PREPARING FOR KINDERGARTEN
IN THE NEW YEAR

Dear Parent/Caregiver

This special edition of our school newsletter is specifically designed for parents of students who will be starting school for the first time in the new year. The school has produced the newsletter with a number of articles for parents as they prepare to send their child to school for the first time.

Should you choose to send your child to Blayney Public School, we will offer him, or her, a broad range of educational, artistic, sporting and social opportunities. Each child’s individual talents are nurtured and developed in a caring and accountable environment. Blayney Public School offers your child a great start to life. Your child will be taught by skilled, highly qualified and motivated teachers who are supported by the resources of the largest, most innovative education system in the southern hemisphere. Our school is proud to be a Heritage Country School and an active member of the pre2 learning community.

At Blayney Public School your child will learn the meaning of integrity, excellence, respect, responsibility, cooperation, participation, care, fairness and democracy. These values are critical in the development of your child as a responsible and successful member of a civil and democratic society.

The important outcomes for your child of learning these values include:
- a love of learning, high standards and the pursuit of excellence;
- care and respect for self, for families and our local community;
- respect for work;
- a commitment to fairness and social justice;
- an appreciation of Australia’s history and its inclusive and cohesive society.

I trust that you will find the information in this newsletter of value as you prepare your child for the excitement of Kindergarten and the start of their school life. If you would like to discuss any matter relating to the enrolment of your child at Blayney Public School, please contact the school on 63682154 to make an appointment with me.

Kind regards

Bruce Inwood
Principal

A thought: “Everything I really need to know in life I learnt in Kindergarten.” - Robert Fulgam
Ten Tips for Parents of Children Starting Kindergarten

Starting school can be a busy time for all concerned. The summer may be nearly over and a new school year is ahead - for some, this is the first time. Here are our ten tips to help you prepare:

1. Provide information about your child’s immunisation status
   Your child will be coming into contact with lots of other children and infections can spread very easily. Immunisation records need to be presented for Kindergarten enrolment. Under the Public Health (Amendment) Act 1992, children who have not been immunised may be sent home during an outbreak of a vaccine-preventable disease.

2. Learn the names of the important people at the school
   This will help you communicate with your child about what they do each day at school. It is also important that you have a relationship with your child's teacher and principal to ensure you are up to date with your child's progress.

3. Give all information about your child to the school especially medical and special needs
   You know your child best. Your child's kindergarten teacher will have many students to get to know. Help the teacher understand your child better and faster by sharing information and insights. This will also ensure that your child gets any essential attention.

4. Provide emergency contact numbers
   The school might need to contact you urgently. Provide alternative numbers and contacts in case the school is unable to contact you.

5. Make the school aware of any special family circumstances
   Any changes to your child's family situation can impact on their emotional and academic well-being. Inform your child's teacher and principal about any changed circumstances so that the child can be supported if necessary. Examples of special circumstances include the birth of a sibling, divorce or the death of a loved one.

6. Establish routines with your child and stick to them
   Prepare your child for a more structured day. Make a daily routine that includes mealtime, talking time, and reading time.

7. Make sure your child is road/travel safe
   Children should know to cross the road only at marked crossings. Please set a good example. Take particular care when you drop off and collect your child from school.

8. Become familiar with school activities - develop a relationship with the school
   Parents/caregivers set an example. If you are positive and encouraging towards school, your child will be too. Both the students and teachers will appreciate your involvement and assistance in activities ranging from sports and excursions to music and drama presentations.

9. Educate your child about 'stranger danger'
   Teach your child not to talk to strangers. They should not accept gifts or lifts from someone that they do not know.

10. Label equipment and clothing
    Replacing lost clothing and equipment is expensive and inconvenient. You should clearly mark every item with your child's name.
Our Mission…
Blayney Public School’s mission is to develop confident well-equipped citizens who have a positive attitude towards continued learning and an active concern for the world.

BEST START
KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT

At the start of Term 1, Kindergarten teachers will observe all of the children in their class doing a range of tasks, to assess where to start teaching literacy and numeracy. Kindergarten teachers have always taken time at the beginning of the year to see how each child works with books, letters, and numbers. However, in Best Start, all Kindergarten teachers will use the same set of observation tasks across NSW public schools.

