

PREPARATORY HANDBOOK 2017



HEIGHTS COLLEGE

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WELCOME TO HEIGHTS COLLEGE

CONTACTS

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VISION STATEMENT

A caring learning community that inspires students to powerfully influence their world for Jesus Christ.

PURPOSE

To provide education that inspires character and leadership.

EDUCATIONAL VISION

That every individual, on their personal journey of discovering their God-given destiny, can say: "I know who I am; I know what I must do; I know how to do it."



PREPARATORY STAFF

Teachers:

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WELCOME TO PREPARATORY

Undergirding our College philosophy is an attitude that we are partnering with you to help your child enjoy engaging in learning and life at school.

This is an exciting year for the children and we look forward to sharing this experience with you and your family.

PREPARATORY PHILOSOPHY

Global Aim - Readiness

Children are already proficient learners before they attend school. However school learning places unique expectations on young children and Preparatory aims to better prepare them for success with their learning in the more formalized school setting.

Every child is different; uniquely created by God. They not only look different and have varying physical capabilities; they also possess diverse talents, likes and dislikes. Their experiences prior to entering school vary and they learn at different rates and have their own preferred learning style. It is important to realize that schools today are becoming more aware of the individual needs of children and are structuring their educational program to best suit these needs.

No parent expects their child to run before they can crawl. Similarly we do not expect a child to write when they have not developed the necessary fine motor skills. One stage of development depends on the successful mastery of the previous stage. Preparatory allows students an educational year to develop and hone foundational skills that will better prepare them for later success in school.

Foundations for Learning

Although the introduction of the new Australian Curriculum F-10 has resulted in guiding the Preparatory program, we continue to uphold and enact practices that reflect and instill early years learning principles and developmental understanding in our program. While both classes will engage with the same skills and knowledge throughout the year, each Preparatory teacher will tailor the class program and activities to suit their individual group of children.

Oral Language Development

Oral language development is a prerequisite for learning. Students need to be able to talk about what they are learning. Time spent on reflecting, arguing, reporting, discussing, recounting,

inferring, suggesting, classifying, describing, comparing and observing the concepts to which they are exposed, is essential to ensure development in all academic areas including reading comprehension and writing. An expanding vocabulary with correct pronunciation and a developing sophistication of spoken sentence structures are indicative of future literacy success. We intentionally promote hands-on experiences with considerable guided and interactive discussion.

Book Experiences

We encourage regular reading at school and at home. How we read to and with children is just as important as how often we read. Research suggests that children who participate in conversations around books with an interested and informed adult are substantially ahead of children who do not have similar experiences. The practice of returning to and re-reading of familiar books is also highly valued. Prep students are involved in the college home reading program as part of their homework, and will be introduced to reading habits through books that use simple high frequency common words and repeated sentence patterns.

Further information about the value of regular reading can be found at

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/400/>

Perceptual and Motor Development

Children understand the world through the engagement of their senses with the environment. Prep aims to provide a multisensory approach to teaching and learning which assists with making stronger connections between concepts and promotes recall. Teachers plan **activities to develop students' ability to discriminate both visual and auditory material independently and accurately.**

PMP (Perceptual Motor Program) is a specialized program that targets physical and sensory development. Good body awareness, motor planning and **co-ordination underlie a child's ability to maintain attention and participation.** Development and refinement of fine motor skills is a precondition to future pencil tasks. Prep aims to develop correct and automatic letter formation prior to independent writing.



The Place of Play in Prep

***“Play is not only our creative drive;
it’s a fundamental mode of learning.”***
David Elkind (psychologist and author)

Children’s knowledge, ideas, attitudes and values develop through interactions with others. At Preparatory we offer a range of play-based activities to invite children to engage actively with concrete materials in meaningful experiences. Careful planning to establish challenging scenarios places students just beyond their existing knowledge and skill level, providing genuine motivation to learn and grow. Play provides an avenue through which children are able to express their creativity. The Prep year is an enjoyable experience which helps the children move towards developing their full potential.

Student Progress

The Prep curriculum is informed by both the Australian Curriculum and the Early Years Curriculum Guidelines.

Learning Areas in Prep include:

- God-awareness and Christian living
- Social and emotional competence
- Health and physical wellbeing
- English
- Mathematics
- Science
- History
- Geography

Students also participate in weekly learning experiences with specialist teachers for Physical Education, Creative Arts and Music, Technology and Chinese.

All learning opportunities are infused with the Biblical understanding of the world, and can be planned or occur at a teachable moment stemming from student interest or response. Student progress is reported to parents according to a five stage developmental scale throughout the year via Parent/Teacher interviews and Student Progress Reports.

