Welcome to PRE-KINDERGARTEN!

What to expect when your child starts Pre-Kindergarten
VISION STATEMENT

St Columba’s Primary School aims to foster the total development of each child within a caring community that is totally committed to supporting the Catholic principles and ideals.

Prayer

Lord, give me strength just for today
To lead my children in your way;
Oh, give me wisdom, Lord, and grace
To show to them your precious face!

And help me, Lord, to teach them, too,
The things of Christ so rich and true,
Just let them see in me, dear Lord,
Your holiness in life and word.

Keep me from sinning with my tongue,
From harsh, quick words that might have stung
Their tender hearts that trust me so
And watch to see which way I go.

Dear Father, keep my thoughts so pure
That they will always know for sure
My Lord has lead me all the way,
Lord, grant my prayer just for today.

{Author Unknown}
St. Columba’s School
Bayswater

Staff 2017
Principal: Mr Greg Martin

Pre-Kindergarten White
Teacher: Mrs Chelsea De Luca
deluca.chelsea@cathednet.wa.edu.au
Education Assistant:
Mrs Lisa Jaffar
Tuesday 12:15pm—2:45pm
Thursday 8:45am—11:15am

Pre-Kindergarten Green
Teacher: Mrs Chelsea De Luca
deluca.chelsea@cathednet.wa.edu.au
Education Assistant:
Mrs Lisa Jaffar
Tuesday 8:45am-11:15am
Thursday 12:15pm-2:45pm
***Please note term one times are different***

A huge thank you to the gorgeous children of Pre-Kindergarten 2015 for their smiles and images!
Photography Credit: Mrs Rebecca Pileggi—photographer to the stars. Thank you for your time and expertise!
This booklet is for you as your child starts Pre-Kindergarten.

It takes you through what happens in a typical day in Pre-Kindergarten and includes ideas to help settle your child into school.

As your child’s first teacher, the role you play is vital. The early years of school build on the experiences your child has at home and sets the foundation for all their future learning.

There are lots of things you can do to support your child’s learning.

This booklet gives you ideas of what you can do at home to add to the exciting things your child is learning each day at Pre-Kindergarten.

Discover some great ideas online:

www.raisingchildren.net.au
www.maggiedent.com
www.developingchild.harvard.edu
www.beststart.org/OnTrack
www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au
YOUR CHILD’S SCHOOL JOURNEY

Children learn many important things before they start school.

They learn from you at home, from friends and family, in local playgroups and day care centres. They bring all of this learning with them to school when they start Pre-Kindergarten.

Children learn best when they are supported by their families. The more you are involved in your child’s learning and the more you talk with the teacher, the better you can both support your child. A strong partnership with the school and regular contact with the teacher makes sure your child gets the best start to school.

In Pre-Kindergarten, your child continues to build on the important skills they have developed with you at home. These skills may include your child being able to talk about things that interest them; draw pictures; pretend write; recognise colours, numbers, sizes and shapes; and share with others.

Your enthusiasm helps your child settle into Pre-Kindergarten and be proud of the things they learn each day.
Establishing a positive HOME-SCHOOL relationship

Talk with your child

At school, your child learns about the importance of communication. You can help by talking with your child about the things they do at school. Ask them to explain or describe things that happened during the day. Ask ‘open’ questions so your child answers with more than a yes or a no. For example: ‘What was your favourite thing you did at Pre-Kindergarten today?’

Speak with the teacher

Have regular contact with your child’s teacher. If you want to speak with your child’s teacher without interruption, it’s best to make an appointment.

Contribute to the class

Your child’s teacher will ask for parent involvement in class by a parent roster that is displayed on the noticeboard. You may also be able to assist with incursions, art projects, sporting activities or special events. You can also get involved in the school Parents and Friends Association, school canteen, sporting teams and social events.

Teachers often need items for art and craft, maths and science such as buttons, material scraps, shells, containers. The list is endless! All donations will be gratefully accepted.

Start of the Session

Children love being read to. We encourage all parents or caregivers to stay for the first ten minutes of Pre-Kindergarten to read to children or complete a puzzle. This time together helps your child settle for the day, and allows for uninterrupted, quality time between children and families.
Religion in Pre-Kindergarten

Children have a natural spirituality and their awareness of God and the wonder of life begins long before their formal schooling. Parents are the first faith educators of their children. Catholic schools support parents in the faith formation of children by accepting the responsibility of providing a range of experiences which will nurture and develop each child’s sense of wonder in God’s presence and creation and which contribute to the life long process of developing their faith and religious knowledge.