The Best Start Assessment is not a test. It is a process where your child’s teacher observes and records what your child already knows and can do in literacy and numeracy and uses the information to guide their teaching. Students will do the assessment tasks with their own teacher in their own classroom.

The teacher will look at your child’s early reading and writing, their ability to communicate with others, and how they recognise and work with numbers, groups and patterns.

In 2008, Blayney Public School and more than 400 other schools across NSW participated in the Best Start Assessment. All public schools have participated from 2010.

Following the assessments, your child’s teacher will provide feedback from the assessment, and you will have the opportunity to discuss your child’s learning.

PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR KINDERGARTEN

Parents/caregivers can do a lot to help prepare their child for Kindergarten before the big ‘first day’. Below is a list of skills that will be useful for children starting Kindergarten. We recognise that not all children will have these skills as everyone develops at a different pace, so this is intended only as a guide so that starting school may be just a little easier.

Encourage your child to attempt the things mentioned below, but don’t worry if your child can’t do all of them. Talk to the Kindergarten teacher, and together you can support and assist your child’s learning.

Language
- talks to other people about familiar objects and events
- answers and asks simple questions
- makes needs known
- follows simple instructions
- uses books for enjoyment or for looking at pictures
- identifies pictures in books, magazines, on television or video
- uses a variety of things (pens, pencils, textas, paintbrushes, sticks in the dirt) to draw, to scribble or to write
- joins in singing familiar songs

Mathematics
- recognises that numbers can be used to count
- uses words such as many, a lot, more, less
- identifies things in a group that are different
- sees differences in shapes
- differentiates between opposites - up and down, under and over, in front and behind, day and night

Personal/Social Skills
- uses the toilet independently
- can say own name and address
- adapts to unfamiliar settings and new experiences
- can finish a task, and tidies up afterwards
- plays cooperatively with other children - shares and takes turns
- can sit still to listen to a story for a few minutes
- is curious about the world
- can share an adult's attention with several other children
- participates in imaginative play

Physical Skills
- uses scissors to cut along a straight line
- enjoys a variety of indoor and outdoor play
- can put on and take off jumpers, shoes, socks independently
- makes and designs things using a variety of materials


FOUR KEY ELEMENTS
Supportive Community – Traditional Values – Exceptional Opportunities – Progressive Education

The first element that contributes to Blayney Public School’s ongoing success is that of a supportive community. The Blayney community is very supportive of the school. It is supportive in terms of time, energy, finance and commitment to learning. High levels of parent participation in the many curricula and extra-curricula programs mean that the school can run successful initiatives. There is also a strong network of schools and communities across the Blayney area and these networks make for a welcoming, friendly school community. The school is proud to be a Heritage Country School. Healthy partnerships with parents, community, business and sporting organisations have seen numerous programs developed and implemented, leading to great learning opportunities for students.

The second element is that of traditional values. The values of tolerance, respect and fair play are actively demonstrated by the staff and promoted and developed in students. The school has strong pastoral care and student management programs which provide safe, inclusive and nurturing learning environments. There is a focus on developing social skills, decision-making and citizenship in each student. The school maintains high expectations of those who work and learn here, with an acknowledged proven record of achievement.

The third element is the provision of exceptional opportunities. Blayney Public School prides itself on the wide range of activities in which students are able to take part. The school conducts enrichment programs to foster individual abilities and interests and coordinates dynamic excursion and visiting performance programs. Of particular note are the outstanding sporting and cultural programs which provide willing students with school, district, regional and state representation opportunities. In each of the extra-curricula activities the school provides, student leadership skills are enhanced.

Finally, Blayney Public School is committed to delivering a progressive education. Innovative programs in literacy and numeracy and the continuous implementation of state-of-the-art technology mean that our students learning needs are addressed in such a way as to equip students to be capable learners now and in the future. The school provides specialised support for students with difficulties in learning and for those requiring stronger academic challenges. Our tertiary-accredited teachers are committed to ongoing learning and the development and implementation of quality teaching programs delivering diverse learning experiences.

TECHNOLOGY AT SCHOOL
Technology has a profound impact on the world in which we live. The ability to use a range of technologies to access, analyse, use and evaluate information is increasingly vital for full participation as an active citizen of the future.