Student development and readiness for Year One is also monitored using the Brigance assessment tool.

Further information on curriculum:

The Australian Curriculum

<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/>

Early Years Curriculum Guidelines

<http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au/981.html>

CHRISTIAN CULTURE

As a Christian College, the students express their faith through involvement in Praise and Worship, prayer, Bible reading and devotions. Biblical Christian view of Easter and Christmas celebrations is explicitly taught.



A Teacher's Prayer

I want to teach my students more
than lessons in a book;
I want to teach them deeper things
that people overlook--
The value of a rose in bloom,
its use and beauty, too,
A sense of curiosity to discover
what is true;
How to think and how to choose
the right above the wrong,
How to live and learn each day
and grow up to be strong;
To teach them always how to gain
in wisdom and in grace,
So they will someday make the world
a brighter, better place.
Lord, let me be a friend and guide
to give these minds a start
Upon their way down life's long road,
then I'll have done my part.

PREPARATORY PROCEDURES

FIRST WEEK

New families to the College are invited to an informal orientation during the week prior to school officially commencing, so that you and your child can come along to meet the teachers, other parents and students, see the facilities, and ask questions.

Prep uses a Staggered Entry at the beginning of the year to help children settle into expected routines. This means that your child's first experience of Prep will occur with a small group of their peers on an allocated day during the first week. The smaller group size allows the staff to better support your child's transition to formal schooling. Dates and times for these events will also be issued in a separate letter. Please ensure you have arranged suitable care for your child's non-contact days during the first week.

GENERAL

- Students participate in College programs including Physical Education, Chinese, creative arts, library and any excursions and performances deemed valuable by the teacher or College.
- When the teachers decide that the students are ready for more formal aspects of College

life, the students will also participate in Assemblies and Praise & Worship.

- Preps commence swimming in Term 4 in preparation for Year One swimming and therefore do not participate in the Term 1 Swimming Carnival.
- Students are allocated a Sports House and participate in the college Athletics Carnival.
- Students participate three days a week in the Perceptual Motor Program (PMP) to develop body awareness and co-ordination.
- From Semester Two, students have regulated access to all school buildings and grounds available to the Early Years students.
- Preps eat their lunch with other children in Prep, Years 1 and 2 in the Hoseenu area. Tuckshop is available using Flexischools online ordering. (second lunch only- please do not send cash to school). Prep students only use the Prep toilet block.
- Students will be given homework (home reading is one aspect of homework)
- Students will be involved in the Prep/Year 11 Buddy program from the middle of the year. Rest time is not mandatory in Preparatory; however, it may be necessary to have some quiet times if children are becoming overwhelmed.

ATTENDANCE

- Students attend five full days – College starts at 8.20 am and ends at 3.00pm.
- If your child is unable to attend school for any reason, please remember to notify Student Reception by 9:30am on each day of their absence.

Phone 4923 1820
SMS 0416 905 257
Email absentees@heights.qld.edu.au

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

It is recommended that parents or an older sibling and the Preparatory student arrive together and wait for the start of class. Teaching staff engage in collective prayer from 8am till 8.20am each morning. Initially, please do not leave children waiting unattended as this could be quite overwhelming for them. If your child arrives after the College start time, families need to sign in through Student Reception and obtain a Late Slip.

At the end of the day, we ask that a parent or a nominated adult or older sibling collect the Preparatory student from the classroom. This can be reviewed as the year progresses, enabling children to make their way to a prearranged

rendezvous independently. Students using the College buses are collected by staff and walked to the bus.

UNIFORM

Preparatory students at Heights College are required to wear the Preparatory Uniform as outlined in the Parent Handbook. Correct hair management is part of the uniform expectations. It is recommended that spare clothes are stored in **student's bag** (in case of accidents).

Every day wear

- Sports shirt and shorts.
- Black joggers (preferably with Velcro for ease of use) and short white socks.
- College hat (the College has a "no hat, no play" policy for breaks).

Formal occasions including Assembly and excursions

- Formal uniform.

SCHOOL BAGS

Children will need to carry A4 pencil cases, scrapbooks, lunchboxes, hats, jumpers etc. in their school bag. Therefore please ensure that their bag will be big enough to contain all materials as this helps students manage their property. Please make sure all items are named clearly.