In Pre-Kindergarten, each child is invited to interact with an environment rich in learning opportunities. Spiritual, social and emotional growth are fostered as children learn about God’s love for them and as they show respect and care for others.

Children are engaged in developing an understanding of and relationship with Jesus. Children will be using stories of Jesus and other appropriate Bible stories to assist them in developing an understanding of God’s love for them.
EARLY EXPERIENCES AND BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Children’s brains are a ‘work in progress!’

In the first few years of life, your child’s brain grows rapidly. The experiences you have with your child during these years are extremely important. A fun, happy and safe environment at home, school and within the school community helps your child develop socially, emotionally and intellectually.

Play is particularly important in childhood learning. Play gives children opportunities to develop imagination, practise skills, communicate with others, take on challenges and solve problems in fun and enjoyable ways.

Singing, playing games, building, playing make-believe, talking, climbing, dancing, reading, writing and drawing all help your child’s brain develop ways of thinking and learning.

‘Play is our brain’s favourite way of learning’

Diane Ackerman
Play is THE answer

The importance of play in the lives of children is supported by theorists, researchers and practitioners. There has been much written about the critical nature of play for young children over the years.

◊ “Play is a particularly powerful form of activity that fosters the social life and constructive activity of the child” Piaget
◊ Vygotsky viewed play as a vehicle used by children to develop new areas of learning and believed that play led development.
◊ “Play is the highest form of research” Albert Einstein
◊ “You can discover more about a person in an hour of play than in a year of conversation” Plato

Play is the instrument for teaching and learning in the Pre-Kindergarten program. It can be both spontaneous and planned play experiences. Types of play include:

- Sensory play
- Construction/deconstruction play
- Dramatic play
- Exploratory play
- Manipulative play
- Physically active play
- Creative play
St Columba’s Pre-Kindergarten Program

Our program is based on the national Early Years in Education Framework (EYLF). It was developed to ensure that children from birth to five years of age receive quality education programs in the vital early years. The main vehicle for learning is **PLAY**.

The EYLF values parents as children’s first and most influential educators and uses the information parents volunteer about their child to develop play and learning experiences. These relationships are important in helping children to feel safe and emotionally secure at school, enabling them to grow through play and interact positively with peers.

There are five learning **OUTCOMES:**
1. Children have a strong sense of identity
2. Children are connected with and contribute to their world
3. Children have a strong sense of wellbeing
4. Children are confident and involved learners
5. Children are effective communicators.

For more information about the Early Years Learning Framework, please visit-

In Pre-Kindergarten, your child learns social skills by playing and sharing with other children. Play allows them to share, take turns and develop their confidence and coordination.

**WHAT WILL MY CHILD LEARN?**

In a carefully planned learning environment, your child experiences many different learning activities through play. These include cutting, painting, gluing, drawing, dressing up, sand play, climbing, storytelling, water play, singing, dancing, exploring and social activities such as making new friends.

The social and emotional development of your child is a very important part of planned learning. The teacher plans activities and encourages all children to be involved so they become successful learners, team players, good problem solvers and creative thinkers who enjoy challenges.

Teachers take into account children’s experiences and backgrounds to make sure learning programs are targeted to meet their individual needs.

Learning centres are physical areas in our classroom that focus on catering for our children’s different interests and skills. They are regularly available for children and allow them to come away from them with a sense of accomplishment.

Please be aware that it is the PROCESS OF PLAY and not the end product that is vital in a child’s growth and development.
Examples of learning centres in Pre-Kindergarten

Dramatic Play Centre (Home Corner)
- Exploring roles
- To BELONG
- Be flexible in their thinking
- Express themselves in sentences
- To sort and organize things
- Decision making
- To improvise and use things in a symbolic way
- To carry out ideas with the cooperation of others.

Block/Construction Centre
- Concepts of shape, size, length, location, space and angles
- To create and repeat patterns
- To cooperate with others
- To solve problems
- To make a plan and implement it.
- Classify, count, balance, sequence
- Develop hand eye coordination.

Sand/Water Centre
- Hand eye coordination
- That some things sink and some things float
- About wet, dry and evaporation
- Capacity of different sized containers.
- That sand texture changes from dry to wet.

