry door for this purpose. Please ensure this is complied with as this becomes the official record of attendance and would be used in the event of a fire or evacuation.

Children will not be released into the care of anyone who has NOT been authorised by the parent, in writing, to collect their child. Please check that the permission to collect form has been completed for all adults that may be collecting your child. In an emergency, staff must be notified by the parent by phone and identification may be requested from the person collecting the child.

Young children can also be upset when their Mum or Dad is late arriving at collection time so please try to be prompt at these times.

The road at the front of our centre is a very busy one at both the beginning and end of our Pre School sessions so make sure the front gate is kept shut at all times to prevent children venturing out without adult supervision.

## **4. PRE SCHOOL FEES**

### **4.1. Fees**

Fortnightly contribution fees of \$30 per child should be put

in an envelope, clearly labelled with the child's name and deposited into the fees box, or paid at the school office. Fees may be paid weekly or by the term. Invoices will be issued for outstanding amounts and receipts provided for money received. Cheques should be made payable to *Narrabri West Public School*. Credit Card facilities are available at the school office, either in person or by phone. Please assist by paying fees promptly. These are used to purchase supplies, materials and equipment used by the children accessing this service.

## **5. HEALTH, SAFETY AND HYGIENE**

### **5.1. Illness & Immunisation**

Children with contagious diseases such as measles, chicken pox, mumps, head lice, scabies, etc must NOT attend Pre School whilst infectious. Please inform us if your child has any of the above.

To comply with Department of Health regulations, we must now sight records of each child's immunisation status and retain a copy for our records. If there is an outbreak of any of the vaccine preventable diseases at the Pre School, any children who are recorded as being un-immunised should stay at home for the time set down by the Department of Health. Management Plans have to be completed for children with illnesses such as asthma, epilepsy & allergies.

We do not have the facilities or staff to provide care for children who are unwell. Therefore, we request that a child be not brought to the Pre School if they are unwell.

### **5.2. Medication**

If medication is necessary for your child at Pre School, a parent must complete a Medication Authority. NOTE: only prescribed medication in the original bottle with the child's name on it will be administered by staff. The medicine will be kept in the fridge and is not to be left in the child's bag for staff administration. If your child has any medical condition which would require staff responding urgently, then an emergency action plan must be completed by the child's doctor.

### **5.3. First Aid**

In the case of injury to a child, appropriate first aid measures will be taken and the parent notified if necessary. In the case of a serious emergency where medical attention is required, an ambulance or doctor will be called and parents contacted. If parents cannot be contacted, the emergency contact person will be informed.

### **5.4. Absences**

Please advise us in advance (if possible) if your child will be absent from Pre School. All absences require a written explanation for the purpose of the roll. Please ensure that notes come in quickly so records can be kept up to date. In cases of prolonged unexplained absences, it may be necessary to ask that the child's position be relinquished to

enable another child to benefit from Pre School.

### **5.5. Excursions / Special Events**

Throughout the year we organise special occasions. These include a parent information night, an Easter celebration, a fathers' night, a mother's night, a sports day, a dance night, a Christmas party, as well as other special excursions and activities which are designed to enhance the learning program.

It is required that we have one adult per 4 children on any excursions which leave the school grounds. These are a most enjoyable experience, however we request that other brothers and sisters do not come as they distract from the responsibility of the larger group.

## **6. PARENT INVOLVEMENT AND COMMUNICATION**

We aim to give parents the opportunity to participate in their child's education and care. It is hoped that parents will play an active role to whatever level you are able to or feel comfortable with. You should feel free to visit any time, discuss your child's progress and volunteer to help in any way. There are many opportunities to get involved in the day-to-day program. The successful running of the Pre School depends on the support and interest of all parents.

### **6.1. Parent Help and Roster**

Parents may be rostered on to help us for part of each session. We will encourage parents to be rostered on twice a term. It is a great opportunity to meet your child's friends and observe them in different situations at Pre School. Rosters will be distributed at the start of each term.

When you come to help you can:

- ✓ Assist the children by asking questions and talking to them about their activities and encourage them to complete activities by themselves.
- ✓ Write children's names on their paintings, drawings etc.
- ✓ Give help when asked by a child while still encouraging children to complete activities by themselves.
- ✓ Supervise a special activity eg; board game, sewing, craft.
- ✓ Encourage children to pack away when they finish an activity.
- ✓ Assist children and staff in packing away.
- ✓ Help prepare and clean up after eating times.

At the end of each semester we have a general clean-up. All toys and equipment are washed to maintain hygiene. We will be asking for your assistance in this task.

### **6.2. Communication**

Each fortnight the school newsletter will be sent home with the eldest child attending Narrabri West Public School. The Pre School news section outlines our weekly plans and upcoming events to help you understand what we are doing at Pre School and how you may extend these

experiences. Our notice board also contains information so please check it regularly to keep up to date. If you have any concerns or comments that you would like to discuss with the staff, an interview can be arranged outside session times.

### **6.3. Parent Communication to Staff**

Two-way communication between the family and Pre School is essential if we are to co-operate with each other in meeting the needs of each individual child. Therefore, please discuss with us:

- Any information that could assist us in knowing and understanding your child.
- Any concerns you may have or difficulties your child may be experiencing.
- Any change to personal details, especially change of address and contact numbers, so that we can maintain up-to-date files.

### **6.4. Parent/Teacher Meetings**

We will discuss with and inform parents of any concerns we may have observed, and are always willing to discuss a child's development with parents. For detailed discussion it would be appropriate for parents to make an appointment for a mutually convenient time.

Formal individual Parent/Teacher interviews will be held at the end of Term 2 to discuss each child's progress.

### **6.5. Parent Library**

A Library has been established, which includes many resources covering a wide range of topics, which are generally of interest to parents of young children. Please feel free to browse and borrow.

### **6.6. Release From Face To Face Teaching (RFF)**

Each week, the Pre School teacher is entitled to two hours release time. This time is used by teachers to conduct parent interviews, prepare class work or teaching aides, complete evaluation records, undertake professional development and carry out many other tasks that must be completed to ensure the best possible education for the children. Our Assistant Principals and Kindergarten teachers will come and teach at the Pre School during this time. This will allow the Pre School students to get to know the teachers they will encounter in Kindergarten and will assist in an easy transition from Pre School to Kindergarten at Narrabri West.

## **7. TRANSITION TO KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**

### **7.1. 'Ready, Set, Kinder!'**

Narrabri West is a P-6 school. Children attending our Pre School are part of, and enrolled at, Narrabri West Public School. Our Pre School is not a separate facility operating in isolation to the rest of the school. It is an integral part of the school and our planning and programs reflect this. This allows us to provide experiences for children that other Pre

Schools are unable to. Our efforts in regard to this are encouraged, supported and mandated by the NSW Department of Education and Training.

There will be extensive integration and interaction with all aspects of Narrabri West throughout the year. This will include regular visits to and interaction with Kindergarten and other grades within the school.

In Terms 3 and 4 all children attending our Pre School will participate in our Transition to Kindergarten program, 'Ready, Set, Kinder!'

Children will benefit from a comprehensive series of planned and structured sessions which will assist in preparing them for a smooth entry into Kindergarten. This will involve skills and activities which will be appropriate for all schools and for all children, regardless of their choice of school for the following year.

All available research shows that children benefit significantly from attending comprehensive transition programs like the one we will be offering, and that this need not be at the school at which they are attending Kindergarten for it to be of value.

We look forward to each child's involvement.

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**Best wishes to you all for a very happy and memorable year!**

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