LUNCH TIME

Children will be eating lunch as part of a larger Prep- Year 2 group. As students are not supervised individually, it is highly recommended that packed lunches are easy for the children to manage. Please help your child by ensuring that they are able to open their food packages independently and have the necessary implements (eg. spoon) to eat their lunch. As we have two lunch sessions, it might be a good idea to organize lunch items into two parcels in the bag and discuss with your child what is for first lunch and what is for second lunch. We do not keep lunches in a refrigerator in Prep, so an esky-style lunch bag with a small ice-brick is recommended. (Note: frozen popper juices do not usually defrost in time for the children to drink at first lunch).

HEALTHY LUNCHES *Healthy lunches are encouraged.* Pre-packaged, highly processed

TOILETING

It is important for children attending the Preparatory Program to have developed toileting independence. Please help your child understand the etiquette of using a communal toilet.

snack foods are quick but not nutritious. High levels of sugar and fat do affect children negatively, impacting their ability to attend and learn.

Some suitable suggestions include:

Sandwiches; Fruit; Crackers; Left over dinner; Yoghurt; Cheese cubes; Sultanas; Cherry tomatoes, celery or carrot sticks; Spaghetti or baked beans in a separate container.

Heights has a 'no sharing food' policy. Please be considerate of students with allergies.

If your child has a food intolerance or allergy, please inform the teacher and Student Reception so that alternatives can be arranged during planned shared cooking/food experiences.

HEALTH POLICY

In the event of your child becoming ill during the day, students may be taken to the College Health Bay. If necessary, parents are notified so that your child may be taken home as soon as possible. Please notify Prep teachers at once if your child has been exposed to any communicable disease, eg German Measles, so we can notify other parents. Please refer to the College Parent Handbook for more details.

Medicine

All medicine is dispensed at the College Health Bay, located in the Nissi Building. All medications must be handed to the teacher with written Instructions. Prescriptions need to be labeled **with the child's name and dosage details. DO NOT LEAVE THEM IN THE CHILD'S BAG OR LUNCH BOX.**

Head Lice

From time to time, we have children coming to Preparatory with head lice. We encourage all **parents to be regularly checking your child's hair** for nits (eggs laid by the lice) and for lice themselves. Head lice are very easily spread and uncomfortable. As a result, if your child is found to have lice at Preparatory, you will be contacted to collect them from the College. Once treated for lice, the children are able to return.

COMMUNICATION

Role of Parents

Heights College warmly welcomes parent (and Grandparent) involvement in Prep. Mothers and fathers may be invited to assist in various activities. Some ways that parents can become involved include classroom help, PMP supervision, excursion assistance, home preparation of materials, and sharing your personal gifts and talents.

It is very important that you notify the College immediately if there are any changes to your address, phone number, and/or emergency contacts.

Sharing Home Life

Events in family life, such as major illnesses, visits to grandparents and relatives, accident or death of relatives or pets, may be a cause for major concern or excitement for children and markedly affect their behaviour and emotions. It is important that families share this information with Prep teachers so they are better prepared to respond appropriately and support your child through these events.

Birthdays

If your child has a birthday during the school year, you are welcome to send a cake or cupcakes to share with the group. Please discuss this with the teacher as the time approaches.

Homework

Preps commence homework immediately. Home tasks are at the discretion of the teacher and reflect class learning and student needs. It is vital that set tasks be undertaken at home to support future literacy and numeracy development and readiness for Year One. Homework will include reading, learning sight words and other relevant activities.

News telling

Children may be nominated on a weekly basis to bring something of interest to share with the rest of the group. We discourage children from **bringing toys to 'show' as we would much prefer** something more interesting – e.g. an empty wasp nest, a painting they did, an insect they found, or a special photo. News-telling provides a simple and non-threatening environment for the

children to begin their journey of public speaking. Topics can become a springboard for broadening general knowledge and understanding of their world.

Discussions with the Teacher

If you have any questions, concerns or positive feedback at any time, please feel free to speak to the teacher. We love to discuss how children are developing but an appointment may need to be made for lengthy discussions. Throughout the course of the year, newsletters and emails informing parents about Preparatory activities and the happenings of Heights College will be sent home with the children, mailed home or made available electronically.

We are excited about Preparatory and look forward to sharing **this year's learning journey** with you and your child.

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 a little while
To bathe his hands and comb his hair
To tell him what he is to wear
To prepare him that he may always be good
And each day do the things he should"

"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 just for a little while
To teach him how to be gentle and kind
To train and direct his dear little mind
To help him live by every rule
And get the best he can from school"

"Whose child is this?" I ask once more
Just as the little one entered the door
"Ours" said the parent and the teacher as they
smiled
And each took the hand of the little child
"Ours to love and train together
Ours this blessed task forever."

(Author Unknown)