Creation Station
- To express imagination and creativity
- Develop fine motor skills
- Concepts of shape, size and location
- Explore tools of art
- To distinguish shapes and to purposefully create shapes
- The names of colours and how to make new colours

Science/Maths Centre
- Science vocabulary
- To group objects into categories
- To observe likeness and differences
- To appreciate nature.
- To notice details and likenesses and differences in objects
- Concepts of colour, size and shape
- Numerical concepts of more than and less than
- Concepts of groups or sets
- Logical reasoning.
- Mathematics vocabulary
- Counting
- Pattern
- Measurement concepts

Play dough/Clay
- Helps to strengthen little fingers, hands and wrists.
- Develop social skills
- Allows children to experiment with vocabulary
- Foster children’s imagination
- Allow for creativity
- It helps children develop self esteem - there is no right or wrong
- It is a great release for tension or angry feelings - squeezing, punching, poking are all acceptable if done to play dough.
- Plan, create and mould.

Reading Centre
- Make believe and imagination
- Listen, concentrate and remember
- Awareness and concepts of print
- Reading for enjoyment
- Comfortable and relaxing experience

Your child will develop strong literacy skills by having books read to them, by sharing stories and by learning songs and rhymes. They will learn to identify words and syllables and describe objects, tell stories and recognise print such as their written name. These skills will help with reading and writing in the future.
What happens during the day?

Pre-Kindergarten is two sessions a week:

PK Green—Tuesday morning and Thursday afternoon
PK White—Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning

The teacher plans regular breaks each day so your child can eat morning tea. We encourage healthy food to eat, and water to drink. Sip and Crunch (morning/afternoon tea) is a fruit or vegetable cut ready to eat, along with a drink bottle of water. Please pack food in wrappers and containers that your child can open easily and eat on their own. Self management is a very important skill that your child learns at this time.

There are also opportunities for inside play, outside play, dance, music, sport and rest time. We support play based learning at all times, which can be messy, hands on but always fun! Please understand that your child may get wet, dirty and/or paint on themselves. This is a clear sign learning has occurred!

For small accidents that are common in Pre-Kindergarten, please ensure your child has a change of clothes, including underwear, in their bag. We will change your child if required.

Hats are compulsory year round at St Columba’s. We play outside at every opportunity, so please ensure your child is dressed for the weather. Children are permitted to remove footwear, so shoes they can manage themselves are essential.
Communication is the Key!

St Columba's Bayswater has a very informative and up to date website where you can view photographs, assembly items, newsletters and current school related information. Use this as your first ‘port of call’ if you have queries, but don’t hesitate to speak to staff if you need further clarification. It is important that you become a member so that you are privy to this information. Please visit the website www.saintcolumbas.com.au and register on the home page to become a member.

St Columba’s Community also has a Facebook Page – you will need to request permission to join.

We love having parents come into the classroom ‘on roster’. Not only does your child feel proud and excited to have a family member with them, it also reinforces the relationships that are a vital part of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Please remember that what happens in the classroom is confidential and parent helpers must support this school policy. All children are special and sometimes require different strategies and support. Please respect the rights of children as individuals.

A Roster will be put up on the notice board once staff feel the children have settled well into routines. We ask for one adult per session.
Helping your child to settle into Pre-Kindergarten

Separation anxiety is normal. Often it is a good sign that healthy attachments have developed between you and your child. Eventually your child will be able to remember that you always return after you leave and these memories will be enough to comfort him/her while you are gone. This experience gives your child the opportunity to develop his/her own coping skills and a little independence.

Ways to Make Goodbyes easier

- Be positive
- Read books about going to school, friends and separation.
- Choose a special fruit container and drink bottle for Pre-Kindergarten.
- Drive past the school, point out the playground and classroom.
- Practice being apart from each other for small periods of time.
- Never ‘sneak’ away whilst your child is distracted.
- Create a goodbye ritual.
- Be calm and consistent; say a loving and firm goodbye. Stay calm and show confidence in your child. Reassure him/her that you’ll be back.
- Give him/her your full attention when saying goodbye.
- When you say you’re leaving, mean it; coming back only makes things worse.
- Follow through on promises; make sure you return when you have promised to return.
- Ask your child “What are some of the good things that happened today?”
- Encourage a positive relationship between your child and their teachers and friends e.g. collect things for the classroom, draw pictures of their teachers and friends, and invite friends over for play dates.

If your child is unwell or tired and unable to attend school, please telephone the absentee line asap before the start of the session.