Students starting school now are often referred to as digital natives, meaning that they have technology embedded into their lives. Technology has opened up schools in ways previously unimaginable. On enrolment, all students at Blayney Public School are provided with a secure email and filtered internet browsing account.

At Blayney Public School all of the classrooms have an Interactive whiteboard (IWB). This technology has replaced the traditional chalkboard as the teacher’s primary tool of instruction. The interactive whiteboards that have been installed mean that students can engage in quality teaching and learning activities that go beyond what can be provided in a traditional chalkboard-based classroom.

In addition to the Interactive Whiteboards, the school also has a connected classroom and a mobile computer lab.

The connected classroom is designed to allow students to engage in video-conferencing with schools and sites within NSW and across the world. Such facilities not only allow teachers to liaise for professional development across large distances, but also allow specialist teachers to instruct students remotely. An extremely important benefit, of course, is that students are able to learn to use and become proficient in cutting-edge technology and software.

The mobile computer lab means that each student in a class can have access to a computer which is connected to the school’s network and the internet.
ENROLLING YOUR CHILD AT SCHOOL

Once you have made the decision to enrol your child, you will be asked to fill out an Application to enrol in a NSW Government school form and submit it to your local school. Forms are available from the Blayney Public School office, your local regional office or online at www.schools.nsw.edu.au. You will require proof of identity (e.g. birth certificate), an immunisation certificate (for primary school enrolments) and proof of address for your child.

Your application will be considered by the school principal to ensure that your child's needs have been identified and assessed. In most cases this process will be completed very quickly. In some circumstances, it will be necessary for the school to gather further information prior to finalising their decision. You can assist by ensuring the information on your application form is accurate and complete.

You will be notified by the school of the result of your application. Please do not purchase items such as uniforms until you receive confirmation of enrolment. If your application is accepted, the information you have provided will be used by the school to formally enrol your child.

Out-of-area applications

When it comes to considering out-of-area applications, our public school principals are required to follow departmental policy. This is because we must ensure that all eligible in-area students wishing to attend their local school are able to do so. Depending on resources, some schools may be able to accept additional students from outside their enrolment area at the discretion of the school's enrolment panel.

Applications for non-local (out-of-area) enrolments are considered using a range of criteria, including the availability of appropriate staff and classroom accommodation. Contact the school to find out more about their out-of-area selection criteria.

Enrolling a child with special needs

As a parent or carer of a child with a learning difficulty or disability, you have access to a team of people from your local regional office who will assist you with your child's enrolment. Depending on your location and your child's needs, you may have access to regular classes in regular schools, support classes in regular schools or a school with specific support services. Before enrolling your child, you will be asked to contact the student support team at your local regional office.

Applications to enrol a child at Blayney Public School will be accepted from mid July each year, which is the start of Term 3.

If you require an application form please contact the school office on 63682154, or drop in to the school office in Lindsay Street Blayney.

ATTENDANCE & ABSENCE

All children over the age of six are required to attend school on each day that instruction is provided. The school will record daily attendance. It is a parent or caregiver’s duty to ensure regular school attendance. The school will inform parents promptly of any case of truancy or of any unexplained absences.

If your child is absent from school through illness, family holidays, etc. you must notify the school in writing on the child’s return. If you know your child is going to be absent for more than two days, please notify the school as soon as possible. For the protection of others, immediate advice is necessary in the case of infectious diseases.
TRADITIONAL VALUES
Blayney Public School holds dear the values of NSW Public Schools. The core values of Blayney Public School and all NSW public schools are:

- **Integrity**: Being consistently honest and trustworthy.
- **Excellence**: Striving for the highest personal achievement in all aspects of schooling and individual and community action, work and life-long learning.
- **Respect**: Having regard for yourself and others, lawful and just authority and diversity within Australian society and accepting the rights of others to hold different or opposing views.
- **Responsibility**: Being accountable for your individual and community’s actions towards yourself, others and the environment.
- **Cooperation**: Working together to achieve common goals, providing support to others and engaging in peaceful resolution of conflict.
- **Participation**: Being a proactive and productive individual and group member, having pride in and contributing to the social and economic wealth of the community and the nation.
- **Care**: Concern for the wellbeing of yourself and others, demonstrating empathy and compassion.
- **Fairness**: Being committed to the principles of social justice and opposing prejudice, dishonesty and injustice.
- **Democracy**: Accepting and promoting the rights, freedoms and responsibilities of being an Australian citizen.