9208 2711

You will also need to issue an email or written note explaining your child’s absence.
Staff Procedures for Separation Anxiety

- Please be assured we will look after your child if they are anxious. We want them to be happy with us! We are very experienced in dealing with separation anxiety. Know that they always settle in eventually.
- We will try and distract your child with activities and play until they are settled.
- We offer choice of activities and comfort when needed.
- We remind them when parents are returning. We use our visual timetable on the board to ‘count’ how many activities there are until parents return.
- We read stories about starting school and change.
- We praise any interaction with the staff, other children or environment.
- We try to match play experiences to the interests of the children (see your parent information sheet).
- We encourage friendships
- We aim to provide a positive play environment – lots of choice and lots of ‘yes’!
- We set clear boundaries so that all children feel safe.
- We encourage messy, involved play.

‘No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship’
James Comer
WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

- Please take the lead from your child! Play with them, play alongside them and allow them to direct the play.
- Please do not expect your child to grow up quickly. Let them be little.
- Let them get messy! Sensory exploration is the main way our brain synapses connect and develop.
- Be patient with toileting. Accidents will happen for a while; treat accidents calmly and matter of factly. Avoid shaming a child.
- Talk frequently with children; use short sentences, ask questions, and **listen**. This shows your child how to listen to others.
- Add new information to your children's sentences. "Yes that's a flower - it's a tall, red flower and it smells so good."
- Provide books for children to read, and read the same books to them. Read poetry and nursery rhymes. Encourage a child to repeat a story and discuss the ideas and events. Read titles and point to important words on pages, packages, and street signs.

Most of all – enjoy your child! In the overwhelming hours of tiredness, work and to-do lists, it can be hard to really enjoy their personalities! They are only little for such a small while – we don’t need to rush.
WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME (continued)

- Encourage interest in reading and writing by providing paper, small notebooks, and textas for use in dramatic play.

- Count objects of interest. When possible, move one at a time as you and the children count. Measure, and have children help measure and count as you follow a recipe.

- Sing simple songs.

- Encourage free expression in art projects. Allow your child to simply enjoy the process of drawing.

- Bring out the baby pictures. Talk about "When you were a baby."

- Talk about colours, numbers, and shapes in your everyday conversation. "We need ONE egg. That's a RED car. The butter is in this SQUARE box.". No need for flashcards or rote learning at this age! Children learn by doing.

- Ask for help with very simple household tasks such as putting the napkins by each plate, putting socks in the drawer, watering plants, or stirring the muffin mix.
PRE-KINDERGARTEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does my child need to bring each day?

Your child needs to bring their school bag, with a school hat, fruit or vegetables, a water bottle and **TWO** changes of clothes (including underewear) for accidents. Sun cream should be administered before school.

What do I pack for my child to eat?

Sip and Crunch (Morning Tea) - fruit or vegetable ready to eat and a water bottle filled with water.

Please pack food in containers your child can manage, in an insulated bag with an ice pack. Please mark everything with your child’s name.

What is the school policy on allergies?

Please find the school policy enclosed. If your child has an allergy, an anaphylaxis plan must be supplied to school, along with the appropriate medication. This will be stored at Kindergarten. Children with allergies also require a red school hat from the Uniform Shop. **PLEASE NOTE: St Columba’s is a NUT FREE ZONE. No children or adults are permitted to have nuts on site.**

Do you celebrate birthdays at Pre-Kindergarten?

Yes! We love celebrating birthdays! If you wish, you may like to send small cupcakes, a lollipop or muffins into class to be distributed at home time to each child. Please advise your teacher. If your child is having a party, please be aware of children’s feelings. Posting invitations or quietly slipping them into children’s folders is best so as not to upset those who are not invited.

What do children wear to Pre-Kindergarten?

Children wear the Early Childhood uniform available for sale through the Uniform Shop. Please remember we will be getting messy and dirty! Save good clothes for special occasions. Shoes that your child can manage themselves are ideal for Pre-Kindergarten. Velcro is great! A school hat is compulsory year round.

What do we do when we arrive at school?

Please wait behind the Early Childhood gate until the official start of the session. For safety reasons, children and siblings are not permitted to play on or with equipment in our outdoor play ground before or after a session.
PRE-KINDERGARTEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Stay and Play Roster?

We love having parents come into the classroom ‘on roster’. Not only does your child feel proud and excited to have a family member with them, it also reinforces the relationships that are a vital part of the Early Years Learning Framework.

Please remember that what happens in the classroom is confidential and we ask that parent helpers support this school policy. All children are special and sometimes require different strategies and support. We ask that parents respect the rights of children as individuals. A roster will be put up on the notice board once we feel the children have settled well into routines. **We ask for one adult per session.**

How will I learn about my child’s progress?