By incorporating these values into all facets of school life we are able to live up to our motto: “Success with Honour”.

HEAD START PROGRAM
Blayney Public School offers prospective kindergarten students the opportunity to participate in our Head Start Program.

The Head Start Program provides children planning to start kindergarten in the new year with an opportunity to take part in structured learning sessions focusing on Talking and Listening Skills; Literature; Numeracy; and Social Skills.

The Head Start Program gives pre-school students experiences and skills to help make their transition into the school setting in the new year a smooth one. The program has been designed by our Stage 1 staff.

Head Start Program sessions will be available on four days each week, commencing in Week 1 of Term 4 and concluding in Week 5 of Term 4. Parents are able to choose sessions which best complement their child’s current pre-school arrangements. If two sessions a week are desired the combination of Monday/Thursday and Wednesday/Friday will allow for a range of skills. Please bring a bottle of water and a healthy packed morning tea.

KINDERGARTEN ORIENTATION
Blayney Public School conducts its Kindergarten Orientation Program each Tuesday from 11.25 am to 12.55 pm commencing in Week 1 of Term 4 and concluding in Week 5 of Term 4.

The aim of the orientation program is to give prospective kindergarten students the opportunity to experience what school will be like, and some of the routines and activities in which they will be involved. The program is conducted by our Early Stage 1 (kindergarten) teachers.

Participants will enjoy working with others on learning activities such as stories, puzzles and games. This year’s kindergarten students will also spend some time with participants, reading stories, helping with activities and showing the new students around the school.

On the first day of the Orientation program, parents are asked to bring their preschooler to the school for a roll call at 11.25am. Student leaders are stationed at the school gates to direct you to the roll call area. After the roll call preschoolers will go with the kindergarten teachers to take part in activities. Parents will be invited to the library to meet with other parents, learn more about Blayney Public School and go on a tour of the school.


**CURRICULUM AND CLASS ORGANISATION**

The NSW primary curriculum is divided into six key learning areas – English, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Human Society and Its Environment, Personal Development/ Health/ Physical Education, and the Arts.

The NSW Board of Studies has developed a syllabus document for each key learning area. The syllabus documents identify the outcomes students are expected to achieve. The outcomes are presented in three developmental learning stages.

Early Stage 1 which is the first year of formal education, and is more commonly referred to as Kindergarten
Stage 1, which includes Year 1 and Year 2
Stage 2, which includes Year 3 and Year 4
Stage 3, which includes Year 5 and Year 6

Blayney Public School structures its classes to reflect these developmental learning stages. For organisational purposes, Early Stage 1 and Stage 1 are referred to as Stage 1. Classes are named using the stage number and a letter identifier. (For example, 2S is a stage 2 class, comprising Year 3 and Year 4 students, taught by Mrs Scott.)

**ANTI-BULLYING PLAN**

All NSW government schools maintain an Anti-Bullying Plan.

Blayney Public School promotes good discipline and effective learning for all. Positive student welfare strategies are implemented to support students’ personal, social and learning needs. These include regular positive feedback, displaying quality work in the school and in the community, modelling consistent and caring behaviour, regular contact with parents and student reflection. The school maintains high standards of student behaviour.

It is the right of all students to:
- be treated with courtesy and respect and be valued as a person;
- be provided with a quality learning program;
- have a safe and caring environment;
- participate in the design of learning and behaviour goals;
- have achievements recognised; and
- be supported in learning.

It is the responsibility of all students to:
- value other people and treat them in a fair and decent way;
- be an active participant in learning programs;
- act in a caring way towards people, property and the environment;
- behave in a way that supports learning; and
- negotiate, set and achieve learning goals.

The school considers harassment, aggression, non-compliance and unsafe play as unacceptable behaviours. If students demonstrate unacceptable behaviours, discipline procedures for either classroom or playground situations will be implemented.

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

Special Religious Education (SRE), previously called “scripture” is part of the NSW Department of Education and Training curriculum. At Blayney Public School, SRE is conducted, on a weekly basis, by authorised representatives from the churches of Blayney. The SRE lessons are non-denominational and are held each Tuesday for half an hour. At enrolment parents are asked to indicate if their child will attend SRE.

And finally: “We live to learn.” - Florence Berry.