St Columba’s integrates technology in all classes PK-6. Staff in Pre-Kindergarten use iPads and photography to document a child’s learning. These photos are then compiled into Learning Stories, and distributed to families by email. We also have a class blog, which will be updated regularly with class notices, events and learning stories. Please provide a current email on the information form and add the teacher’s email to your address book, so that these important emails aren’t sent to ‘junk’ files. Please fill out and return the enclosed permission forms.

What happens if my child has difficulty with toileting?

Whilst we encourage children to be toilet trained, we understand that accidents may still occur. Please talk to your child about going to the toilet and explain that a teacher will take them through. We will remind them at each session to tell us when they need to go to the toilet and if you could do the same before you leave them in the morning that would help them to remember. If an accident occurs, your child will be changed discreetly and the wet clothes will be put in a plastic bag into his/her school bag. We will inform you if your child has had an accident.

What donations do you accept?

We are always more than happy to take any ‘junk’ or recyclables off your hands! We always love buttons, paper, envelopes, wool, stickers, cardboard tubes, wood scraps, fabric scraps -anything that can be glued or collaged.
PRE-KINDERGARTEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is School Banking?
School banking is coordinated by volunteers. All children can sign up and make contributions to their bank accounts. The service is affiliated with the Commonwealth Bank.

Can Pre-Kindergarten children place orders from the canteen?
No sorry they cannot. Our canteen operates on Monday, Wednesday and Fridays when the children do not attend.

What care options are available at St Columba’s? OSHC
The school offers a before and after school care program, as well as day care on student free days and holidays. Children must be four to attend and the centre is open from 7am until 6pm. Please contact Jess Scott (coordinator) on 92082723.

My child has arrived late to Pre-Kindergarten/I need to collect my child early from Pre-Kindergarten. What is the procedure?
If your child arrives late or leaves early, you must attend the school office before coming to the classroom and complete a slip.

Where do I find newsletters, notes and other school information?
The St Columba’s website contains a wealth of information, weekly newsletters and term planners. Please consult the site FIRST. The class blog will also be updated with reminders and notices regularly. Other notes will be placed in your child’s ‘file’ which is outside the classroom. Please check it regularly.

Where do I park?
Parking is available along Milne Street, Roberts Street and at the Tennis club in Murray Street. Be aware the parking spaces are at a premium and we often have the local ranger present. You may wish to walk or car pool or plan to arrive earlier, especially at the beginning and end of the day.

The bays immediately outside the Church on Roberts Street are reserved at all times for parishioners and ‘Kiss n Drive’ families from grades 1-6.
Meet your staff...

My name is Chelsea De Luca and I am the Pre-Kindergarten Teacher for 2017. I have been teaching at St Columba’s for five years now, but have been a teacher for twenty years. I am qualified to teach children from birth to age twelve, but my passion is early childhood education and play based learning. I have been happily married for twenty years and we have three girls (12, 9 and 5); two of whom attend St Columba’s. As parents, we love the school for its fabulous community and the opportunities it offers to our children. Other than teaching, I enjoy reading, parties, baking, design and movies. However in reality, I usually find myself as a taxi for dancing, tennis, netball, play dates and music! We also have three fur children—two cats and a dog.

Thank you for entrusting us with your child in 2017. We look forward to a fabulous year.

Hi my name is Lisa Jaffar. I’m an Education Assistant at St Columba’s and will be working alongside the class teacher, Chelsea De Luca, to deliver a Pre-Kindergarten program for your child. This will be my fourth year at St Columba’s and I’m really enjoying working with the three year olds, watching them develop as they explore, play and socialise.

I’m married to a wonderful man and we have two girls, Olivia aged fourteen and Hayley aged twelve. They keep us very busy with their dancing, flute, basketball and social commitments. The other love of my life is our four year old dog, Zoe. She is a Maltese x Toy Poodle and we think she is gorgeous. My family and I love taking her for walks at the park and swimming at the beach. Some other things I like to do when I have some spare time are gardening, cooking with my girls (I have a sweet tooth!) and just relaxing with family and friends.

I’m really looking forward to working with all of your beautiful children and helping to make their first experience of school life positive and enjoyable.
St Columba’s School Motto
To grow in Faith, seek Wisdom and live in Peace.

Mercy Values
At St Columba’s School, we strive to use the values of the Mercy Sisters to guide all who belong to our community in the building of a better and happier world for future generations. These values of mercy, compassion, justice, service and excellence are the core values of what it means to be a part of a Mercy School. We hope that in leaving St Columba’s that these values are entrenched and an understanding of this charism will be taken with the children for future years.